



Procedure

Working with Children Check – Blue cards

Audience

All state schools

Implementation date: 08/01/2019

Version: 3.4

Purpose

The Working with Children Check – Blue cards procedure sets out the way in which the department will comply with its responsibilities under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) in relation to employment and volunteer arrangements.

This procedure sets out:

- the types of work that require a person to hold a blue card
- the way in which the department manages blue cards
- the responsibilities of blue card holders and other persons.

Overview

To ensure the department complies with its responsibilities under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#), the department applies Blue Card Services' employment screening process in relation to employment and volunteer arrangements in the department.

Specific information on blue card requirements can be found on the Queensland Governments Blue Card Services website: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au.

Unless otherwise exempt under a statute or order (as outlined below), all paid employees who present for work to undertake child-related employment or activities, require a blue card if their duties include, or are likely to include, providing services directed mainly towards a child or children, or conducting activities that involve contact with children for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, for over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month, over six months.



The department considers that all casual school-based employees require a blue card as they will work (or will likely work) the minimum frequency requirements above. Responsibilities and processes in this procedure that apply to departmental employees also apply to casual school-based employees.

Volunteers require a blue card prior to commencing child-related work or activities irrespective of the frequency of the work.

The [Working with Children \(Risk Management & Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) provides an exemption from the blue card requirements for any person who is a registered teacher or police officer or health practitioner (who is registered as a registered health practitioner in accordance with the [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#) and who works with children as part of their professional duties.

However, in certain circumstances registered teachers, police officers or registered health practitioners may need to apply to Blue Card Services for an Exemption card (refer to definitions) if they provide child-related services, either in a volunteer, paid or self-employed capacity, that are not part of their normal employment. Examples of such work may include coaching at a local sporting club or tutoring services.

Instrumental music instructors are not exempt from the blue card requirements of this procedure.

A fact sheet providing helpful information in relation to blue card requirements for specific employee groups working in child-related employment or activities is provided at [Who needs a blue card?](#)

Additional information can also be found on the [Blue Card Services website](#).

Responsibilities

Departmental employees

- All departmental employees must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Employees must self-fund their initial blue card application. Subsequent blue card renewal applications will be funded by the department. The [Government paid employee blue card application](#) form can be found on OnePortal under [Human resources](#) (DoE employees only).
- If the person already holds a blue card and is taking up a new paid or voluntary position please complete a [Link an applicant/cardholder to this organisation for government employees](#) form, (formerly known as the Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form).
- Paid employees who do not yet have a blue card may commence work in child-related employment (refer to definitions) upon lodgment of their blue card application with Blue Card Services. The blue card application must be lodged as soon as the employee commences work.
- Employees must ensure that their blue card does not expire at any time, including during periods of absence from duty (i.e. leave).
- Employees must immediately notify [Blue Card Services](#) AND their principal/DP/BM or manager as soon as they become aware that their police information (refer to definitions) has changed (e.g. if they have been charged or convicted of a criminal offence).

- If a blue card is suspended or cancelled, or if the employee is issued with a negative notice, the employee CANNOT commence or continue working in child related employment or services.
- If an employees' blue card expires, the employee CANNOT continue to work in child-related work or services until a renewal application has been lodged with Blue Card Services.
- Employees must, within 14 days, notify [Blue Card Services](#) and their principal/DP/BM or manager of the following:
 - when their blue card and/or positive notice has been lost or stolen, using the [Card/notice letter lost or stolen form](#)
 - when they change their name or contact details, using the [Update contact details form](#)
 - when their employment ends, using the [No longer with organisation \(for applicants/cardholders\) form](#)
- More information about an employee's responsibilities under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) can be found on the [Blue Card Services website](#).

Volunteers

- Volunteers must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Volunteers (18 years or older) and trainee students need a blue card PRIOR to commencing child related work or activities if their work or practical placement in a school includes, or is likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children, or conducting activities mainly involving children, unless an exemption applies.
- For example, the following volunteers may be exempt:
 - a volunteer parent of a child enrolled at the school, or
 - a legal guardian of a child enrolled at the school

In addition to the above exemptions, a blue card is not required if the person is a:

- volunteer guest of a school or recognised body and are:
 - observing or supplying information or entertainment to ten or more people, and
 - the activity is for ten days or less on no more than two occasions per year, and
 - the person is unlikely to be alone with a child without another adult present.
- volunteer at a national or state event organised by a school or recognised body:
 - for a sporting, cultural or skill based activity, and
 - the event is attended by more than 100 people, and
 - the work is for ten days or less on no more than two occasions per year, and
 - the person is unlikely to be alone with a child without another adult present.
- A volunteer requires a blue card irrespective of the frequency of the child related work.
- Volunteers must ensure that their blue card does not expire at any time, including during periods of absence from duty.

