



# Guidance notes: blue card requirements

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## Purpose

This guidance note provides basic information about blue card and exemption card requirements for people wishing to work with children and young people (aged under 18 years) in a congregational setting within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Church). Additional information may be obtained from the blue card website [bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://bluecard.qld.gov.au) This is a general guide only and if you need specific advice please contact the Synod office.

The blue card system:

- is a key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children and young people in Queensland
- aims to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people by contributing to the creation of safe and supportive environments
- is founded on the principle that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.\*

**Before** any person can work with children and young people, an appropriate screening process must be undertaken. The church screening process includes the requirement that you hold a current blue card, complete a written application and declaration, participate in an interview/conversation about your application, and provide the names of two people we can speak with to confirm your suitability to safely work with children.

If you don't require blue card screening within one category, you might still need screening under another. Please check all categories.

## Congregation members

### **Which form?**

A blue card application (BC) is required for the following positions

### **Who does this apply to?**

#### **Church council**

Every church council member in congregations which conduct activities or services for children requires a blue card or exemption card.



## **Volunteers, students, employees**

Every volunteer, student, and trainee student and paid employee of the congregation who works with children and young people in the congregation setting must hold a blue card or exemption card, unless an exemption applies.

## **Health practitioners**

Registered health practitioners require a blue card if the work they are doing with children and young people in the congregation does not relate to their function as a registered health practitioner.

## **Police and teachers**

The Exemption card application (E) is used for police officers and registered teachers who work with children in the congregation. These people need to apply for an exemption card if they are providing child-related services which are outside of their professional duties.

## **Retired ministry agents**

When retired from active ministry, and working with children and young people in the congregation setting, retired Reverends, Deacons, Deaconesses, Ministers in Association or Pastors Stream Bs must hold a blue card or exemption card.

## **What if I already have a card?**

Where an individual has a blue card prior to commencing services within the congregation, they are required to complete the Authorisation to confirm a valid card application.

## **Who is the organisation's contact person?**

The church council chairperson is to be reflected as the organisation's contact person on the application form of **every other council member and individual** working with children and young people in the congregational setting.

The **church council chairperson must reflect the church council secretary** as the organisation's contact person on their application form.

## **When can I commence working with children?**

Unless a particular exemption applies you may NOT commence volunteering with children until such time as the church council receives the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services.

A paid employee may commence employment whilst waiting for their blue card or exemption card.

## **Ministry agents not remunerated by stipend (fortnightly payments)**

### **Which form?**

Any person engaged as a paid or unpaid employee as a ministry agent, and who is not remunerated, or eligible to be remunerated by stipend, is required to complete the Blue card application (BC).

### **Police and teachers**

Police officers and registered teachers who work with children in the congregation need to apply for an exemption card if they are providing child-related services which are outside of their professional duties. The Exemption card application (E) is to be used in this instance.

### **What if I already have a card?**

Where an individual has a blue card or exemption card which is linked organisation, prior to commencing their role they are required to complete the Authorisation to confirm a valid card application.

### **Who is the organisation's contact person?**

Every individual engaged under this category as a paid or unpaid employee within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, **must** reflect the employing body's nominated person as contact person on the application form (e.g. Presbytery Chair). The employing body must inform the general secretary (or his/her nominated representative) of notices from Blue Card Services to enable appropriate governance actions.

### **When can I commence working with children?**

Unless a particular exemption applies you may NOT commence volunteering with children until such time as the church council receives the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services.

A paid employee may commence employment whilst waiting for their blue card or exemption card.



## Ministry agents remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend (monthly payments)

### **Which forms?**

Any person remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend (and/or engaged in or available for supply ministry) is considered, for the purposes of blue cards, to be a person carrying on (or proposing to carry on) a regulated business and is required to complete the [Blue card business application \(BCB\)](#). People engaged in this way are also required to complete the [Authority to liaise with an authorised person form](#) which authorizes Blue Card services to discuss information with the Associate General Secretary.

