

Guidelines on the Employment of Staff

October 2021



Diocese of Sale
Catholic Education Ltd

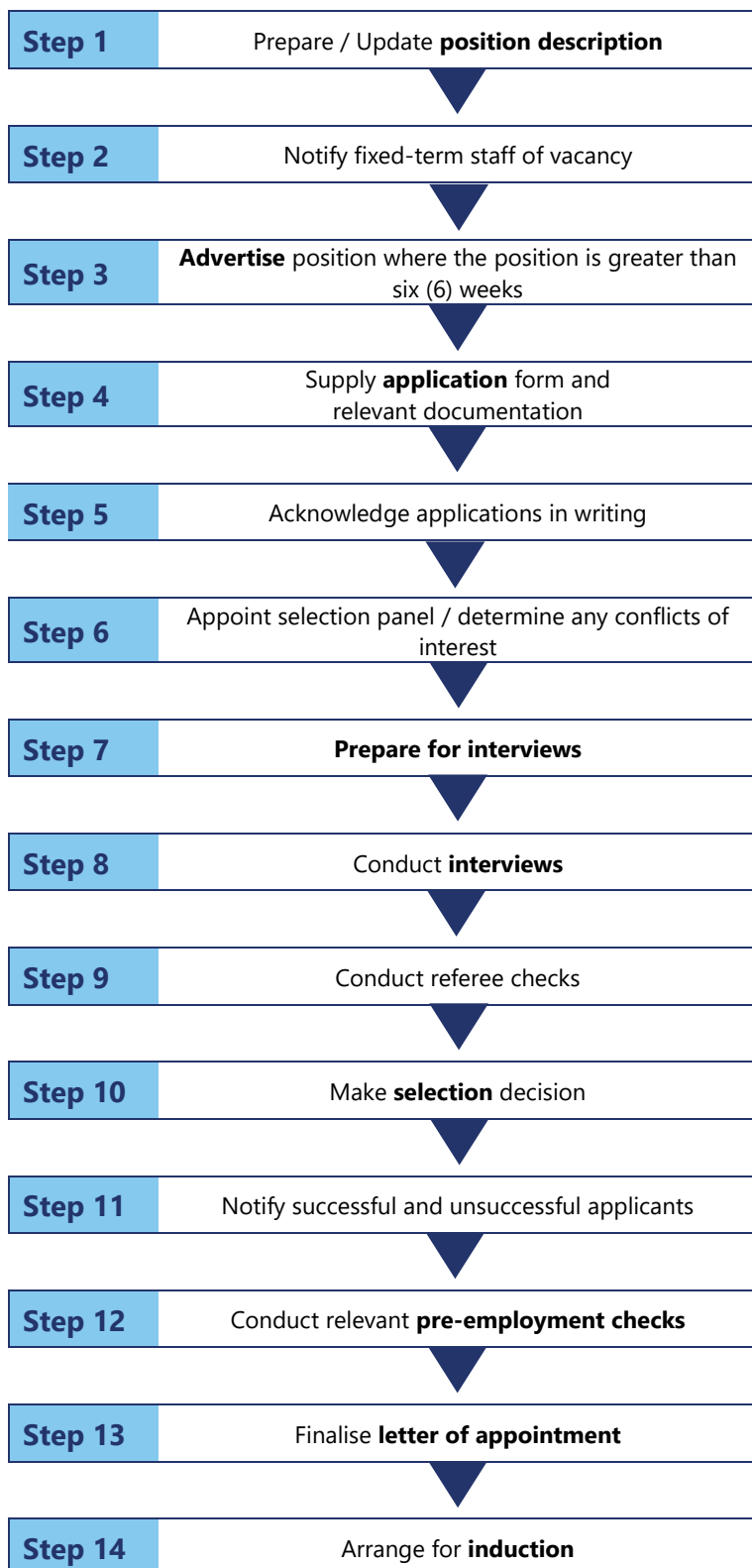
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Flowchart – Recruitment & Selection Process



Be aware of requirements relating to:

- Working in a Catholic school
- Child Safety
- Anti-discrimination and adverse action
- Privacy
- Other applicable legislation

See also **Attachment 1: Checklist for the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools**

General

1. Introduction

The Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) Guidelines on the Employment of Staff (**Guidelines**) have been developed for the process of selecting and employing suitable staff in DOSCEL workplaces and to do so in a fair and lawful manner.

These Guidelines apply to the employment of employees in schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat; 'staff' should be read to mean employees only. Employees include ongoing staff, staff on fixed-term contracts and casual staff (the specific situation of casual staff is covered in [Emergency teachers and casual relieving employees](#)).

These Guidelines apply to the appointment of the following teaching and non-teaching school and DOSCEL Secretariat staff:

- Ongoing (excluding Senior Leadership Team)
- Fixed-term (excluding Senior Leadership Team)
- Casual and casual relieving (including emergency teachers)
- Engagements via recruitment agencies
- Positions of Leadership.

Appointments of Senior Leadership staff, such Principals, Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals, Heads of Campus, Religious Education Leaders and Business Managers will be made by the DOSCEL Secretariat in accordance with the DOSCEL Delegations Policy and Delegations Register.

[Attachment 1](#) contains a checklist that summarises the key steps from the Guidelines. The checklist should not be considered a substitute for reading the Guidelines.

These Guidelines are not intended to be legally binding and are not intended to be incorporated into any contracts of employment.



[Attachment 1](#): Checklist for the Employment of Staff

2. Working in a DOSCEL Catholic school

Catholic schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat are an important part of the Catholic Church's mission. Dignity and respect for each student form the basis of teaching and learning in Catholic education, with the values of the Gospel integral to the faith development activities and religious education programs.

It is expected that all DOSCEL staff:

- (a) accept the Catholic educational philosophy of the school
- (b) develop and maintain an adequate understanding of those aspects of Catholic teaching that touch upon their subject areas and other aspects of their work
- (c) by their teaching and other work, and by personal example, strive to help students to understand, accept and appreciate Catholic teaching and values
- (d) avoid, whether by word, action or public lifestyle, influence upon students that is contrary to the teaching and values of the Church community in whose name they act
- (e) in relation to teachers, comply with the Accreditation Policy of DOSCEL to teach in a Catholic school, and other DOSCEL policies, and uphold the professional standards expected of a teacher
- (f) be committed to regular ongoing professional development
- (g) be qualified as required by state authorities
- (h) be vaccinated in accordance with the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions, as amended or replaced from time to time, and provide appropriate Vaccination Information to the school for collection, recording and storing purposes
- (i) be a person suitable to work with children.

Canon Law does not specify that employees in Catholic education must be baptised Catholics, rather, Canon Law focuses on their understanding of doctrine and way of life:

*'The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life.'*¹

*'The local ordinary is to be concerned that those who are designated teachers of religious instruction in schools ... are outstanding in correct doctrine, the witness of a Christian life, and teaching skill.'*²



Attachment 2: Statement of Principles regarding Catholic Education

¹ [The Code of Canon Law](#), Canon 803, section 2

² [The Code of Canon Law](#), Canon 804, section 2

3. Child safety

Catholic education has a responsibility to create nurturing (school) environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe. This commitment to protecting children should be embedded in culture and policies.

