

Is it a safe place for our kids?

A guide for parents, November 2014.

As a parent or carer you play an important role in making sure your kids are spending time in places that are safe. This guide will help you look out for 'child safe' places.

What is a 'child safe' place?

Child safe means making sure the place where our kids spend time is safe from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm or abuse. A child safe place will have rules that are set up to make sure our kids are kept safe.

Parents have a right to know who is working with their children.

It is your business to know who is working with your children. Every day kids around NSW spend time with adults outside of their home. This can be at places like a sports club, youth group centre, or a drama studio. As a parent or guardian you need to understand what organisations should be doing to keep your child safe.

It is the law that people who work with your children including many tutors, nannies, coaches and counsellors have a current Working With Children Check. However, there is much more an organisation can do to keep kids safe.

Understanding the Working With Children Check.

In NSW all people who are working with your children (as well as a number of volunteers) need to have a current NSW Working With Children Check clearance number.

Some people don't have to get a Working With Children Check number, such as a parent that volunteers in an activity that involves their own child e.g. a sports coach. The Check provides either a clearance or a bar to work with children.

It is a crime for a person with a bar to work or volunteer with children.

How do you know they have a Check?

Parents and guardians are now able to 'verify' if the person working with their child (under 18) has a Working With Children Check. When we say 'verify', we mean parents can check online.

By checking online you will instantly see if the person is allowed to work with your child. Also, if they become a 'barred' person we will let you know. You will however need to know their details, including their name, birth date, application or clearance number.

What parents can do.

It is the law for bosses to check or verify online that their workers and volunteers have a current Working With Children Check clearance number. So you don't need to check a person who is employed but if your child has a coach or tutor that you pay directly you can go online to verify a Working With Children Check.

How to verify a WWC online

To verify, follow these simple steps:

- STEP 1** Ask the person who works with your child for their surname, date of birth and WWCC or APP number.
- STEP 2** Go to www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check and click on this blue button:
- STEP 3** Under Verify, click the Individuals (e.g. parents) Verify button.
- STEP 4** Complete the form, including the reason why you are checking the person (e.g. sports coach, dance teacher etc)
- STEP 5** Click **Submit**.
- STEP 5** You will receive the outcome by email.



What else can I do as a parent?

While a Working With Children Check can be an important step in making a place 'child safe', it's no guarantee that your child is safe. Before picking an activity or service for your child, find out what they do to help protect the children who are using their service. You can question them about how they keep children safe. You can also ask them if all their staff have had their Working With Children Checks verified online.

If the person is self-employed, you can ask for their WWCC number. You can then go online to verify their Working With Children check number. It's always good to become familiar with the place where your child spends time. You can always speak to other parents whose children use the service and see what they think.

You can also drop in at an unexpected time and see for yourself if it's a safe place for kids. However, the best advice is to always talk to your kids. Ask your children about their experiences and let them know you are interested in what they do. This helps kids feel they can tell you when things aren't going well or they have any worries.

Reporting your concerns - Child protection Helpline

If you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse or neglect, contact the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.

Kids Helpline

A counselling service for Australian children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years. You can call **1800 55 1800**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or go to www.kidshelp.com.au If you would like to know more about Child Safe Organisations go to www.kids.nsw.gov.au

NSW Ombudsman

If you have any queries, comments or complaints about a child related government or non-government service provider call the NSW Ombudsman on **02 9286 1000** or go to their website www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Police Assistance Line

The Police Assistance Line (**131 444**) operates 24hrs a day, 7 days a week.