### **Police and teachers**

Police officers and registered teachers who are engaged in this way are required to complete the [Exemption card business application \(EB\)](#).

### **What if I already have a card?**

Where an individual has a blue card or exemption card which is linked to a different organisation, prior to commencing their placement with the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, they are required to complete the [Authorisation to confirm a valid card application](#).

### **Who is the organisation's contact person?**

Every individual engaged in this way must reflect the general secretary as the organisation's contact person on the application form. If they are or become engaged in a secondary placement within an agency (other than congregational activities) the ministry agent must complete the **Authorisation to confirm a valid card application** naming the contact person relevant to the agency.

### **When can I commence working with children?**

A person proposing to carry on a regulated business must not commence providing child-related activities until they hold a valid blue card, i.e. the general secretary has received the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services.

## Frequently asked questions

### **How much does it cost?**

Blue cards for volunteers and trainee students are valid for three years and there is no application fee, unless the trainee student is a paid employee.

Business blue cards and blue cards for paid employees are valid for three years and the prescribed application fee is \$84.25 at the date of this publication.

### **What exemptions apply?**

Volunteer parents are exempt under certain categories when providing services or conducting activities that relate to their own children. This exemption is overruled if the parent is a church council member (in a congregation conducting activities for children and young people).

Volunteers under 18 years are exempt from requiring a blue card unless they are a trainee student doing a practical placement as part of their studies with an education provider (i.e. candidate for ministry).

### **What is a disqualified person?**

Certain people are prohibited from applying for or renewing a blue card. Find out more information about disqualified persons on the Blue Card Services website [bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://bluecard.qld.gov.au)

### **What about when someone leaves?**

When someone moves on from the role they hold working with children, the organisation must notify Blue Card Services within 14 days, using the [Applicant/cardholder no longer with organisation \(for organisations\)](#).

### **What about people from interstate and overseas?**

People making application prior to coming to Queensland must provide on their application form, details of their anticipated place of residence and contact details in Queensland.

### **What if the presbytery chairperson or presbytery minister is not paid by stipend?**

In circumstances where the presbytery chairperson or presbytery minister is not paid by stipend, they are required to complete the [Authorisation to confirm a valid card application](#), and must reflect the general secretary as the organisation's contact person on the application form.



## **What about presbytery standing committee members?**

Every presbytery standing committee member in presbyteries which conduct activities or services for children requires a blue card or exemption card.

For existing blue card or exemption card holders, the details of the card must be made available for validation on the Blue Card Services website [bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://bluecard.qld.gov.au) and noted in the presbytery's Blue card register.

Where an individual has a blue card or exemption card which is linked to a different organisation, prior to commencing their membership on the presbytery standing committee, they are required to complete the [Authorisation to confirm a valid card application](#).

Where an individual has no current blue card or exemption card prior to commencing their membership on the presbytery standing committee, they are required to complete the [Blue card application \(BC\)](#).

For all applicants, the organisation's contact person on the application form is the presbytery chairperson.

## **Where can I find out more?**

To find out more, you can contact the Safe Ministry (children) administrator, via email at [safeministrywithchildren@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:safeministrywithchildren@ucaqld.com.au) or visit the Blue Card Services website at [bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://bluecard.qld.gov.au)

### Document Review History

Version Number	Date	Reason	Aurthor/reviewer	Approved
1.0	19.08.2015	Created to support Safe Ministry with Children policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Ministry (children) administrator</li> <li>• General counsel</li> <li>• Risk &amp; Insurance manager</li> </ul>	Associate general secretary
1.1	25.07.2016	Updated to align with changes to Blue Card Services website and forms which are valid till December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Ministry (children) administrator</li> <li>• General counsel</li> </ul>	General Secretary
Due	25.02.2017	Review cycle – every year aligned with Blue Card Services review of documents.		