Child safety must be a key focus in the selection and employment process for staff in Catholic education. Throughout these Guidelines, child safety is reinforced at every stage of the selection and employment process. It is envisaged that these processes not only help to identify the most suitable people to work with children, but also deter unsuitable people from applying to work in Catholic education.

The Guidelines accord with the [DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#), available from the DOSCEL Intranet.

The processes recommended in these Guidelines are consistent with obligations under [Ministerial Order No. 870 \(Ministerial Order\)](#) and the [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#). Child Safe Standard 4 relates to screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel. The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements, all of which are incorporated into the processes in these Guidelines:

1. Subject to the requirements of the [Education, Training and Reform Act 2006](#) (Vic.), the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
2. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
 - (a) the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
 - (b) the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
3. All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
4. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - (a) Working with Children Check (**WWCC**) status, or similar check;
 - (b) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - (c) the person's history of work involving children; and
 - (d) references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

5. The school need not comply with the requirements in clause (4), above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in clauses (4)(a) to (4)(d) above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
6. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
 - (a) the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and
 - (b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.
7. The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Under the Ministerial Order and the Victorian Child Safe Standards, 'child-connected work' means work authorised by the school principal or governing body and 'performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present'. 'School environment' extends to locations other than the school campus, e.g. school camps, sporting events and excursions. These broad definitions mean that school staff who do not work directly or unsupervised with children may still be involved in 'child-connected' work as the term is defined in the Ministerial Order and used within these Guidelines.

The definition of 'child-related work' is described in the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#) (Vic.).

4. Anti-discrimination and adverse action

During all stages of the selection and employment process (including during the employment relationship), the DOSCEL Secretariat, principal and/or any of their representatives must be mindful of the equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and general protections laws which apply in Victoria and federally and must avoid any conduct that could be construed as unlawful discrimination³ or unlawful adverse action.⁴

³ The relevant Acts include the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.), [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#) (Cth), [Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999](#) (Cth), [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#) (Cth), [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth), [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#) (Cth), [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#) (Cth) and [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth) and their amendments and regulations

⁴ [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth)

Anti-discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is conduct prohibited by state and federal equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws. In general terms, unlawful discrimination in employment occurs when an employer:

- *treats an employee/prospective employee with an attribute (see below) unfavourably because of that attribute (this is known as 'direct discrimination');* or
- *imposes a requirement, condition or practice that has the effect of disadvantaging employees/prospective employees with an attribute and that is not reasonable (this is known as 'indirect discrimination').*

Attributes are the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited under state and federal equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws, being age, breastfeeding, disability (mental or physical), employment activity, gender identity, industrial activity, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or status as a carer, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race or national extraction, religious belief or activity, sex, sexual orientation, social origin or association with a person with one of the above attributes.

In general, throughout the selection process, applicants should not be asked to state their religion or other questions with the intent of determining whether the applicant is Catholic (e.g. requiring the applicant to name their parish priest). There is a need in Catholic education to ensure that staff understand, commit to and adhere to the principles of Catholic education.

However, questions asked to determine whether a person has been baptised, provide little information about the applicant's capacity in this respect and may be used as evidence of unlawful discrimination. A better approach is to prepare clear selection criteria that outline any relevant faith-related requirements for the position and to discuss this with the applicant in the interview (see [Position description](#) and [Interview](#)).

Adverse action

The [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth) contains general protections that prohibit an employer from taking unlawful 'adverse action' against an employee or a prospective employee.⁵ Examples of the type of adverse action that could be taken by an employer against an employee or prospective employee during the recruitment and selection process include:

⁵ See Chapter 3, Part 3-1 of the [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth)

- not affording them their legal rights or entitlements
- changing their job to their disadvantage
- treating them differently than others
- not hiring or promoting them
- taking investigatory or disciplinary action against them
- offering them different (and unfair) terms and conditions, compared to other employees
- discriminating against them.

Taking the actions described above is not of itself unlawful. Adverse action is unlawful only if the action is taken for one of the following reasons:

- the employee/prospective employee has or proposes to exercise a 'workplace right' (meaning they are entitled to a benefit under a workplace instrument or workplace law or, for employees, are able to make a complaint or enquiry in relation to their employment)
- the employee/prospective employee is or is not a member/officer of a union
- the employee/prospective employee has engaged or proposes to engage in industrial activity
- a discriminatory reason (that is, based on the employee/prospective employee having one of the attributes described above).

Exemptions

There are certain exemptions to unlawful discrimination that apply to religious bodies and religious schools. Under the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.), an act done because of someone's religious belief/activity, sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or gender identity that would otherwise be discriminatory may be lawful if the act:

- conforms with the doctrines, beliefs or principles of the religion; or
- is reasonably necessary to avoid injury to the religious sensitivities of adherents of the religion.⁶

A similar exemption is contained in the [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth) in relation to adverse action based on a discriminatory reason.⁷ Given the complexity of these exemptions and the risk of claims of unlawful discrimination or adverse action, industrial and/or legal advice should be sought before taking any action in reliance on these exemptions.

⁶ Section 83 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.)

⁷ Section 351 of the [Fair Work Act 2009](#) (Cth)

5. Privacy

Throughout the selection and employment process, schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat need to be mindful of privacy laws and any obligations under their privacy policies. Privacy laws, namely the [Australian Privacy Principles](#),⁸ are relevant to pre-employment screening processes because they contain obligations regarding the use, storage and disclosure of 'personal information' and 'sensitive information'. This information should be treated with respect for the person's privacy. Appropriate safeguards for the collection, retention, use and disclosure of personal information should be developed.

In summary, schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat are required to do the following:

Notify the applicant that they are collecting personal and/or sensitive information (this is incorporated into [Template Application for Employment](#)).

Obtain consent for the collection of such information (this is incorporated into [Template Application for Employment](#)).

Use the information only for purposes that are directly related to the purpose of collecting the information, i.e. for the purposes of determining the applicant's suitability for the position.

Ensure accuracy of the information contained in any records.

Protect the information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Further information in relation to Privacy can be accessed in the [DOSCEL Privacy Policy](#) and [DOSCEL Privacy Collection Notice](#).

⁸ [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth)

Pre-Employment Stage

6. Position description

When a vacancy for a position arises greater than six (6) weeks in duration, a position description should be developed for that position. If there is an existing position description, this should be reviewed to ensure that it accurately reflects the position in consideration of the ongoing needs of the school or the DOSCEL Secretariat. The position description should include a clear outline of the role comprising a statement of duties together with selection criteria relevant to the role.

The position description should include and clearly state the expectation that staff must provide a child-safe environment. The position description must set out the position's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and the essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety required of the incumbent.⁹ It is important to include reference to child safety in all position descriptions that involve child-connected work, not only teaching staff or those working directly with children (see the explanation of child-connected work in [Child safety](#)).



