



commission for  
children and young people  
and child guardian

# Understanding the blue card

## The Commission

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian is an independent statutory authority which promotes and protects the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland.

The work of the Commission is regulated by the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (the Commission's Act).

The Commission's Act fosters the creation of safe service environments for children and young people in Queensland by requiring written child protection risk management strategies, including ensuring that people who work with children in certain businesses, paid or voluntary employment undergo the Working with Children Check.

## What is the Working with Children Check?

The Working with Children Check, also known as the blue card, is a detailed national criminal history check including:

- any charge or conviction for an offence, whether or not a conviction is recorded
- whether a person is a respondent to or subject to an application for a child protection prohibition order or disqualification order, or
- whether a person is subject to reporting obligations under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*.

The Commission also considers disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations for:

- teachers
- child care service providers
- foster carers
- nurses
- midwives, and
- certain health practitioners

In addition, information from police investigations into allegations of serious child-related sexual offences will be taken into account, even if no charges were laid because the child was unwilling or unable to proceed.

A person whose application is approved is issued with a positive notice letter and a blue card.

If a person's application is refused, they are issued with a negative notice which prohibits them from carrying on a business or providing child-related activities in the categories regulated by the Commission's Act.

## Can anyone apply for a blue card?

Only people providing essential and developmentally focused services directed mainly towards children regulated by the specific categories in the Commission's Act are required to hold a blue card.

However, certain people are disqualified **upfront** from applying for a blue card. Penalties apply where a 'disqualified person' signs a blue card application form.

For information on who is a 'disqualified person' see the 'Obligations for applicants/blue card holders' and 'Disqualification from applying for or holding a blue card' information sheets available on the Commission's website.

## Who needs a blue card?

### Paid employees and volunteers

If you work as a paid employee or volunteer with children and young people in any of the following areas, you may need a blue card:

- residential facilities
- school boarding houses
- schools (other than teachers and parents)
- child care
- churches, clubs and associations involving children
- health, counselling and support services
- private teaching, coaching or tutoring
- education programs conducted outside of schools (ie. alternative education programs for students suspended from school or flexible schooling arrangements)

- child accommodation services, including home stays
- religious representatives
- sport and active recreation
- emergency services cadet programs
- school crossing supervisors, and
- carers of children under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, eg. foster and kinship carers.

To see if you need a blue card, check the requirements of each category which are applicable to the child-related activity you are involved in. The requirements and exemptions differ for each category.

For more information about these categories, go to [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) or call the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

### Person carrying on child-related business

If you carry on a child-related business in any of the following areas, you may need a blue card:

- health, counselling and support services
- private teaching, coaching and tutoring
- child care
- education programs outside of schools
- religious representatives
- child accommodation services, including home stays
- sport and active recreation (ie. providers of sporting camps and programs - excludes amusement parks)
- operators of hostels for rural children, and
- businesses relating to licensed care services under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

To see if you need a blue card, look at whether the nature of your child-related activity meets the requirements of the categories above.

## Is anyone exempt from requiring a blue card?

To see if you are exempt, check the requirements of each category which is application to child-related activity you are involved in. Exemptions are category specific and even if you are exempt under one category, you may still require a blue card under another category.

For more information about exemptions see the Commission's website at <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/employment/bluecard/categories.html> or call the Blue Card Contact Centre.

## How often do I have to work with children and young people to need a blue card?

### If you are a paid employee

You must apply for a blue card if you work (or are likely to work) in regulated child-related activities within 12 months for at least:

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

It is important to note that you can start or continue working in child-related employment while awaiting the outcome of your blue card application, provided the application has not been withdrawn.

### If you are a volunteer

**Before** you begin volunteering in regulated child-related activities, you must hold a valid blue card.

However, if you are a volunteer guest of a school or recognised body, you do not need a blue card if:

- you are volunteering for 10 days or less, no more than twice a year, and

- it is for the purpose of observing, supplying information or entertainment to 10 or more people, and
- they are unlikely to be with a child while no other adult is present.

Also, if you are a volunteer at a state or national event, you do not need a blue card if the event is:

- organised by a school or recognised body, and
- being held at state or national level for a sporting, cultural or skill-based activity, and
- attended by more than 100 people, and

you are:

- providing the service for 10 days or less, no more than twice a year, and
- unlikely to be with a child while no other adult is present.

