



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

National Police Check (Police Record Check)

THIS DOCUMENT RELATES TO THE FOLLOWING CAPABILITY AREA

3 Right people, right role, right knowledge



A National Police Check (Police Record Check) can provide important information (in addition to the Working with Children (WWC) check that can be used to assess a person's suitability to work and/or volunteer with children and young people. The assessment of criminal history information is an important risk management strategy designed to ensure that an organisation does not knowingly expose children and young people to a person that may place them at risk.

Criminal history records, which are based on criminal conviction data, tend to underestimate the true incidence of offending. Child sexual offenders may continue to offend without ever being caught, as most children, young people and adults do not disclose their abuse or report their abuse to authorities. For this reason, Police Record Checks form only part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's broader approach to safeguard children and young people.

It is important to note that a criminal record does not automatically exclude a person from working or volunteering in the Archdiocese and is only part of the assessment process.

From a child safety perspective, criminal history information is useful in assessing whether a person:

- may pose a risk to children and young people (and others)
- is unsuitable to perform the inherent requirements of a role.

It is not an act of discrimination to find a person unsuitable for a particular role if the person is unable to perform the inherent or essential requirements of a role.

Who is required to undertake a Police Record Check?

All Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne clergy and employees are required to undertake a Police Record Check.

Police Record Checks are required for those applying for, or volunteering in specific roles and/or activities that involve children and young people within Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities.

While all volunteers in Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities are required to undertake a WWC check, not all volunteers are required to undertake a Police Record Check. A person with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration need not undergo a separate Police Record Check as this is accommodated as part of the VIT registration process.

As per the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's [National Police Record Check Policy](#), and advice provided by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited, there are a range of other roles for volunteers, that require a Police Record Check. They include:

- roles which work directly with children (understanding that some offences do not prohibit obtaining a WWC check)
- roles involving management and oversight of people and/or the entity's resources
- roles which represent the entity with external bodies and groups even when there are no child related activities occurring. For example:
 - home visits
 - visits to community support agencies (e.g. disability support centres)
 - visiting special care facilities (e.g. refuges, hospitals, aged care facilities)
- roles which have access to facilities after hours or without formal supervision
- roles which have financial responsibility and handle money e.g. records and/or financial management with access to personal information about families, children and young people (e.g. name, address, date of birth, family circumstances)
- a member of a board, council or committee
- roles involving the transportation/driving of adults and children
- roles involving overnight stays (e.g. camps, interstate or overseas trips).

Parish, agency and entity safeguarding committees are required to consider the inherent requirements of each volunteer role and assess the potential risks to children and young people to determine whether a Police Record Check is required for specific roles and/or activities that will be performed by volunteers on behalf of the parish, agency or entity.

Parish, agency and entity safeguarding committees are encouraged to seek advice from the Safeguarding Unit if they require any assistance in determining the need for a Police Record Check for specific volunteer roles.

Example

A parish group is considering hiring a bus driver to transport young people from nearby secondary schools to a community centre to serve meals to the homeless. In addition to an interview process, a Working with Children (WWC) check, and a current and valid Victorian Driver's Licence, the parish group would like to ensure that the person chosen for this position is able to perform their duties in a safe way.

Criminal history information can provide additional and relevant information to assist the volunteer group to assess the suitability of candidates. In assessing the suitability of candidates, the volunteer group will need to select the candidate who is most likely to be able to 'drive young people safely' to the community centre. When reviewing candidates, criminal history information about driving offences may assist the parish group to select a suitable candidate.

Though a traffic history report is not a compulsory requirement of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework, a parish, agency or entity may choose to request this from Church personnel who are performing driving responsibilities in addition to the standard Police Record Check, to assess whether they are suitable to perform the requirements of their role. To apply for a traffic history report visit the [VIC Roads website](#).

When is a Police Record Check required?

A Police Record Check is a 'point in time' check that is only valid on the day it is issued. Police Record Checks are required upon commencement and every three (3) years.

In the interim period, while a Police Record Check has not yet been obtained, the person is required to complete the [**TEMPLATE: National Police Check \(Police Record Check\) Statutory Declaration Form v2.0**](#).

For parish volunteers, if you have obtained a recent Police Record Check within the last three months of your commencement date, this will be accepted.

A National Police Check (Police Record Check) can be obtained through Victoria Police [Apply for a National Police Check | Our services | Victoria Police](#)

Ongoing obligation to disclose relevant criminal history information

In addition, in the interim period prior to the next Police Record Check, those who are subject to a Police Record Check are required to inform their head of entity if they are charged with or convicted of any criminal offence which is, or may reasonably be regarded as:

- relevant to their position
- relevant to the inherent requirements of their position
- posing a risk to children and young people.

The requirement to disclose any relevant charges and convictions to their head of entity, is included in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct.

Review process for criminal history information

All criminal history record information e.g. disclosable outcomes, will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Should a history of criminal offences be revealed through this process, this matter may be directed for guidance and assessment of convictions or charges that may pose a risk to children, young people and others, to:

- the head of entity
- the Vicar General
- the Safeguarding Unit
- Human Resources.

An assessment of criminal history information will be based on the following principles:

- the relevance of the offence(s) to the requirements of the role
- the nature of the offence(s) and its relationship to the particular role and the values of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne parish, agency or entity
- the role and its involvement with children, young people and vulnerable persons
- possible risks to children, young people and vulnerable persons
- the time elapsed since the most recent offence
- the scope of the criminal history (e.g. whether there is evidence of an extended criminal history indicating a pattern of behaviour)
- the number and frequency of offences (e.g. to establish a pattern of behaviour)
- whether the offence(s) was committed as an adult or as a juvenile
- the severity of the punishment imposed
- whether an offence is still a crime or whether the offence has been decriminalised
- the person's character since the offence(s) was committed
- other mitigating factors that may be relevant for consideration.

Clergy, employees and volunteers will be informed in writing of the issues of concern and the information that has been disclosed through the Police Record Check process and will be provided with an opportunity to provide further information or dispute any disclosable outcomes.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne will undertake a risk assessment process to determine:

- whether the person is able to meet the inherent requirements of the role
- possible risk posed to children and young people
- whether the person can be appointed or continue in their position.

The person will be notified in writing of the outcome of the risk assessment and provided with support if they are unable to continue in their role.

Requirements for those who have previously resided overseas

People who have resided outside Australia for 12 months or longer over the past five years are required to obtain a National Police Check (Police Record Check) for all countries of citizenship and for each country the applicant has lived in for 12 months or longer.

This requirement applies to:

- employees
- applicants for employment
- specific volunteer roles – see the ‘Who is required to undertake a Police Record Check’ section of this document
- overseas priests
- priests
- seminarians who have undertaken study overseas
- visiting clergy.

If a particular Police Record Check cannot be obtained from a particular country, as per Department of Home Affairs advice, it is necessary to obtain a statutory declaration that outlines efforts made to obtain a foreign police check and a disclosure of any charges or spent convictions related to serious sexual, violent or drug related offences.

Parish, agency and entity responsibilities in relation to Police Record Checks

Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities must sight the original Police Record Check document and maintain a register of all national criminal record checks including the person’s name, date of birth, position, police certificate reference number, date of issue and renewal date to ensure that checks are undertaken for all relevant roles every 3 years.

Visiting clergy

Visiting clergy from outside the Archdiocese who wish to provide ministry or religious services within the Archdiocese of Melbourne, are required to complete an Application for Faculties - Short Term Ministry and receive permission to minister before providing any ministry or religious service in the Archdiocese. Please see <https://visitingclergy.melbournecatholic.org/>

Related documents [National Police Record Check Policy](#)