

BLUE CARD PROCEDURE



1 Scope

This procedure applies to Rockhampton Regional Council activities that engage with or provide services to children therefore requiring relevant employees, volunteers and consultants to hold and maintain a blue card or exemption card.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- (a) Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- (b) Ensure compliance with legislative requirements; and
- (c) Outline the process for managing blue cards or exemption cards.

3 Related Documents

3.1 Primary

Blue Card Policy

3.2 Secondary

Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Blue Card Register

Change in Police Information Notification Form

Change of Name Form

Code of Conduct

De-Link a Person to your Organisation

Discipline Procedure

Eligibility Declaration Application Form

Exemption Card Application Form

Link a Person to Your Organisation

Paid Employee or Job Seeker Blue Card Application or Renewal Form

Pre-Employment Screening Policy and Procedure

Volunteer or Student Blue Card Application or Renewal

Volunteer to Paid Employment Transfer Form

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4 Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Blue Card	A card issued by Blue Card Services to people performing child-related activities regulated by the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i> .
Blue Card Register	A register that records details of blue cards and exemption cards held by employees and volunteers (excludes consultants).
Change in Police Information	Includes: (a) Any charged or conviction for an offence, whether or not a conviction is recorded; (b) The existence of police investigative information relating to allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid; (c) Being the subject of an application for a disqualification order (i.e. an order that prohibits a person from holding or applying for a blue/exemption card); (d) Being a respondent to an application for offender prohibition order under the <i>Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004</i> ; or (e) Becoming subject to reporting obligations or a child protection offender prohibition order under the <i>Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004</i> ; or a disqualification order; or a sexual offender order.
Consultant	A person who is engaged externally by Council whose expertise is provided on a temporary basis, usually for a fee.
Contact Person	The appointed administration officer within the Community Services Directorate Office who manages the blue card and exemption card process within Council.
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
Disqualified Person	As defined in section 17 of the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i> : A person is a disqualified person if the person: (a) Has been or is convicted of a disqualifying offence; or (b) Is subject to: (i) Offender reporting obligations; or (ii) An offender prohibition order; or (iii) A disqualification order; or (iv) A sexual offender order; or (c) Is the respondent to an application for an offender prohibition order under the Offender Reporting Act. However, a person to whom subsection (1)(a) applies and subsection (1)(b) and (c) do not apply is not a disqualified person if an eligibility declaration is in force for the person.
ECM	Enterprise Content Management. Council's electronic document and records management system.
Employee	Local government employee: (a) The Chief Executive Officer; or (b) A person holding an appointment under section 196 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Exemption Card	A card issued to registered teachers and police officers who provide services that fall outside of their professional duties.

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Volunteer	Any person, who of their own free will, offers to undertake un-paid work for Council and is accepted as a volunteer by the Chief Executive Officer and/or their authorised delegates.
W&G	Workforce and Governance

5 Procedure

Under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* persons performing work defined as regulated employment must hold a blue card or exemption card.

5.1 Commencement of Regulated Employment

5.1.1 Employees

Requirements to hold and maintain a blue card are listed as a condition of employment and outlined in appointment letters and position descriptions.

Employees are required to possess a blue card before being appointed to a position – in accordance with Blue Card Services ‘No Card, No Start’ rule.

5.1.2 Volunteers and Consultants

It is the responsibility of volunteers and consultants to maintain their blue card or exemption card.

Volunteers and consultants are not engaged to undertake child-related activities until the relevant supervisor has been provided with a photocopy of the blue card or exemption card and has confirmed online validation via the Blue Card Services website.

If the blue card or exemption card fails the online validation the volunteer or consultant is not engaged.

5.2 Appointment and Engagement

The following forms must be completed to ensure Council is registered as the current employer. This enables Council to receive notification of any ‘change to status information’ or ‘change in police information’ for blue card holders:

- (a) Paid Employee or Job Seeker Blue Card Application or Renewal Form;
- (b) Exemption Card Application Form;
- (c) Link Person to your Organisation Form; or
- (d) Volunteer to Paid Employment Transfer Form.

5.2.1 Employees

W&G provides prospective and existing employees with the appropriate forms in accordance with paragraph 5.2.

For employees with no current blue card or exemption card, W&G ensures required identification (original copies) is sighted, photocopied, certified by a Justice of the Peace and the relevant section completed on the Paid Employee or Job Seeker Blue Card Application or Renewal Form.

Employees are not appointed to a position until receipt of their blue card or exemption card.

For employees with an existing blue card or exemption card, W&G sights the original, takes a photocopy of the card, and completes the online validation via the Blue Card Services website and arranges completion of a Link Person to Your Organisation Forms.

Where a document is in a former name, an original official document (for example, marriage certificate or change of name certificate) showing the change of name must be sighted.

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W&G forwards the online validation check outcome and documents to the contact person for processing in accordance with paragraph 5.4.

5.2.2 Volunteers and Consultants

It is the volunteers and consultant's responsibility to apply for and maintain their blue card or exemption card.

5.3 Renewal

5.3.1 Employees

A renewal notice is issued by Blue Card Services directly to the employee 10 weeks prior to the expiration date.

The contact person provides supervisors with a reminder of cards due for renewal within the unit.

The employee completes the Paid Employee or Job Seeker Blue Card Application or Renewal Form and submits to their supervisor within 30 days of the date of issue.

