

Rationale

Under Part 3 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, all children's workers must be police vetted as part of a safety check. A children's workers are anyone whose work involves regular or overnight contact with children, takes place without parents or guardians being present, and is paid or undertaken as part of an educational or training course. A New Zealand police vet must be obtained before the children's worker starts work.

Under Section 319 of the Education Act 1989, a police vet must be obtained for anyone appointed to work during normal opening hours. *Sistema Waikato* must apply for a police vet no later than 2 weeks after the person begins work at the service and it must be obtained before the person has unsupervised access to children. A police vet will also be obtained for every volunteer who has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children during normal opening hours.

Purpose

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, both those enrolled and those volunteering in the programme.

Guidelines

- Police vetting will be carried out by the Police Licensing and Vetting Service Centre.
- Police vetting is required for all staff and management directly employed in the *Sistema Waikato* programme in any capacity, who have access to the children or the children's information. This includes staff on the site such as food preparation staff, volunteers and administration staff.
- Volunteers do not need to be police vetted under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 or the Education Act 1989. However, *Sistema Waikato* recognises the importance of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children at all times and consequently will police vet all volunteers working on the programme during session times.
- Vetting will be carried out prior to appointment of an employee or volunteer.
- Compliance with the standards precludes the employment of any person in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those in management positions, who has a conviction for sexual crimes or for any offence involving the harm or exploitation of children.
- *Sistema Waikato* is not required to request a police vet for a teacher who has been issued a current practicing certificate or limited authority to teach by the Education Council. This is because the Council will only approve a practising certificate or authorisation once a police vet has been obtained and considered to be satisfactory as per Education Council policy.
- As the results of a police vet are strictly confidential, only the requestor may open the returned information.

- If the police vet shows that a person has been convicted of an offence specified under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, the person cannot be employed or engaged as a core children's worker, unless they have an exemption.
- A person who has been police vetted will be allowed to see the results, and have the opportunity to correct anything that isn't accurate.
- **Staff only:** If the vetting information indicates an issue of concern, the requestor will provide a copy of the police vet to the applicant who will be asked to validate the information.
- If the applicant is unable to disprove the information, the requestor will inform them that any offer of employment will be withdrawn.
- **Volunteers:** If the vetting is unsatisfactory, the requestor will inform the applicant and discuss alternative volunteer opportunities that do not involve contact with children.
- Vetting is repeated at least every three years.
- Vetting reports will be kept on file and old reports will be destroyed when they are updated.
- Those under the age of 17 years cannot be police vetted; however, *Sistema Waikato* can still employ staff aged under 17 years as long as they have been reference checked.
- Staff under 17 years and volunteers who are not vetted must be supervised at all times.
- All information collected will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993 or any other enactment.
- *Sistema Waikato* will maintain a record of the following information in relation to police vetting:
 - The date of the initial vet
 - Date of the most recent vet
 - When the next vet is due
 - Whether the results were satisfactory or unsatisfactory