



# Working with children authority procedure

Version: 1.3 | Version effective: 16/12/2021

## Audience

Department-wide

## Purpose

This procedure sets out the Department of Education's (the department's) approach to managing working with children authorities in order to ensure compliance with its obligations under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#) (the Act).

## Overview

The department identifies the safety of children as an area of lowest appetite for risk and is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all children. As part of this commitment:

- all persons working with children must hold, and maintain, a valid working with children authority at all times (unless otherwise exempt); and
- all schools, education and care service centres and departmental worksites where services are delivered to children, must implement a [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy](#) (CYRMS) to identify and minimise risk of harm to children.

This procedure outlines responsibilities and processes for working with children authority verification, ongoing monitoring and risk management strategies in accordance with the Act. The procedure details the working with children authority requirements prior to, during and following a person working with children.

A working with children authority means a working with children clearance (commonly referred to as a blue card) or a working with children exemption (commonly referred to as an exemption card).

It is to be read in conjunction with the department's [Working with children authority guidelines](#) that provide further information regarding who needs an authority.

## Responsibilities

### Persons required to hold a blue card or exemption card

Under the Act, the following people are required to hold a valid **blue card** if they are likely to work more than seven (7) days in a calendar year:

- Any paid employee (excluding teachers and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity) if their work falls under a category of regulated employment under the Act;
- All volunteers 18 years of age and older (unless they are a parent of a child attending the school); and
- Students enrolled in a tertiary course and undertaking practical placements in regulated employment as part of their studies.

A valid **exemption card** is required to be held by teachers likely to work more than seven (7) days in a calendar year in [Education and Care Services](#) (when children are present), or teachers working or volunteering with children in other regulated services outside of the school, such as participating in a homestay program, supervising after hours school care, or private tutoring of a child.

The department considers that **all school-based casual, temporary, permanent employees, and school-based volunteers and trainee students in regulated employment will meet the seven (7) day threshold** and must hold a valid working with children authority. It is noted that any hours performed on any given day equates to one (1) day for the purpose of the seven (7) day threshold.

The department's [Working with children authority guidelines](#) provide further information regarding who needs a working with children authority in compliance with the Act.

### Prior to working with children

- Other than teachers, and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity, all persons seeking to work for the department in [regulated employment](#) with children must:
  - apply for, fund and obtain a blue card (or exemption card) prior to engaging in work with the department (refer to [Blue Card Services](#) regarding the relevant application process); and
  - provide evidence of their blue card (or exemption card), as prescribed by the department, when applying for the role.
- For completeness, teachers and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity must hold registration as a teacher with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCoT) or registration as a health practitioner with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

### Working with children

- Other than teachers, registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity, and volunteer parents of a child attending the school, all persons likely to work more than seven (7) days\* in a calendar year in regulated employment must:
  - hold a valid **blue card** (including during periods of absence e.g. leave);
  - verify their identity and blue card for compliance purposes when requested;
  - renew their blue card prior to its expiry;

- update their contact details with Blue Card Services within 14 days of the change;
- immediately advise Blue Card Services if there has been a [change in their police information](#); and
- comply with [notification requirements](#).

*\*The department considers that all casual, temporary and permanent school-based employees in regulated employment (including school-based volunteers and trainee students) will meet the seven (7) day threshold and therefore must hold a valid blue card.*

- Teachers and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity must hold valid QCoT or AHPRA registration at all times during their employment for the purpose of satisfying the exemption requirements of the Act.
- However, teachers likely to work more than seven (7) days\* in a calendar year in Education and Care Services (including State Delivered Kindergarten programs) must:
  - Hold, or have applied for, a valid **exemption card** (including during periods of absence e.g. leave);
  - verify their identity and exemption card for compliance purposes when requested;
  - renew their exemption card prior to its expiry;
  - update their contact details with Blue Card Services within 14 days of the change;
  - immediately advise Blue Card Services if there has been a [change in their police information](#); and
  - comply with [notification requirements](#).

*\*The department considers that all casual, temporary and permanent teachers in Education and Care Services will meet the seven (7) day threshold and therefore must hold, or have applied for, a valid exemption card.*

### **Principals and Regional/Central Office Managers (and nominated officers as directed by the Principal or Regional/Central Office Managers)**

- Ensure that all persons required to hold a blue card (or exemption card):
  - are aware of, and comply with, the responsibilities and requirements of this procedure;
  - are verified and validated via the [Blue Card Services online validation tool](#);
  - are linked by their blue card (or exemption card) to the school or departmental worksite, upon commencement, for Blue Card Services notifications;
  - [renew their blue card](#) (or exemption card) prior to its expiry; and
  - are immediately removed from working with children in regulated employment in circumstances where their blue card (or exemption card) is no longer valid (e.g. expired, suspended or cancelled). Note: this responsibility cannot be delegated to a nominated officer.
- Maintain a register of all persons required to hold a blue card (or exemption card) in OneSchool (schools) or TSS (regional/central office).
- Notify Blue Card Services of all persons who cease regulated employment with the school or departmental worksite.
- Ensure that a restricted person is not knowingly employed or continues to be employed, in restricted employment.