[Attachment 3](#): Example Position Descriptions

Statement of duties

The statement of duties clarifies the role, responsibilities and expectations of the position. The statement of duties should list the specific duties for that position (and should also include a catch-all phrase such as 'and any other duties as directed by the principal/Manager/Director Catholic Education').

In preparing the statement of duties, it is important to consider and include all inherent requirements of the position. The inherent requirements are those elements that are essential to the performance of the position (e.g. physical requirements, qualifications, attributes, registration and employment check requirements). A practical method of determining whether or not a requirement is an inherent requirement is to ask whether the position would be essentially the same if that requirement were dispensed with.

⁹ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: *Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:*

(a) *the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and*
(b) *the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.*

Selection criteria

Using the statement of duties as a guide, the next step is to prepare the selection criteria that will be used to assess the applicants in the selection process. Use of selection criteria facilitates a fair and objective approach in the selection process. The selection criteria should list the main qualifications, qualities, attributes, skills and expectations (including any inherent requirements) that are required to perform the duties of the position to the satisfaction of the school/DOSCEL Secretariat.

The selection criteria should specify the requirement for the applicant to have an understanding of, and commitment to, child safety.

The selection criteria should specify any faith-related requirements. It is important to consider exactly what is being required by a staff member and ensure this is reflected in the selection criteria, keeping in mind that the key question is not whether the applicant is a Catholic. For example, the selection criteria may include the following requirements:

- A demonstrated understanding of the ethos of a Catholic school and its mission
- A demonstrated understanding of the Church's teachings and a Catholic school teacher's role in the mission of the Church
- A demonstrated capacity to instil in students a respect for each other in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ
- A capacity to integrate the Church's teachings into all aspects of curriculum.

7. Advertising

Advertisements

The purpose of advertising a vacant position is to attract suitable applicants. In general, all positions greater than six (6) weeks duration (save for casual and short-term appointments where advertising may not be practicable) should be advertised to ensure that the process is fair and transparent and that the best person for the position is employed.

Advertisements should specify:

- the position and classification under the [Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018 \(VCMEA\)](#) or other relevant industrial instrument
- any key expectations of the school/DOSCEL Secretariat (e.g. that the applicant have a demonstrated commitment to Catholic education, be appropriate vaccinated against COVID-19 and to the safety and wellbeing of children)

- whether the position is ongoing or fixed-term¹⁰ (and if fixed-term, the period of the appointment)
- whether the position is full-time or part-time (and if part-time, the Full Time Equivalent (**FTE**))
- the commencement date
- the closing date for applications
- how to access the application form and position description (e.g. website, contact person).

It is important that the advertisement demonstrates the commitment to safeguarding children. It is recommended that advertisements include a statement as follows:

'This school community promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.'

Where relevant, the advertisement should inform applicants of the requirement to hold or be willing to acquire a WWCC and undergo a National Police Record Check and the requirement to provide appropriate COVID-19 Vaccination Information for collection, recording and holding by the school prior to their on-site attendance.

Information contained in advertisements must be correct and must not mislead any potential applicant in any matter relating to the employment, including in relation to the availability, nature, terms or conditions of employment.¹¹ For example, employers should ensure that the position is advertised at the correct classification level or salary range.

It is unlawful to publish or cause to be published an advertisement which indicates (or that might be reasonably understood as indicating) an intention to engage in unlawful discrimination.¹² For this reason, for most positions, schools should avoid stating in an advertisement that the person must be a Catholic, as this could indicate an intention to unlawfully discriminate against non-Catholic applicants (see [Anti-discrimination and adverse action](#)).

¹⁰Clause 11 of the [VCEMEA](#) specifies the limited circumstances in which an employee can be engaged on a fixed-term basis

¹¹ Section 31 of the *Australian Consumer Law* (schedule 2 to the [Competition and Consumer Act 2010](#) (Cth))

¹² Section 182 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.)

Fixed-term employees

Prior to advertising an available position, consideration must be made in relation to the number of current fixed-term staff members. Clause 11.2 of the VCMEA provides that an employer:

- must, prior to advertising any position in a particular school, provide fixed-term employees who may be suitably qualified for the position with notice in writing that the position is vacant and
- must – if the fixed-term employee does apply for the vacancy – interview the employee for the position.



[Attachment 4](#): Template Advertisement

8. Application

Potential applicants should be provided with access (either online or on request) to:

- the application form
- the position description which includes the selection criteria (see [Position description](#))
- the child safe policy and code of conduct
- the DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- the Statement of Principles Regarding Catholic Education ([Attachment 2](#)).

Provision of the child safe policy and code of conduct informs potential applicants about the child safe practices and emphasises that DOSCEL is committed to child safety.¹³ Provision of the DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety emphasises the system-wide importance placed on child safety within Catholic education in the Diocese of Sale.

It is important that applicants gain an understanding of work in Catholic education and so all applicants should be provided with the Statement of Principles regarding Catholic Education ([Attachment 2](#)). The application form requires staff to confirm that they have read and understood the Statement of Principles regarding Catholic Education and the child safe policy and code of conduct.

¹³ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: *All applications for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).*

Application form

The application form should request the basic information necessary to screen applicants prior to interview. The Child Safe Standards require employers to gather, verify and record a person's history of work involving children.¹⁴ For this reason, it is recommended that applicants be required to list their entire work history and include any volunteer work involving children.

In addition, the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions requires the school to collect, record and hold vaccination information about all school staff who are, or may be, scheduled to attend the school. Upon a successful applicant being offered and accepting a position, evidence of the persons vaccination status information will be required to be provided to the school, and prior to the persons attendance on-site¹⁵.

The Principal / DOSCEL Secretariat should be mindful that it is unlawful to request an applicant to supply information that could be used to discriminate against the applicant, unless that information is requested for a purpose that does not involve discrimination.¹⁶ For example, on the face of it, asking an applicant to state their religion on the application form could be used to discriminate against non-Catholic applicants. For most positions within Catholic education, it will be necessary to make inquiries and discuss with an applicant his or her ability to understand, commit to and adhere to the principles of Catholic education. However, it is better to do this within the interview setting, rather than make assumptions about an applicant's capabilities based on one-word answers, particularly when that could potentially be discriminatory.

As specified in the [Template Application for Employment](#), any information provided should be treated in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth). Schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat should also ensure compliance with any relevant privacy policies.

Declaration

It is recommended that, as part of the application form, applicants are required to complete a declaration of prior conduct. This declaration requires the applicant to state whether or not the applicant:

- has had any disciplinary action taken against them by an employer (e.g. received a warning or had their employment terminated) in relation to any inappropriate or unprofessional conduct

¹⁴ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires a school to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work...(c) The person's history of work involving children...':

¹⁵ Victorian State Government, Department of Health - [Directions issued by Victoria's Chief Health Officer](#)

¹⁶ Sections 107-108 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.)

