



Catholic Diocese of Darwin

Working with Children Clearance Policy

Introduction and Purpose

Every day children and young people are taught, coached, and cared for by workers and volunteers. From sports coaches, music teachers, childcare workers, teachers and church groups – everyone plays a part in helping educate, nurture and inspire children. The requirement for a Working With Children Clearance (WWCC) has been introduced under the *Care and Protection of Children Act (NT)*, as a method to prevent and deter people who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either a paid or volunteer capacity. Therefore the WWCC is an important part of the recruitment process for potential new employees and volunteers.

Policy Statement

In accordance with the *Care and Protection of Children Act (NT)*, the Catholic Diocese of Darwin is committed to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and abuse. As an employer, the Catholic Diocese of Darwin has a responsibility to ensure that all persons employed or engaged to carry out work in child related employment are screened appropriately through a Working With Children Clearance (WWCC).

Responsibility

The onus for complying with the Northern Territory Care and Protection Act, rests with both the individual and the person who engages the individual, e.g. Parish Priest is the employer of all involved in parish activities.

Who Requires a Working with Children Clearance?

Child related work is any work that involves or may potentially involve contact (see definitions below) with children in connection with the following:

- Educational facilities
- Religious organisation (includes all diocesan/parish activities)
- Counselling or other support services for children
- Overnight camps for children
- Clubs, associations or movements (including those that are of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature with significant child membership or involvement)
- Other services such as gym or play facilities
- People involved in working with youth

Without limiting the above any of the following is a person engaged in child-related employment:

- (a) Anyone performing child related work
 - I. a minister of religion or as part of a religious vocation; or
 - II. as a student for the practical training of an education or vocational course
 - III. as a voluntary worker

(Part 3.1, section 185 Child Related Employment (N.T, Care and Protection of Children Act)

Definitions

Contact is any contact with a child that involves any of the following:

- physical or the potential for physical contact with children;

- spoken or the potential for spoken communication with children;
- written communication or the potential for written communication with children;
- access to records and information of children and young people

Working with Children Clearance is a search of national police records for criminal history in relation to:

- sexual offences involving children;
- violent offences involving children;
- drug related offences involving children.

A **Clearance Notice** is provided to a person after successfully applying for a Working With Children Clearance. The applicant will also receive their Ochre Card.

Parish Registers

Parishes must keep a register of the following information:

- Names of workers, this includes parish volunteers and council members
- Working with Children card number and expiry dates

Registers maintained by parishes need to be made available for periodic audit.

Retreats

Where interstate retreats/youth camps are run in the Northern Territory an interstate working with children clearance would be accepted. The organising committee must see evidence and sign off prior to the event taking place.

Exemptions

- A person who is 15 years of age or less
- A visitor to the NT who will be working as a volunteer for a total period of no more than 30 days per year.

Costs

The cost of a Working with Children Clearance for a worker in the Northern Territory is \$70.00 and for a volunteer \$7.00. It is expected that parishes will offer to pay for the cost of a volunteer WWCC.

Volunteers

When applying for a WWCC the volunteer must name the parish as their volunteer agency. If the person volunteering already has a working with children clearance with another organisation then they should advise parish and sign the *Catholic Diocese of Darwin Authority of Consent* form to register the Diocese of Darwin as their volunteer organisation.

What if a person declines to apply for a WWCC?

If a worker or volunteer declines to have a WWCC, the person concerned is prohibited from child-related employment and will be deemed unsuitable for employment or appointment as a volunteer in any position within the Catholic Diocese of Darwin.

Reference

[Northern Territory Care and Protection of Children Act](#)

[Working with Children Clearance](#)

[For employers or volunteer coordinators](#)

SAFENT Organization Consent