- If a blue card held by a volunteer expires, the volunteer cannot continue to work in child related work until the volunteer has been issued with a new blue card by Blue Card Services.

Regional Human Resources (HR) officers

- Regional HR officers must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Regional HR officers must report monthly on the number of employees who require a Working With Children Check (blue card), or renewal of their blue card that are recorded as having expired and immediately notify the principal/DP/BM or manager of the relevant school or business unit (refer to definitions) to request that a blue card application/renewal is completed, signed and lodged with Blue Card Services immediately.
- Regional HR officers must take action to contact schools or business units directly to ensure that any paid employee who does not have a current blue card is removed from child-related employment (refer to definitions) until a blue card application/renewal has been lodged with Blue Card Services.
- Regional HR officers must also report monthly on the number of employees who have a blue card due to expire within the next 60 calendar days and immediately notify the principal/DP/BM or manager of that school or business unit to request that a renewal application is lodged prior to the expiry date.
- Regional officers must ensure that the blue card information obtained during the monthly reporting processes, (i.e. from OneSchool data and/or information provided directly by the school), is recorded and updated in the department's TSS (The Solution Series) payroll system.
- Regional HR officers notified by a principal or Blue Card Services of a negative notice, must immediately notify and seek advice from the Integrity and Assessment team.
- Regional HR officers must ensure that all job advertisements, job descriptions and letters of appointment for positions requiring a blue card state the following:

"The [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) requires a person in this position to hold a blue card."

Principals/DPs/BMs or managers

- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure that all paid employees commencing employment undergo a Working with Children Check screening by Blue Card Services, by ensuring they complete and submit one of the following:
 - a) for employees without a blue card – complete and submit a [Government paid employee blue card application form](#) (DoE employees only) to ensure the new employee undergoes a Working With Children Check (blue card) screening by Blue Card Services

OR

 - b) for employees starting child-related employment who already have a current and valid blue card; or employees who have recently applied for a blue card –

complete and submit a [Link an applicant/cardholder to this organisation for government employees form](#) (DoE employees only) to ensure employees who already have a current blue card, or have recently submitted a blue card application (whether the employee was previously employed by another Government Department, outside organisation, or transferred, promoted or seconded from another school or non-school business unit), are linked on Blue Card Services database to their new school or workplace.

- Principals/DPs/BMs must maintain blue card information for all paid employees and volunteers in the OneSchool system (under 'Staff Accreditations' > 'Suitability Card').
- For individuals/businesses or contractors that are unable to be recorded in the OneSchool database, the Principal/DP/BM or manager must maintain a register of blue card information for ALL other individuals/businesses/contractors that regularly provide services directed mainly towards a child/children, or regularly conduct activities that involve contact with a child/children.
- Managers in work areas other than schools must maintain a register of all employees who regularly undertake child-related employment or activities. These employees may include regional office staff such as regional systems technicians who regularly visit schools, field officers who regularly visit Early Childhood Education and Care Centres or training officers who regularly visit schools or other facilities in relation to apprentices or trainees who are under the age of 18 years.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure that all volunteers and trainees (including volunteer student teachers and practical placement teachers) have a valid blue card BEFORE they perform duties directed mainly towards a child/children or conduct activities that involve contact with a child/children.
- **NOTE** : While principals/DPs/BMs or managers are not responsible for organising a blue card for a trainee/student teacher engaged through a Group Training Provider (GTP) or education provider, it is the principals/DPs/BMs or managers responsibility to ensure a valid blue card is held by the individual before they commence work.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure that if a volunteer (who has a volunteer blue card) is engaged in paid child related employment, then they must submit a [Volunteer to paid employment transfer form](#) to Blue Card Services.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must take timely action to ensure all blue card renewal applications are lodged with Blue Card Services PRIOR to the expiry date.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure that, in the event that an employees' blue card expires, that a renewal application is lodged immediately with Blue Card Services. **Employees' with an expired blue card MUST NOT be engaged in child related employment until the blue card renewal application has been lodged with Blue Card Services.**
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure that if a volunteer's blue card expires, the volunteer MUST NOT be engaged in child related employment until such time as the volunteer is issued with a new blue card from Blue Card Services.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must take **immediate** and appropriate action, on a case-by-case basis, when they are notified that an employee or volunteer has had their blue card suspended or cancelled, or if the employee has been issued with a negative notice. Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must **immediately notify** the department's Integrity and Assessment team. Principals/DPs/BMs or managers **must ensure** that any employee, volunteer, or contractor/individual issued with a negative notice, or suspended or

cancelled blue card, **is not engaged in child-related employment**. Please refer to the [Flowchart](#) and the [Risk Management Strategy](#).

- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must **immediately** notify the department's Integrity and Assessment team as soon as they become aware that an employee or volunteer's police information (see definitions) has changed (e.g. if they have been charged or convicted of a criminal offence), or if the employee has been issued with a negative notice, or had their blue card cancelled or suspended.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must advise applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form in accordance with the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#), Part 4, section 174.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must sign the declaration on the application form stating the applicant has been warned of offences and verifies that the applicant has signed the declaration confirming they are not a disqualified person, before the application is lodged.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers **MUST sight and verify** the blue card **applicant's identifying documents** and ensure the name on the form matches their identification.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must ensure blue card applications are managed in accordance with the [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#) by ensuring that:
 - the application forms have a covering sheet while being processed in the school/business unit
 - if an application is faxed to Blue Card Services, the original is posted immediately
 - the school/business unit updates the employees OneSchool records and/or TSS payroll data noting the date the application has been made, however copies of the application are not to be retained.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers **MUST NOT** sign any forms (i.e. payroll commencement form, blue card renewal form, blue card 'link' form) to verify that they have sighted an employee or volunteer's blue card, if they have not yet done so.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must manage Negative Notices, and blue card cancellations and suspensions in accordance with the [Blue Card Risk Management](#) strategy.
- Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must advise Blue Card Services that an applicant/cardholder is no longer undertaking child-related activities with their school by submitting an [Applicant/cardholder no longer with organisation \(for organisations\) form](#).

Officers of Employee Relations

- Must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Review this procedure at least annually.
- Take immediate and appropriate action in relation to a person's employment when notified by the Integrity and Assessment team of a change in police information, a negative notice or blue card cancellation or suspension.

Officers of Integrity and Capability

- Must not contravene the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).
- Take immediate action when notified by a Principal/DP/BM or manager that an employee or volunteer's police information (see definitions) has changed (e.g. if they have been charged or convicted of a criminal

offence) or, that the employee has received a negative notice or their blue card has been suspended or cancelled.

Process

To assist Principals/DPs/BMs or managers to meet their obligations under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) a [blue card process flowchart](#) is provided as a guide for when individuals are engaged in their school or business unit in child-related employment or activities.

The flowchart steps out the blue card process requirements:

- for engaging new employees and volunteers in child-related employment or activities
- for managing existing employees and volunteers.

The blue card process requirements contained in the flowchart are detailed below.

Appointing new employees

When engaging a person as a paid employee in child-related employment or activities:

Q: Consider whether the person has either a current blue card, a blue card application in progress, or an exemption card application in progress?

If yes, complete the [Link an applicant/cardholder to this organisation for government employees form](#).

The paid employee can commence work once the link applicant/cardholder form has been submitted to Blue Card Services.

If no, complete the [Government paid employee blue card application form](#).

A paid employee can commence work once the application form has been submitted to Blue Card Services.

Engaging volunteers

A volunteer **cannot commence** working in a school until they have been issued with a blue card from Blue Card Services confirming that they have received a positive screening clearance.

The current blue card must be **sighted and verified** by the principal/DP/BM or manager on the Blue Card Services website by entering the cardholder's details and card number.

Maintaining accurate records

Principals/DPs or BMs must ensure that the blue card information for ALL employees and volunteers is entered and maintained in the OneSchool database.

Managers in non-school locations who engage employees or volunteers in child-related employment or activities must ensure that a register of current blue card information is maintained.

Managing existing employees and volunteers

An application to renew the blue card of an employee or volunteer must be submitted PRIOR to the blue card expiry date.

If a blue card for an employee or volunteer expires, the following action must occur:

For paid employees

- the employee must be removed from child-related employment or activities until a renewal application is completed, signed and lodged with Blue Card Services.

For volunteers

- the volunteer must be removed from child-related work or activities until a new blue card has been issued by Blue Card Services and verified by the principal/DP/BM or manager.

Transitioning from volunteer to paid employee status

A person who was previously engaged by the department as a volunteer (who has a volunteer blue card) must submit a [Volunteer to paid employment transfer form](#) to Blue Card Services **within 14 days of becoming a paid employee**.

Verifying and confirming blue cards

Employees and volunteers who hold a valid blue card must comply with a lawful and reasonable request by a principal/DP/BM or manager to produce their blue card for verification.

Employees and volunteers who hold a blue card must comply with any request from their principal/DP/BM or manager to complete a [Link an applicant/cardholder to this organisation for government employees form](#) when it is lawful and reasonable for the department to do so.

Principals/DPs/BMs or managers must use [Blue Card Services online validation tool](#) available on the Blue Card Services website, to check and confirm the validity of an employee or volunteer's blue card.

Performing duties without a blue card

Paid employees may commence child-related employment or activities without a blue card if they have already lodged a [Government paid employee blue card application form](#) and they have not had a negative notice issued upon them by Blue Card Services.

