

Waipu Primary Police Vetting Policy for Parent/Caregiver Volunteers

Policy

This policy allows Waipu Primary School (WPS) Board of Trustees (BOT) to have confidence that its parent/caregiver volunteers are of suitable character to volunteer in an environment that includes young people.

For the purpose of this policy a parent/caregiver volunteer means a person who volunteers to participate in a school activity, during which they have contact with a child/children without a parent or guardian of the child/children being present (e.g. school camps and day trips, music lessons, Christian education lessons).

The purpose of police vetting is to minimise the likelihood of WPS students being put at risk by individuals who may have displayed behaviour that could be detrimental to their safety and wellbeing, in accordance with the WPS Health and Safety policy and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

This policy is due for review at Feb 2019

Operational Procedures

These procedures apply only to parent/caregiver volunteers as outlined above. All parent/caregiver volunteers at WPS are required to undergo a police vet. This police vet must be applied for and received by WPS prior to parent participation in school activities i.e. before the person has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to students at the school during normal school hours or at any time during extracurricular activities, on school camps and day trips.

All parent/caregiver requests to attend school camps and trips will be subject to a satisfactory police vet. To avoid dispute about what satisfactory means, this should be discussed with the prospective parent/caregiver in terms of what the board considers this may mean. In general, a satisfactory police vet is one that does not contain any offences which indicate that:

- a) a person may jeopardise the safety of children, that is, a conviction for sexual offences or offences involving violence
- b) the person may be a harmful example for children, for instance, convictions involving possession or supply of drugs
- c) a person is not suitable for the particular job, for instance, fraud/theft convictions if the job involves handling money

A police vet may not be undertaken on anyone under the age of 17 years; therefore, anyone under the age of 17 will not be eligible to be a parent/caregiver volunteer at WPS.

The cost of the police vet will be covered by the parent/caregiver applicant at the time they submit their application; WPS will not submit a police vet application on behalf of a parent/caregiver unless payment has been made in full.

Every applicant must submit a police vetting request and consent form, a copy of which will be kept by BOT Secretary for a period of three years. The request and consent form must be dated no older than three months prior to the police vet being completed.

The BOT Secretary will record the outcome of the police vet on a secure electronic file with adequate controls.

Any unsatisfactory police vet will be referred by the BOT Secretary to the Principal and the BOT Chairperson who will subsequently make an in-committee recommendation to the BOT. The applicant will be informed that this is occurring and will have the right to check the accuracy of any information contained in the police vet. It will remain the applicant's responsibility to dispute the accuracy of any information contained in a police vet and a reasonable length of time will be allowed for this, i.e. three weeks. The applicant must advise the Principal of the intention to dispute the accuracy of the police vet within three days of being advised of the outcome of the police vet.

Police vets which will be referred to the Principal and the BOT Chairperson include but are not limited to police vets identifying any of the following offences:

- a) any offence specified under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- b) conviction(s) for a crime in which children were involved
- c) offence(s) of violent or sexually exploitive behaviour
- d) conviction(s) concerned with the possession, use or supply of drugs
- e) offence(s) relating to fraud or dishonesty
- f) driving offence(s) – this is mainly concerned with placing a proviso on allowing transportation of students and covers offences that may have resulted in disqualification, e.g. excessive speeding offences, driving while disqualified, driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs etc.

The Principal and the Chairperson of BOT have the delegated authority of the BOT to make a recommendation regarding the outcome of the police vet result and each decision will be considered on a case by case basis. In the event of non-agreement, the matter will be put to the full BOT for consideration and a vote.

The Principal or BOT will not take adverse action in relation to a person who is the subject of a police vet until the person has validated the information contained in the vet, or the person has been given a reasonable opportunity to validate the information but has failed to do so within a reasonable period.

The result of a police vet may raise issues and it is up to the BOT as an employer to decide if the information gained indicates that they must act. Care will be taken that a fair process is followed if the BOT is considering any action.

Following an unsatisfactory police vet, the following will be considered, with independent advice as required, when determining whether an individual is suitable to be a parent/caregiver volunteer:

- a) the nature of the offence and relevance to the activity the parent/caregiver volunteer will be participating in
- b) length of time since the crime was committed
- c) age and maturity now as compared to when the crime was committed, the seriousness of the crime e.g. length of sentence, use of a weapon, the circumstances at the time of violent behaviour
- d) pattern of crime, e.g. a short spate may indicate a “phase” but a regular pattern may indicate continuing inappropriate behaviour
- e) the proximity of the person undergoing vetting to WPS student(s), including whether or not they are likely to have unsupervised access to students

Police vets are valid for a period of three years. A register will be kept by the BOT Secretary of current approved parent/caregiver volunteers, recording the dates that the parent/caregiver volunteers’ police vets expire. The BOT Secretary will advise parent/caregiver volunteers six months prior to the date that their police vet will expire to enable them to apply for a new police vet before the existing one expires.

The information obtained in the police vet is confidential and will be treated in the same way as an employee’s personnel file. All information regarding a police vet, including the applicant’s request and consent form and the notification of the police vet outcome, will be available only to the Principal, the BOT and the BOT Secretary; all relevant information will be kept securely to maintain confidentiality, in accordance of WPS standard protocols regarding confidential information.

Timeframe

The WPS policy for parent/caregiver police vetting will be introduced in term one 2018. 2018 will be considered a year of transition. All parent/caregiver volunteers will be required to have a valid police vet from term four 2018, in time for senior camps.

To assist the implementation of the above policy, the BOT will manage initial applications. During the first five weeks of term two, Y5/6 parents/caregivers may apply; during the second five weeks of term two Y3/4 parents/caregivers may apply. Y1/2 parents/caregivers may then apply from the beginning of term three. This will help the transition to be completed smoothly prior to term four camps and excursions.

Waipu Primary Police Vetting Procedure for Parent/Caregiver Volunteers

1. Potential parent/caregiver volunteer obtains a police vet request and consent form from the BOT secretary at WPS
2. Potential parent/caregiver volunteer completes police vet request and consent form and submits it to the BOT secretary at WPS. At this time the applicant is required to provide two forms of approved ID, as per the police vetting guidelines, which must be sighted and verified by the BOT secretary
3. At the time of lodging the police vet request and consent form, the potential parent/caregiver volunteer makes payment in full to the BOT secretary at WPS
4. Upon receipt of a completed police vet request and consent form, having verified two forms of approved ID and having received full payment, the BOT Secretary will submit the application to the police for processing
5. Upon receipt of a satisfactory completed police vet, the BOT Secretary will contact the applicant by phone to advise them of the outcome and confirm that they are eligible to be a parent/caregiver volunteer at WPS for the three-year duration of their current police vet
6. Upon receipt of an unsatisfactory completed police vet, the BOT Secretary will advise the Principal and BOT Chairperson of the outcome. The Principal will then contact the applicant personally to advise them of the outcome and discuss their options, as outlined in the WPS Police Vetting for Parent/Caregiver Volunteers policy
7. The BOT Secretary will record the outcome of the police vet electronically and file any paperwork securely