- has been the subject of an allegation of inappropriate or unprofessional conduct, which has been substantiated by an employer or other body
- has been found guilty of a criminal offence or is currently facing criminal charges.

(See further the discussion in [Preparing for interview – Shortlisting applicants](#) for interview as to dealing with a 'yes' response in the declaration of prior conduct.)

While use of the declaration of prior conduct is highly recommended, schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat should not rely on the expectation that an applicant will complete the declaration honestly. Therefore, in conjunction with this, it is recommended that applicants be required to provide consent to contact previous employers.

Referees

The application form should require the applicant to list preferred referees. However, it is likely that referees provided by the applicant will provide only favourable information about the applicant and may be reluctant to share concerns about the applicant's suitability to engage in child-connected work.

For the above reason, in addition to speaking with preferred referees, it is recommended that written consent is provided by the applicant to make inquiries with the applicant's current and previous employers/principals (who may not be listed as referees) about the applicant's prior employment history. This is incorporated into the template application form ([Attachment 5](#)). If an applicant refuses to provide consent, it is important to discuss this at the interview stage (if the applicant is otherwise deemed suitable for interview) (see also [Interview – Referees and previous employers/principals](#)). The applicant may have an acceptable reason for not providing consent. In other situations, the school/DOSCEL Secretariat may not be sufficiently satisfied to proceed with the applicant's application without having spoken to the current/previous employer or principal. Unless they are listed as preferred referees, contact should not be made with the applicant's current or previous employers/principals without the applicant's consent either in writing or during the interview.



[Attachment 5](#): Template Application for Employment

All applications should be acknowledged in writing. This can be either electronically or via post, preferably within 48 hours of receipt of the application.



[Attachment 6](#): Template Letter Acknowledging Receipt of Application

9. Preparing for interview

Selection panel

In general, a selection panel should be appointed to screen and interview applicants. In selecting panel members, attention should be given to forming a panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires. Where practicable, the gender mix of the panel should be balanced.

Panel members should ensure that they do not have a close association with any of the applicants, e.g. family member or close personal friend (see [Conflict of Interest](#)). In the event that such a situation arises, it is recommended that the panel member excuse him or herself from the process. A new selection panel member should then be appointed.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises where a panel members' duty is affected by a personal interest. In such cases, the line between personal and professional conduct may become blurred and interfere with a panel member's capacity to perform their duties appropriately.

It is worth bearing in mind that conflict of interest can arise without intent to 'cross the line' between professional and personal interest. In other words, conflict of interest cannot only be actual, but also **potential** or **perceived**.

- A **potential** conflict of interest is one which is foreseeable from the circumstances, but has not yet become actual (for example, where a job applicant is related to a recruitment panel member, but the applications have not yet been processed).
- A **perceived** conflict of interest is one where the circumstances indicate to a reasonable person (third-party) that a panel member's duty is affected, whether there is an actual conflict of interest or not (for example, a panel member may work for a business owned by an applicant's family and it may be perceived that such a relationship would affect their impartiality in choosing a successful applicant).

Where a panel member declares a conflict of interest (either actual, potential or perceived), they must declare this conflict to the Chairperson of the selection panel and remove themselves from the selection panel.

Where a principal declares a conflict of interest (either actual, potential or perceived), they must immediately declare this conflict of interest to the DOSCEL Secretariat for further discussion and, where applicable, appointing a new selection panel.

For further information, see the [DOSCEL Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Shortlisting applicants for interview

It is recommended that the selection panel compile a schedule of applicants, based on the selection criteria and the applications. The panel can use this schedule to compare applicants based on the key criteria and therefore assist them to determine which of the applicants to proceed to the next stage. (It is common practice to interview applicants and then check references. However, it is also acceptable practice to conduct reference checks prior to interview.)

The panel should not automatically exclude every person who answers 'yes' to one or more of the questions in the declaration of prior conduct. The panel should consider the circumstances before making a decision as to whether to proceed the application to the next phase. They may wish to discuss the matter with the applicant in the interview setting before making a decision.

When shortlisting applicants for interview, the panel should be mindful of potential unlawful discrimination and adverse action (see [Anti-discrimination and adverse action](#)). As further protection from claims of discrimination or adverse action by aggrieved applicants, the comments in the schedule of applicants should reflect why the decision was made not to interview a particular applicant.



[Attachment 7](#): Template Schedule of Applicants

Applicants whom the panel determines do not meet the selection criteria should be advised in writing that they have been unsuccessful. Some applicants can be ruled out early in the process. However, if there is doubt about whether an applicant will be interviewed, it is better to wait until the end of the selection process before sending the letter that the applicant was unsuccessful.



[Attachment 8](#): Template Letter to Unsuccessful Applicants

Each applicant whom the panel determines could meet the selection criteria should be contacted and an interview arranged. Applicants should be provided with details of the interview time and location and the names of the members of the selection panel. Where relevant, applicants should be advised if they will be required to undertake any specific assessment in addition to the interview (e.g. computer skills assessment, presentation, sample of written work). Applicants should be advised that during the interview, the panel may request to see proof of identity, such as professional registration and/or WWCC.¹⁷



[Attachment 9](#): Template Letter Requesting Interview

10. Interview

The purpose of the interview is to assess the suitability of applicants for the position and to provide applicants and the selection panel with an opportunity to gain further information before making a successful appointment. The interview provides the selection panel with the opportunity to clarify information provided in the applicant's application.

The panel should follow the same interview format in relation to each applicant. Each member of the panel should be conversant with the selection criteria and the information provided on the application form. It is recommended that certain areas of importance (e.g. questions on a particular topic) be allocated to each panel member. It is important to give the applicant an opportunity to explain why he or she is suited for the position.

An effective method of interviewing is the 'behavioural' or 'targeted' interview which is an open-ended style of questioning designed to provide an insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. This method is based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. Interviewers adopting this method ask applicants questions that require specific examples of performance that will demonstrate those skills and capabilities relevant to the selection criteria. This method discourages the use of hypothetical questions. Stated capabilities should later be confirmed with referees.

¹⁷ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires an employing authority/principal to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:

- (a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
- (b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications...

Interviewers may use the STAR technique to assess the response: a strong answer outlines the Situation in which the events occurred, the Tasks that were undertaken, the Action taken by the applicant, and the Result of the action.

The panel should be careful during the interview not to mislead a potential applicant in any matter relating to the employment, including in relation to the availability, nature, terms or conditions of employment.¹⁸ For example, a panel should avoid implying that a particular fixed-term position will become ongoing in future, unless it is certain that this will happen.

Child Safety

It is important for the panel to make an assessment of any possible risk to child safety. The panel should inform the applicant about child safety practices and the code of conduct, emphasising the importance of child safety.¹⁹ As part of the interview process, the panel should review and verify the applicant's history of work involving children.²⁰

It is strongly recommended that the panel ask probing questions relevant to child safety. Some example interview questions that may be asked of applicants are:

'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'

'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'

'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'

Depending on the enrolment, location of the school and/or their role in the DOSCEL Secretariat, it may be relevant to ask the applicant specific questions relating to their knowledge of promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with disability.