The supervisor will ensure a certified copy of ID is submitted with the application form.

Where a document is in a former name, a Change of Name Form must accompany the form along with a certified copy of the original document showing applicant's name change.

The supervisor forwards all documents to the contact person for processing in accordance with paragraph 5.4.

Should a renewal application be forwarded **after** the expiry date, the employee is not permitted to undertake child-related activities until the new card arrives.

5.3.2 Volunteers and Consultants

It is the volunteers and consultants responsibility to maintain and renew their blue card or exemption card. The contact person provides supervisors with a reminder of cards due for renewal.

5.4 Processing Applications

The contact person processes all employee blue card and exemption card renewal applications and blue card and exemption cards applications for existing employees.

Upon receiving an application, the contact person:

- (a) Ensures all necessary supporting documentation has been received;
- (b) Conducts an online validation check on the Blue Card Services website for renewal applications;
- (c) Conducts online payment of application fee;
- (d) Completes payment option section on form;
- (e) Uploads the form online;
- (f) Files original documentation in a locked file; and
- (g) Electronically forwards documentation to W&G to be registered in the employee's personnel file in ECM.

5.4.1 Notification of Renewal

Monitoring of notices for cards issued is undertaken via Blue Card Services organisational portal, upon which Council's Blue Card Register will be updated with card holder's renewed details.

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5.4.2 Negative Notice

If a renewal application is not approved, the contact person receives a negative notice from Blue Card Services. The contact person notifies the relevant manager, supervisor and W&G and records the non-approval in the Blue Card Register.

The supervisor notifies the employee and liaises with the manager and W&G to ensure the employee does not continue to undertake child-related work within Council. The employee is immediately suspended and is required to 'show cause' why their employment should not be terminated. The employee remains on a suspension until the discipline process is finalised.

If Council continues to employ the person to perform work that is not child-related, Council will ensure appropriate actions are taken to manage any risks of harm to children and young people that may arise as a result of the person's ongoing employment.

5.4.3 Consultants

As Council is not registered as a current employer for consultants, it is the responsibility of the consultant to notify the relevant supervisor if a negative notice is received.

The supervisor terminates contracts with a consultant immediately if a negative notice is received.

5.5 Disqualified Person

5.5.1 Disqualification Notice

It is an offence for a disqualified person to apply for or renew a blue card/exemption card.

Blue Card Services provides the following notice at the top of the application form:

Important notice: If you are eligible to apply for a blue card (please see disqualified person and negative notice holder definitions on page 4), continue to complete this application. If you are not eligible, do not complete this form. Disqualified persons must complete an Eligibility Declaration and negative notice holders must complete the Application to Cancel a Negative Notice if two years have passed since the negative notice was issued.*

5.5.2 Eligibility Declaration

A disqualified person may, in certain circumstances, apply for an eligibility declaration under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* using the Eligibility Declaration Application Form.

Blue Card Services only issue an eligibility declaration, if satisfied the case is an exceptional one in which the best interests of children would not be harmed by allowing the person to apply for a blue card. A person who has been or is convicted of a disqualifying offence is not a disqualified person if issued an eligibility declaration which has not expired.

5.6 Change in Police Information

Blue Card Services receives a daily update from the Queensland Police Service on blue card or exemption card holders, including those with an application in progress.

If an employee, volunteer or consultant has a change in police information the following is completed:

- (a) The person must immediately notify Blue Card Services that their police information has changed;
- (b) The person completes the Change in Police Information Notification Form and forwards to the supervisor immediately (failure to lodge this form is an offence and the person may be subject to a penalty); and
- (c) The supervisor notifies the manager and W&G and forwards the Change in Police Information Notification Form to the contact person to process in accordance with paragraph 5.4.

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Once lodged, Blue Card Services will reassess the eligibility for the person to hold a blue card and advises the contact person of the outcome. The contact person advises the manager, supervisor and W&G (for employees only) and finalises the application depending on a positive or negative notice (refer to paragraph 5.4).

5.6.1 Undertaking Child-Related Work

Once a person has advised of a change in their police information, the supervisor ensures the person does not continue to undertake child-related work within Council, until the Change in Police Information Notification Form has been lodged to Blue Card Services (Council may choose not to engage them for child-related work until notification has been received from Blue Card Services).

The employee may be suspended from the workplace and may be required to 'show cause' why their employment should not be terminated. The employee may remain on a suspension until the discipline process is finalised.

If Council continues to employ or engage the person to perform work that is not child-related, it ensures appropriate actions are taken to manage any risks of harm to children and young people that may arise as a result of the person's ongoing employment or engagement with Council.

5.7 Cessation of Child-Related Work for Council

Council is required to notify Blue Card Services if an existing blue card holder employee, volunteer or consultant ceases working in child-related work.

The supervisor notifies the contact person who submits a Delink a Person from Your Organisation Form. within 14 days of the employee ceasing child-related work for Council.

W&G advises the contact person via email of 'cessation' or 'advice of staff movement' for employees for the Blue Card Register to be updated.

6 Review Timelines

This procedure is reviewed when any of the following occur:

- (a) The related information is amended or replaced; or
- (b) Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the General Manager Community Services.

7 Document Management

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Quality Control	Legal and Governance

OUR VALUES



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