- Implement the department's CYRMS for their school/departmental worksite where children are present.
- Ensure registered teachers and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity hold valid QCoT or AHPRA registration at all times during their employment for the purpose of satisfying the exemption requirements of the Act.

### Human Resources Business Partnering (HRBP)

- Provide regional support to the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager and the Integrity and Employee Relations team where required to assist with compliance activities and the immediate removal of persons from the workplace in the event of expired, suspended or cancelled blue cards.

### Human Resources – Integrity and Employee Relations

- Monitor blue card compliance via the Blue Card Services Organisation Portal and weekly reporting through departmental systems (OneSchool/TSS).
- Report on persons with pending blue card (and exemption card) expiry dates and notify those persons (and their Principal or Central/Regional Office Manager) to ensure blue cards (or exemptions cards) are renewed prior to expiry.
- Upon receipt of any change in blue card (or exemption card) status for persons required to hold a blue card (or exemption card), immediately notify the:
  - relevant Principal or Central/Regional Office Manager; and
  - relevant HRBP team.
- Manage non-compliance by assessing, referring and taking appropriate action regarding the person's employment to address an employee's charge, conviction or change in blue card (or exemption card) status.
- Develop the department's CYRMS for implementation by Principals and Regional/Central Office Managers at their school/departmental work site and perform an annual review of the [CYRMS](#) to ensure compliance with legislative obligations under the Act.

## Process

The department's approach to managing working with children authorities is based on the Blue Card Services system. The system is designed to consider past, present and future risks of harm to children consisting of three elements: Initial verification, ongoing monitoring and overarching risk management strategies.



Image 1 Process flow chart

## 1. Blue Card Verification

### Prior to working with children

- Prior to engaging a person to work with children in a school/departmental site, the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must:
  - Verify the identity of the person by sighting their photographic identification documentation (e.g. driver's licence/passport);
  - Confirm the identification documentation accurately reflects the person's full name, date of birth and signature (for cards issued prior to 31 August 2020) or photograph (for cards issued after 31 August 2020) as recorded on the person's blue card (or exemption card);
  - Confirm the current validity (and expiry date) of the person's blue card (or exemption card) via [Blue Card Services online validation tool](#). Note: exemption cards issued prior to 31 August 2020 (which do not have an expiry date printed on the card) will have a deemed expiry date of 31 August 2023; and
  - For teachers and registered health practitioners working within their professional capacity, verify and confirm the validity of the QCoT or AHRPA registration.
- Once the person's blue card (or exemption card) has been validated, the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must notify Blue Card Services of their engagement by lodging the relevant [Link form](#) (DoE employees only).
- The Link form must be submitted immediately upon the person's engagement and ensures that the Principal or Central/Regional Office Manager is notified by Blue Card Services of any change in status of the person's blue card (or exemption card).
- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must not knowingly employ or continue to employ a restricted person in restricted employment. [Penalties apply](#) for non-compliance.

### Transferring from a 'volunteer' [V] blue card – to a 'paid' [P] blue card

- A volunteer blue card holder proposing to undertake regulated employment in a paid capacity must transfer from a volunteer (V) blue card to a paid (P) blue card.
- Volunteer cardholders must:
  - Complete the '[Volunteer to paid employment transfer form](#)' (Transfer Form) and present to the Principal/Central Office Manager to complete section 2 of the Transfer Form;
- Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must:
  - Verify the volunteer blue card in accordance with section 1.1 Prior to working with children.
  - Complete section 2 of the Transfer Form and sign declaration.
- Volunteer cardholder must:
  - [Pay the application fee online](#) via the Blue Card Services website;
  - Submit completed form to Blue Card Services; and
  - Provide evidence of the submission of the Transfer Form (including Blue Card Services receipt of the Transfer Form) to the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager.
- Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must:
  - Update the Blue Card Register in accordance with section 2.1 Blue card (and exemption card) register.
- Please note submission of the Transfer Form by the volunteer cardholder establishes the link to the school/work unit. A separate Link Form is not required in this instance.
- Volunteer card holders can commence paid work, upon submitting a Transfer Form to Blue Card Services (subject to a valid volunteer card being verified and registered in accordance with this section).
- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must not knowingly employ or continue to employ a restricted person in restricted employment. [Penalties apply](#) for non-compliance.

## 2. Monitoring

### Blue card (and exemption card) register

- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must maintain accurate blue card records including the person's name, blue card number, expiry date, and any relevant renewal or linking notifications, in a blue card register (One School > Staff Accreditations for school-based persons; and TSS Payroll for non-school based employees).