In line with the declaration in the application form, it is strongly recommended that applicants be asked whether they:

¹⁸ Section 31 of the *Australian Consumer Law* (schedule 2 of the [Competition and Consumer Act 2010](#) (Cth))

¹⁹ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: 'All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct)'.

²⁰ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires a school to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work...(c) The person's history of work involving children...'.

- have had any disciplinary action taken against them by an employer (e.g. received a warning or had their employment terminated) in relation to any inappropriate or unprofessional conduct
- have been the subject of an allegation of inappropriate or unprofessional conduct, which has been substantiated by an employer or other body
- have been found guilty of a criminal offence or are currently facing criminal charges.

If the applicant answers 'yes' to any of the above questions (either in the interview or the application form) or if they seem hesitant in their response to any of the questions, the panel should be prepared to ask for further information. The panel should not automatically exclude an applicant with a 'yes' response but should consider the circumstances very carefully before making a decision regarding the application.

During the interview, members of the panel should take notice of their own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant. Panel members should ask for further information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.

Possible warning signs for panel members to note during interview include:

- unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history
- the applicant stating they do not value or 'need' supervision
- the applicant being evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers.

Discrimination

In general, questions about the applicant's marital and family status, age, health (excluding the requirement to be vaccinated in accordance with the COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions as amended or replaced from time to time), religious and political beliefs or other protected attributes (see [Anti-discrimination and adverse action](#)) should not be asked in an interview. Questions that may be raised in a normal social context may be inappropriate in an interview setting.

The panel should be mindful that it is unlawful to request a person to supply information that could be used to unlawfully discriminate against that person, unless it is requested for a purpose that does not involve discrimination.²¹ This means that the panel should not ask questions relating to a particular attribute unless they have a non-discriminatory reason for doing so, such as Vaccination Information status.

²¹ Sections 107-08 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.)

Faith-related matters

While being mindful of unlawful discrimination, for most positions in Catholic education, it will be necessary to ascertain whether the applicant understands, and is prepared to commit to and adhere to the principles of Catholic education. This is particularly important for teaching positions and other roles where the staff member has significant contact with and influence over students (e.g. school counsellor). This information can be sought in a non-discriminatory way. The panel should not focus on whether the applicant is a Catholic but whether the applicant meets the selection criteria including any faith-related requirements (see Part 6 [Position description](#)).

Special facilities/adjustments for disability

The selection panel should ask the applicant if there is anything that may prevent him/her from successfully performing the duties of the position. If special facilities or adjustments are required to enable a person to perform the requirements of his or her role, the employer is legally obliged to provide these facilities or make such adjustments.²² The exception to this is where the provision of facilities or adjustments would impose an unjustifiable hardship.²³

At the interview stage, the task of the panel is to obtain information about any special facilities or adjustments that are required. For example, an applicant may advise that he or she has a back injury that requires a stand-up desk for long periods of computer-based work.

The matter of special facilities or adjustments may become relevant at the selection stage. An applicant's need for reasonable adjustments/special facilities should not affect the decision of the panel, principal or DOSCEL Secretariat about the suitability of the applicant for the position.

The situation becomes more complex when it is not clear whether the required special facilities/adjustments would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the school/DOSCEL Secretariat. For example, a specialist teacher with mobility restrictions may not be able to access the specialist subject area in an upstairs part of the school. This could require moving the location of the specialist subject area or installing a lift in the building. Whether this imposes an unjustifiable hardship on the school/DOSCEL Secretariat depends on all the circumstances. The decision about whether an adjustment imposes an unjustifiable hardship rests with the school/DOSCEL Secretariat. It is recommended that legal advice is sought in such situations.

²² Section 5 of the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth); section 20 of the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (Vic.)

²³ Section 21B of the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth)

Referees and previous employers

The panel should confirm referee details with the applicant, establishing the professional relationship and/or history between the applicant and their preferred referees. Where possible, the panel should request to speak with referees who can provide insights into the applicant's experience involving child-connected work.

As outlined in [Application – Referees](#), it is recommended that consent is obtained from the applicant, via the application form, to contact the applicant's current and previous employers. For applicants who have worked in education, this generally means contacting the principal. For applicants from other industries, depending on the size and nature of the organisation, it may be appropriate to contact the applicant's employer, manager or direct supervisor. The priority should be to contact the relevant person from the applicant's most recent place of work but the panel may also wish to speak with other previous employers.

This contact should be discussed with the applicant during the interview and the applicant should be given the opportunity to raise any relevant matters. For example, if an applicant has not advised their current employer that they are applying for work elsewhere, they may wish to discuss the timing of the contact with the panel.

If the applicant has not signed the declaration in the application form or otherwise requests that the panel not contact their current or previous employer, it is important that the panel asks the applicant to explain their reasons for such. The panel should carefully consider the applicant's reasons. It may be that the panel accepts the applicant's reason and is satisfied that it has sufficient information from other referees to proceed with the application. In other situations, the panel may form the view that, without contacting the most recent employer, they do not have sufficient information to proceed with the application. The panel should not contact the applicant's current or previous employers without the applicant's consent.

Documentation

Where the applicant for a position is unknown to the panel (for example, not an existing staff member), the panel should sight during the interview:

- proof of personal identity (e.g. driver's licence, passport)
- where relevant, original copies of the applicant's qualifications
- where relevant, evidence of professional registration

- where relevant (e.g. not necessary for teaching positions), the applicant's current WWCC card.²⁴

Post-interview

After the interview, the panel should rate how each applicant meets the selection criteria. A short summary of the interview and comments on each applicant may also be helpful. This will aid with the selection process and form part of the selection report provided to the decision-maker. The panel should bear in mind that all documents brought into existence as part of the interview and selection process may be accessible to applicants under privacy laws or, alternatively, could be required to be disclosed in legal proceedings. Accordingly, the panel should ensure that all documents brought into existence during the interview and selection process are accurate.



[Attachment 10](#): Template Applicant Assessment Sheet

11. Selection

At the conclusion of the interview stage, the selection panel should be able to agree, based on the applicant's rating in reference to meeting the selection criteria, on the preferred applicant/s (if any). In some cases, there may be only one applicant considered suitable for appointment, whereas in other situations there may be two or three suitable applicants.

Referee checks

Referee checks should be conducted for the applicant/s considered suitable for appointment. It is common practice to interview applicants and then check references. However, it is also acceptable practice to conduct reference checks prior to interview. Referee and reference checks are essential to the process of screening potential staff and providing additional insight into the applicant's character and skills. A key focus of referee and reference checks should be addressing the person's suitability for the position and for engaging in child-connected work.²⁵

²⁴ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires an employing authority/principal to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:

- (a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
- (b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications...

²⁵ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires a school to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work...(d) References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.'