Volunteers **may not undertake** child-related work or **activities without a blue card**.

Suspended and cancelled blue cards or negative notices

If the blue card of an employee or volunteer is suspended, cancelled or the person is issued with a negative notice, the principal/DP/BM or manager must IMMEDIATELY REMOVE THAT PERSON from performing child-related employment or activities and must immediately contact the Integrity and Assessment team.

Change in police information

Any employee or volunteer who is engaged in child-related work or activities and who has a change in their police information must immediately complete the applicant/card holder sections of Blue Card Services [Change in police information](#) form and immediately provide this form to their principal/DP/BM or manager for submission.

On being notified of an employees' change in police information, the principal/DP/BM or manager must complete the organisation sections of the [Change in police information](#) form provided by the employee/volunteer and immediately submit the form to Blue Card Services.

NOTE: The employee/volunteer cannot be engaged in child-related employment or activities until the form has been lodged.

The principal/DP/BM or manager must **immediately notify the Integrity and Assessment team** of the change in police information.

Definitions

Blue card	<p>A blue card is a plasticised card issued by Blue Card Services, upon an applicant receiving a positive screening notice from Blue Card Services. A blue card is valid for 3 years from the date of issue and displays the following information about the blue card holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the person • the registration number of the person • the expiry date of the person's positive notice • the signature of the person.
Business unit	<p>An example of a departmental business unit may be a regional office work area that employs staff such as regional systems technicians who regularly visit schools, field officers who regularly visit Early Childhood Education and Care Centres or, training officers who regularly visit schools or other facilities in relation to apprentices or trainees who are under the age of 18 years.</p>
Child/children	<p>A person under the age of 18 years.</p>
Child-related work/employment or activities	<p>Employment or services conducted in the department are regarded as child-related if the usual functions of the employment or services include or are likely to include —</p> <p>(a) providing services that are directed mainly towards children, or</p> <p>(b) conducting activities that mainly involve children.</p> <p>In DoE, such work or activities predominantly occur in schools but may also occur in other locations, for example, in relation to Early Childhood Education and Care and, Training in relation to trainees and apprentices under the age of 18 years.</p>
Employee	<p>A person (including a casual employee) employed by the Department of Education.</p>
Exemption card	<p>An exemption card is a plasticised card, issued to a registered teacher, police officer or registered health practitioner allowing them to undertake child-related services that are not part of their normal employment, such as private tutoring of a child, work in a child care centre, volunteering at a children's sporting club, participating in a homestay or reading program or supervising after hours school care.</p>

Positive notice	A notice issued by Blue Card Services which permits a person to perform child-related employment or activities.
Negative notice	A notice issued by Blue Card Services which prevents a person from performing child-related employment or activities.
Police information	Any information issued by the Police Commissioner which may include an individual's criminal history and investigative information.
Parent	<p>A parent is a child's mother, father or someone else, other than the chief executive (child safety), who has or exercises parental responsibility for the child however a person standing in the place of a parent on a temporary basis is not a parent for the child.</p> <p>A parent for an Aboriginal child includes a person who, under Aboriginal tradition, is regarded as a parent of the child.</p> <p>A parent of a Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who, under Island custom, is regarded as a parent of the child.</p>
Registered health practitioner	<p>Includes medical practitioners, nurses and midwives, podiatrists, psychologists, optometrists, osteopaths, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.</p> <p>Note: Speech and language therapists are not registered health practitioners and therefore REQUIRE a blue card.</p>
Volunteer	An unpaid worker performing child-related work or activities for the department.

Legislation

- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) Chapter 8
- [Criminal Law \(Rehabilitation of Offenders\) Act 1986 \(Qld\)](#) Parts 1-14
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Public Service Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#) Chapters 1-4

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- Nil

Related procedures

- [Student protection](#)
- [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection](#)

Guidelines

- Nil

Supporting information/websites

- [Blue card - Risk management](#)
- [Blue card flowchart](#)
- [Blue card forms](#)
- [Payment of blue card fees](#)
- [Who needs a blue card?](#)

Contact

For further information, please contact:

Human Resources - Integrity and Employee Relations Unit

- **Employee Relations**
Phone: (07) 3513 6518
Email: EmployeeRelations.HUMANRES@qed.qld.gov.au
- **Integrity and Assessment – Conduct and Complaints**
Phone: (07) 3055 2950
Email: conductandcomplaints@qed.qld.gov.au

Blue Card Services

Phone: 1800 113 611 (8am to 5pm Monday – Friday)

[Blue Card Services website](#)

Review date

27/01/2017

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

- 2.0 Working with Children Check – Blue Cards
- 3.0 Working with Children Check – Blue Cards

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