### If you are a person carrying on a regulated business

**Before** you can start regulated work, you must hold a valid blue card, regardless of how often you come into contact with children and young people.

You also need to develop and implement a written risk management strategy to protect children from harm in your particular service environment. This strategy must be reviewed and updated annually.

For more information on child protection risk management strategies, see the Risk Management section of the Commission's website at [http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/about/risk\\_management.html](http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/about/risk_management.html) or call the Blue Card Contact Centre.

## How do I apply for a blue card?

Blue card application forms are available from the Commission's website at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au)

If you would like a form posted to you or would like more information about which form to complete, call the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

You should select the relevant application form, depending on the nature of your child-related activities. For example, a volunteer will complete a

Volunteer Blue Card Form (**V**), while a paid employee will need to complete a Paid Employee Blue Card Form (**P**).

The Commission has developed 'How to apply' information sheets which are available on the Commission's website at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au).

### How long is a blue card valid?

A blue card is valid for two years from the date it is issued, unless cancelled earlier.

### How do I renew my blue card?

The Commission notifies existing blue card holders 16 weeks prior to the expiry of a current blue card.

If your blue card has expired (or is about to expire) and you intend to continue working in regulated child-related employment, you must complete a blue card renewal application and lodge it with the Commission.

If you lodge a renewal application with the Commission at least 30 days prior to the expiry of your current card, you can continue carrying on regulated child-related activities while your application is being processed, provided:

- that your current card has not been suspended or cancelled, and
- your renewal application has not been withdrawn.

### How much does a blue card cost?

Applications (including renewals) for volunteers and students are processed free of charge. However, paid employees and business operators must pay the prescribed application fee.

For more information, refer to the schedule of fees available on the Commission's website.

### What if I change my name/contact details?

Blue card applicants, card holders and people issued with a negative notice and who have applied for the cancellation of the negative notice, must notify the Commission of a change to their name or contact details within 14 days of the change occurring.

Notification forms are available from the Commission's website at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) or by calling the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

## What do I do if my blue card is lost or stolen?

Blue card holders must notify the Commission within 14 days if their blue card has been lost or stolen.

The 'Blue card lost or stolen' form is available from the Commission's website at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) or by telephoning the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

## What if I stop working in work requiring a blue card before it is processed?

If you are still awaiting the outcome of your application, you must notify the Commission within 14 days if you stop working in regulated employment (paid or voluntary).

If a person carrying on a regulated business ceases working or the contact details of the business change the business operator must notify the Commission within 14 days.

These forms are available from our website at [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au) or call the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

## Can I use the blue card for more than one child-related activity?

Yes. A blue card can be used for any of the activities listed by the Act. However, if you are working with more than one organisation, you should complete an 'Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card/application' form. This is available from the Commission's website. This form provides your consent to the Commission to confirm the validity of your blue card to a nominated person.

## Is the blue card a guarantee of safety?

The Working with Children Check is **only one** component in a suite of strategies the government supports to promote safe environments for children and young people.

Although the blue card is a vital child protection mechanism, it is no guarantee of a person's safety around children, and is no substitute for vigilance by parents and the community or implementing appropriate risk management strategies to protect children and young people from harm in service environments.

Employers and businesses regulated by the Act must have a child protection risk management strategy in place to promote the safety and wellbeing of children in their care.

The risk management strategy must include the following elements:

- a) a policy with a statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- b) a Code of Conduct for interacting with children and young people
- c) recruitment, training and management procedures for staff (including appropriate employment screening – ie. blue cards and registers of staff who hold blue cards)
- d) reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm
- e) consequences to staff for not complying with policies
- f) policies and procedures for meeting blue card requirements
- g) risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- h) strategies for communication and support such as:
  - information for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, and
  - training materials and strategies to help staff, volunteers and parents identify risks of harm.

More information is available from the Commission's website at [www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au](http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au) or by calling the Blue Card Contact Centre on **3211 6999** or **1800 113 611**.

### Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

**Street address:** Level 17, 53 Albert Street  
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### Blue Card Contact Centre:

**Office Hours:** 8:00am – 5:00pm  
Monday to Friday

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**Fax:** 07 3035 5910

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