If the reference is provided in writing, the panel should contact the referee to confirm its authenticity. When contacting referees by telephone or otherwise, it is important to verify to whom the panel member is speaking to ensure that genuine contact details have been provided.

It is recommended that the panel contact at least two of the applicant's preferred referees. As outlined in [Application – Referees](#) and [Interview – Referees](#) and previous employers/principals, it is strongly recommended that the panel also contact the applicant's most recent principal/employer. There may also be circumstances where the panel wishes to speak with any previous principals/employers. As outlined above, the panel should not contact the applicant's current or previous employers/principals without the applicant's consent.

All referees (including the most recent employer/principal) should be questioned along an agreed line based on the selection criteria. The panel member/s responsible for conducting referee checks must be confident, assertive and probing in their questions. The panel member should compile a written record of the referee's responses to the extent those responses are relevant to the selection criteria. When speaking with referees, the panel should seek to establish and/or verify the referee's relationship with the applicant, together with work and skills experience. It is particularly important to verify the person's history of work involving children.²⁶

Suggested questions for referees include the following:

- How long the applicant and referee worked together
- Whether the referee was the applicant's direct supervisor
- The specifics of the role previously and/or currently held by the applicant
- The applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses
- Whether the referee would employ the applicant again
- Whether the referee has directly observed the applicant engaging in child-connected work
- Whether the referee has any concerns about the applicant engaging in child-connected work
- Whether the referee is comfortable knowing the applicant might sometimes be working alone with children
- Whether, to the referee's knowledge, the applicant had any disciplinary action taken against them in relation to inappropriate or unprofessional conduct; any substantiated allegations of inappropriate or unprofessional conduct made against them; was found guilty of a criminal offence or is currently facing criminal charges.

²⁶ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires a school to 'make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work...(c) The person's history of work involving children...'

Panel members should ask for information if the referee does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses. It is recommended that panel members take note of any pauses or gaps in a referee's responses. Panel members should not be afraid to 'probe' if they consider the referee is not telling the full story.

The panel should take the verbal or written reports from referees into consideration in assessing the suitability of the applicant for selection.



[Attachment 11](#): Template Referee Report

Registration

If relevant, the selection panel should confirm the applicant's current registration on the registering board's website. For example:

- [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#)
- [Speech Pathology Australia](#)
- [Certified Practising Accountants Australia Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia.](#)

For teaching positions, it is recommended that the panel confirm that the applicant is currently registered with the VIT by searching the online teachers register on the [VIT website](#). The online teachers register will also indicate whether a teacher has had their registration suspended or cancelled or whether any conditions have been imposed on the teacher. If this is the case in relation to an applicant, the panel is advised to obtain further information from the applicant.

The panel should make a note if the applicant does not yet have VIT registration at the time of interview. For example, if the applicant is in their final year of university, they will not receive provisional VIT registration until they have completed the relevant application and their university advises VIT that the applicant has completed their course. In general, for mid-year graduates, the VIT approves registration from mid-July to August. For end-of-year graduates, the VIT approves registration from December to January. If the applicant is successful in obtaining the position, the principal must ensure that the applicant has VIT registration before he or she commences teaching at the school (see [Pre-employment checks](#)).

Obtaining additional information

If the selection panel utilises social media or other internet-based sources to gather information about a prospective employee, they should ensure that they document the information obtained and used in assessing the applicant. The panel must ensure that the information obtained and used in assessing applicants has direct relevance to the position requirements. The panel should not assess an applicant on an attribute on which discrimination is prohibited under state and federal equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws (see [Anti-discrimination and adverse action](#)).

The same principles apply to using social media or internet-based sources after receiving a recommendation from the panel.

Selection decision

After all applicants have been interviewed and referees have been contacted in relation to the suitable applicants, the selection panel should compare the various applicants and the information obtained in relation to each of them. If further information is needed, the panel may contact other referees, hold further interviews or consider other assessment options (e.g. presentation for relevant position).

The panel should then make a decision as to who is the preferred applicant. As a result of the process followed, the decision-making should be rigorous, defensible and transparent.

The panel must be sure that the preferred applicant is able to perform the inherent requirements of the position. If an applicant has a disability or impairment, provision of special facilities or reasonable adjustments made to enable the applicant to perform the inherent requirements of the position. However, the key point is that the successful applicant must be able to perform the inherent requirements of the position, even if some adjustment is required to enable them to do so (see [Interview – Special facilities/adjustments for disability](#)).

The next step is for the panel to recommend the preferred applicant. The panel should consider presenting the decision-maker with a selection report that provides information on each of the applicants and demonstrates the reasons for the panel's recommendation. The role of the panel is only to recommend the employment of an applicant. The decision to offer employment rests solely with the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat (unless specific delegations relating to the employment function has been provided to the principal in writing or as part of the principal's contract). The principal/DOSCEL Secretariat must approve the recommendation of the panel before any offer of employment is made to the preferred applicant.

The selection report should be used to record how the decision was made. In addition to informing the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat of the reasons for the decision, this document offers some protection in the event that a claim of discrimination or adverse action is made in relation to the appointment process.

Where a preferred applicant is a family member of the principal, Manager or an employee in a Leadership position at the same DOSCEL workplace, all interview information, including selection reports and the panels recommendation must be provided to the DOSCEL Secretariat (Industrial Relations / Human Resources) before a final decision is made and the successful applicant contacted.



[Attachment 12](#): Template Selection Report

Notification to applicants

The successful applicant should be contacted as soon as practicable. It is generally appropriate to contact the applicant by telephone. The applicant should be advised that they have been successful and that the offer of employment is conditional on the applicant passing the relevant pre-employment checks (see [Pre-employment checks](#)) and on signing the letter of appointment (see [Appointment](#)).

As soon as practicable, the unsuccessful applicants should be thanked for their interest in the position and notified in writing that their applications have been unsuccessful (see [Template Letter to Unsuccessful Applicants](#)). In some situations, it may also be appropriate to telephone the unsuccessful applicants or have a discussion in person (e.g. if the applicant is a current employee at the school or DOSCEL Secretariat). If there is certainty that the preferred applicant will accept the offer of employment, the letters may be sent to unsuccessful applicants at the same time as the successful applicant is offered the position. However, if there is any doubt as to whether the preferred applicant will accept the offer, the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat should wait until the offer is accepted before sending letters to the unsuccessful applicants, in order to leave open other options.

Document retention

Documentation relevant to the application process should be retained, including all documents relating to unsuccessful applicants for at least seven years after the selection process has concluded. The reason for this is to enable the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat to defend any subsequent claims of discrimination or adverse action relating to the selection process. The decision-maker must ensure that compliance with privacy legislation and any relevant policies in relation to the storage and use of personal records is met.

Employment Stage

12. Appointment

Once the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat has approved the appointment, a letter of appointment must be sent to the successful applicant offering him or her the position. This letter forms part of the contract of employment. A signed copy should be retained on the employee's personnel file. The letter of appointment should be signed and returned before the applicant commences employment.

DOSCEL template letters of appointment for staff are available from the [DOSCEL Intranet](#). In summary, the letter must include the following:²⁷

- an offer of employment for the particular position, specifying the category and classification under the VCMEA or other relevant industrial instrument
- whether the position is ongoing or fixed-term (and if fixed-term, the period of the appointment, the reason and circumstances for the appointment being fixed-term and the rights of any employee being replaced)
- whether the position is full-time or part-time (and if part-time, the FTE, days and hours of duty/scheduled class time)
- the commencement date and, if applicable, the cessation date of employment
- the salary and key conditions of employment (e.g. hours of duty, rate of pay, any allowances, superannuation entitlements, leave entitlements, any recall obligations)
- any professional registration requirement as a condition of employment
- the requirement for a Working with Children Check and a National Police Record Check (not necessary for teachers as this is covered by their VIT registration)
- the requirement for the successful applicant to provide to the school appropriate COVID-19 Vaccination Information for collection, recording and holding
- a space for the applicant to sign accepting the offer of employment
- the position description
- the [Fair Work Information Statement](#) or [Casual Employment Information Statement](#) produced by the federal government
- the 'Statement of Principles of Catholic Education' ([Attachment 2](#))
- the child safe policy and code of conduct
- the DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety.

²⁷ Clause 12 of the [VCMEA](#) outlines specific requirements for letters of appointment. These requirements are incorporated into the DOSCEL templates.

13. Pre-employment checks

It is important that necessary pre-employment checks are conducted. The offer of employment should be conditional on staff passing the necessary checks. This requirement is incorporated into the DOSCEL template letters.

Staff who do not have current VIT registration must obtain a WWCC and a National Police Record Check (Police Check). For teachers, this forms part of their VIT Registration.

Principals and the DOSCEL Secretariat must be mindful that pre-employment checks are only one part of building a child-safe organisation. WWCCs and Police Checks do not assess a person's suitability to work with or care for children in a particular role. It is the responsibility of the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat to assess whether a staff member is a suitable person to engage in child-connected work and to monitor their behaviour around children. Pre-employment checks should be combined with other strategies, such as those outlined in these Guidelines, for selecting and employing suitable staff.

Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration

The principal/DOSCEL Secretariat must ensure that teaching staff have valid VIT registration prior to commencing employment. It is recommended that the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat view and make a copy of the registration cards of all teachers and also check the online teachers register on the [VIT website](#).

In some circumstances, graduate teachers may not have received provisional VIT registration at the time of interview (see [Interview](#)) or the time of offer of employment. The principal/DOSCEL Secretariat must ensure that the teacher has VIT registration before they commence teaching. In general, for mid-year graduates, the VIT approves registration from mid-July to August. For end-of-year graduates, the VIT approves registration from December to January. In general, the teacher will appear on the online VIT register before they receive their registration card. Once a teacher appears on the VIT register, they are registered and can teach.

Working with Children Check

The [Worker Screening Act 2020](#) (Vic.) requires that any person doing child-related work, and who is not exempt, must have a valid WWCC. A person is considered to be doing 'child-related work' if they work within one or more of the occupational fields defined in the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, and the contact with children is direct, unsupervised, and part of their duties.

A WWCC helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening a person's criminal records and professional conduct records, and preventing people who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for children.

A WWCC is valid for five years, and is transferable between employers. A WWCC is different from a Police Check because WWCC cardholders are monitored on an ongoing basis for any new relevant offences or adverse professional conduct reports from prescribed professional bodies. New charges, convictions or findings relevant to the WWCC will instigate a re-assessment of the person's eligibility to hold a card.

It is unlawful for a person who has not obtained an appropriate WWCC to engage in child-related work. It is also unlawful to knowingly employ a person who has not obtained a WWCC in child-related work.

In general, it is recommended that all non-teaching staff be required to apply for and pass a WWCC. If the staff member does not already have a current WWCC (for employment, as opposed to a volunteer check), they should obtain this prior to commencing employment and present the WWCC card as soon as practicable.

Schools and the DOSCEL Secretariat must ensure they have processes in place not only in relation to new staff, but also in relation to checking the WWCC status of existing employees and other visitors to the DOSCEL workplaces (including contractors and volunteers).

National Police Record Check

It is recommended that all new non-teaching staff be required to undergo a Police Check and provide the resulting National Police Certificate as soon as practicable. The school/DOSCEL Secretariat should ensure they sight the original National Police Certificate and retain a photocopy of such.

A Police Check is different to a WWCC, which considers 'relevant offences' as listed in the [Worker Screening Act 2020](#) (Vic.), such as sexual, violent and drug offences. A Police Check is a list, at any given point in time, of the offences a person has committed. For example, a Police Check may be useful when appointing a person into a role that has access to money or expensive goods, as it will report on fraud and theft offences. It may also be useful when appointing a school bus driver or someone who regularly transports students as it will report on drink driving offences.

If the National Police Certificate demonstrates that an applicant or a current staff member has committed an offence, this is not necessarily detrimental to the person's employment or potential employment. The principal/DOSCEL Secretariat must make an assessment as to whether the offence is relevant to the person's employment, taking into account all the circumstances, e.g. the nature of the offence, the nature of the position, when the offence occurred. In most cases, the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat will need to have a further discussion with the applicant/staff member about the result of the Police Check before making any decisions.

National Police Certificates do not have an expiry date. The National Police Certificate is the result of a check of police records only up until the day it is issued. Unlike a WWCC, there is no ongoing monitoring. It is recommended that existing staff undergo a Police Check every five years (consistent with the timeframe for the WWCC).

14. Induction

Induction is a structured and supportive method of introducing a new staff member to the workplace. Commencing a new job can be a daunting process with new people, new systems and a new workplace culture in addition to having a new position to perform. The transition to a new workplace is made easier and more effective for both the individual and the workplace if there is a comprehensive induction process in place, which introduces the new staff member to the workplace. Schools/The DOSCEL Secretariat also have a legal obligation to have an induction program for all new staff.²⁸

An induction process should communicate the ethos, policies and procedures to new staff and include an introduction to their role and their immediate work area. It is also a means by which information and resources are provided to new staff in a timely manner.

Induction is an ideal opportunity to have discussions with new staff about child safety. Schools/the DOSCEL Secretariat need to ensure that newly appointed staff understand the importance of child safety. New staff should be provided with information on the child safe policy, code of conduct, and relevant practices and procedures.²⁹

²⁸ Clause 23 of the [VCEMEA](#)

²⁹ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: *'The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to: (a) The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work...'*

It is important that the discussion about child safety includes practical matters. This is particularly so for graduates or staff who are new to an educational setting. For example, staff should be advised to remain visible when working alone with children, that they should not have unnecessary physical contact with children and that they should avoid having 'favourites'. Staff should be given an opportunity to ask questions about relevant policies, procedures and practices. It is important that staff know who to contact if they have concerns.

Induction programs should be structured and provide a staff member with the following information:

- Materials relevant to the ethos and mission of the school
- Materials relevant to child safety
- A thorough explanation of their role and responsibilities (referring to their position description)
- An understanding of where their job fits into their immediate work area, school and Catholic education more broadly
- Occupational health and safety (**OHS**) information (including identification of any OHS training required for the role)
- An introduction to key colleagues in the work area
- An introduction to colleagues who can provide support and advice (e.g. first-aid officer, administrative staff, contact officers for complaints)
- An appreciation of the school's expectations with respect to professional behaviour
- Provision of, and training on, school policy and procedures documents
- Salary assessment information.³⁰



[Attachment 13](#): Template Induction Checklist

³⁰ Clause 23 of the [VCEMEA](#) requires a school's induction program to include the following: materials relevant to the ethos and mission of the school; provision of, and training on, school policy and procedures documents; identification of lines of support and contact persons; and salary assessment information.

Post first week

Induction should be an ongoing process. The formal induction program may be completed in the first week. However, beyond that, it is important to keep communication flowing and to address any concerns, teething problems, training or accountability issues and to provide clarity on priorities. Such ongoing assistance and clarification will help new staff feel more positive and focused about their contribution, leading to a happier, more settled staff member and to a more productive workplace.

With this in mind, after the formal induction program is complete, it is recommended that the principal/the staff member's supervisor and/or coordinator schedule follow-up induction meetings with the new staff member as follows:

- every week for the first month
- every two weeks for the second month
- every month for the third to sixth month.

The following are some example discussion points for these induction meetings:

- Ensure the employee is settling in. Discuss with the employee their experience to date settling into their role and the workplace.
- Clarify the employee's perception of their role. Has the role met their expectations?
- Have there been any issues or concerns for the employee since their commencement?
- Discuss the employee's performance and achievements to date.
- Discuss any appropriate training, retraining, refocus and appropriate time lines for such.

If concerns are identified regarding the employee's performance, conduct or capacity that may warrant action, the process provided within clause 13 of the VCMEA, Managing Employment Concerns, should be followed. Further information regarding these provisions is available by contacting the Industrial Relations/Human Resources at the DOSCEL Secretariat.

15. Emergency teachers and casual relieving employees

The processes outlined in these Guidelines are appropriate for the appointment of ongoing and fixed-term positions. For short term positions (including emergency teachers and casual relieving staff), some aspects of the processes may be truncated. However, the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat must still be satisfied that the person is suitable for engaging in child-connected work.

For emergency teachers and casual relieving staff, the principal/DOSCEL Secretariat should:

- request that the staff member complete an application form
- provide the staff member with the child safe policy, code of conduct and DOSCEL Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- interview the prospective staff member
- contact referees, including the most recent principal/employer for whom the staff member worked for a significant period
- check VIT registration or conduct relevant pre-employment checks, including a WWCC
- provide the staff member with a letter of appointment (the DOSCEL template letters include a one-off letter to be provided to staff on the emergency teacher/casual employee list)
- ensure the staff member undergoes induction.

Where the same staff for emergency and casual relieving positions are regularly used, this process should be following at the commencement of employment and updated as appropriate after any significant intervals between work. For example, if a teacher has not worked at the school in the past 12 months, it would be appropriate for the principal to speak with the most recent principal/employer and ensure the teacher has received induction in relation to relevant policies and procedures.

16. Ongoing obligations regarding child safety

Ongoing support, supervision and training of staff are critical in managing and reducing the risk of child abuse. The Child Safe Standards impose ongoing obligations in relation to the employment of staff.³¹ Specifically, schools/the DOSCEL Secretariat must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place to monitor and assess a staff member's continuing suitability for child-connected work. A number of steps can be taken to meet these obligations.

Training

As a basic starting point, staff should be able to easily access and understand the commitment to child safety and relevant policies. It is recommended that staff receive training relevant to child safety each year, as part of their professional learning.

Schools/the DOSCEL Secretariat should ensure that staff are regularly provided with information, training and education about child safety including in relation to:

³¹ [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: *'The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to...(b) Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.'*

- the policies, procedures and code of conduct
- what constitutes child abuse
- appropriate standards of care and duty of care how to identify and reduce risks of child abuse detecting signs of potential child abuse
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse
- what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, such as inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting
- what is inappropriate behaviour between children and adults, with reference to the code of conduct
- legislative requirements, e.g. mandatory reporting
- where relevant, specific training to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with disability.

Such training can take many forms, including:

- training by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching.

Support, supervision and monitoring

New employees should be supervised regularly to ensure that they understand their role and possess the necessary skills as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. For new staff, this may include having a mentor or other staff member present on occasion. This circumstance aside, in general, it is not practical or desirable for staff such as teachers to be directly supervised in their classrooms. However, there are other steps that can be taken to provide support and supervision to staff, such as the following:

- Provide clear expectations about roles and responsibilities and give staff the best support and training to equip them to perform their roles in a professional manner.
- Ensure that staff have regular opportunities to meet and talk with their relevant coordinators/managers/the principal. In this way, staff are more likely to share observations or talk about concerns that may otherwise go unsaid.
- Principals/Managers are advised to maintain a physical presence in the workplace. Where practicable, they should walk around the school or area and get a sense of what is happening.
- Consider appointing a staff member to the role of 'child safety officer'. This role would have specific 'child-safe' duties including monitoring the implementation of appropriate child-safe strategies. The person may also have a role in coordinating training. Although it is

useful to have a person in this specific role, principals/managers and the broader staff must not abrogate their responsibilities in this area.

- Continually monitor and assess a staff member's suitability to engage in child-connected work. It is recommended that this form part of the consideration prior to and discussion at a staff member's annual review meeting.
- Consider supervision and monitoring requirements in terms of building design and allocation of spaces. For example, it is important to ensure that child safety is a key consideration when making arrangements for staff working one on one with students, e.g. reading recovery, counselling, instrumental music teaching.

The principal/DOSCEL Secretariat should discuss the strategies in these Guidelines in the context of broader discussions about the steps taken to ensure child safety.³² It is recommended that the principal provide information to the DOSCEL Secretariat regarding child safety as part of the school's annual report.

³² [Child Safe Standard 4](#) requires that: *'The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.'*

Appendices

- [Attachment 1:](#) Checklist for the Employment of Staff
- [Attachment 2:](#) Statement of Principles regarding Catholic Education
- [Attachment 3:](#) Example Position Descriptions
- [Attachment 4:](#) Template Advertisement
- [Attachment 5:](#) Template Application for Employment
- [Attachment 6:](#) Template Letter Acknowledging Receipt of Application
- [Attachment 7:](#) Template Schedule of Applicants
- [Attachment 8:](#) Template Letter to Unsuccessful Applicants
- [Attachment 9:](#) Template Letter Requesting Interview
- [Attachment 10:](#) Template Applicant Assessment Sheet
- [Attachment 11:](#) Template Referee Report
- [Attachment 12:](#) Template Selection Report
- [Attachment 13:](#) Template Induction Checklist