### Renewing blue cards (or exemption cards)

- Persons who require a blue card (or exemption card) must renew their blue card (or exemption card) every three years by completing a [Renewal Application](#).
- Renewal must occur prior to the expiry date and can be submitted up to 16 weeks before the blue card (or exemption card) expiry date.
- Evidence of the renewal application must be provided to the person's Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager, prior to the expiry of the blue card (or exemption card) confirming the renewal application has been submitted prior to the expiry date.

- Paid employees, volunteers, and trainee students may continue working as long as they submit their renewal application prior to the expiry date of their current blue card (or exemption card).
- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must:
  - proactively identify all expiring blue cards (and exemption cards) at the beginning of each term and actively engage with the employees, volunteers and trainee students concerned to complete their renewal application;
  - actively respond to all notifications from Integrity and Employee Relations advising of employees with pending blue card (and exemption card) expiry dates by engaging with the employees concerned to complete their renewal application;
  - pay the blue card renewal application fee [online](#) for existing employees who are required to hold a blue card for their role. Exemption cards and volunteer blue cards are free of charge. Note: the former payment method of direct invoicing is no longer available;
  - provide the payment receipt details to the employee which can be used by the employee for their renewal application; and
  - update the blue card register (in OneSchool/TSS) upon receipt of the person's evidence of the renewal application being submitted to Blue Card Services prior to the expiry date.

### Removing a person from regulated employment - expired/suspended/cancelled blue cards (or exemption cards)

- In circumstances where a person's blue card (or exemption card) has expired, is suspended or is cancelled, the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must:
  - **immediately** remove the person from regulated employment; and
  - thereafter, contact their HRBP team for advice regarding the ongoing management of the person's removal from regulated employment.
- The HRBP team will liaise with, and support, both the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager and the Integrity and Employee Relations team regarding the person's removal from regulated employment and any resulting decisions that impact upon their ongoing employment.
- Integrity and Employee Relations will take **immediate** action in relation to a person's employment following the expiration, suspension or cancellation of a blue card (or exemption card) and liaise with both the HRBP team and the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager to give effect to such action.
- Once a blue card has expired, the person must hold a valid blue card (not just a pending application) before they can recommence working with children in regulated employment.
- Once the employee, volunteer or trainee has obtained their new blue card the Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must verify and link the new blue card to their place(s) of work in accordance with this procedure.
- Exemption card applicants (teachers with current Queensland College of Teachers' registration) can commence or recommence in regulated employment as soon as their exemption card application has been submitted to Blue Card Services and the employer links the applicant to their organisation(s).

### Ceasing regulated employment (delinking)

- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must notify Blue Card Services when a blue card (or exemption card) holder is no longer undertaking regulated activities with the school/departmental worksite.
- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must complete the [Applicant/Cardholder no longer with organisation](#) form and submit the form to Blue Card Services.
- The notification to Blue Card Services must be provided upon the person's cessation of employment (for each place of employment).
- A Principal or Regional/Central Office Manager must update their blue card register (in OneSchool/TSS) to reflect the change.

### 3. Managing risk

- Integrity and Employee Relations must develop a [CYRMS](#) for implementation by Principals and Regional/Central Office Managers at their school or departmental worksite where children are present.
- The purpose of the CYRMS is to document processes, policies and procedures in place that help to create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people and identify and minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.
- The CYRMS must address eight mandatory requirements:
  - A statement of commitment;
  - A code of conduct;
  - Policies for recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees (including volunteers);
  - Procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm;
  - A plan for managing breaches of your child and youth risk management strategy;
  - Policies and procedures for compliance with the blue card system;
  - A risk management plan for high risk activities and special events; and
  - Strategies for communication and support.
- Integrity and Employee Relations will review the CYRMS annually, during term 4 of each year, for implementation by Principals and Regional/Central Office Managers the following school year.
- Principals and Regional/Central Officer Managers implement the CYRMS by ensuring all staff are aware of their obligations under the CYRMS and comply with those obligations at all times.
- Following review, a new CYRMS will be published and made available to Principals and Regional/Central Office Managers for implementation each year at their school or departmental work site.
- Blue Card Services may request a copy of the CYRMS at any time. Failure to comply with the requirement to have a CYRMS is an offence under the Act.



## Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Blue card</b>	<p>A blue card is a plasticised card issued by Blue Card Services, upon an applicant receiving a working with children check clearance from Blue Card Services. A blue card is valid for 3 years from the date of issue (unless suspended or cancelled earlier) and displays the following information about the blue card holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the registration number of the person;</li> <li>• the expiry date of the person's working with children check clearance; and</li> <li>• the signature of the person (for people who applied before 31 August 2020); or</li> <li>• the photograph of the person (for people who apply after 31 August 2020).</li> </ul>
<b>Blue Card Services</b>	Blue Card Services administers the blue card system: Queensland's Working with Children Check.
<b>Cancelled blue card</b>	A blue card/exemption card is cancelled if the holder is convicted of a serious or disqualifying offence.
<b>Child/children</b>	A person under the age of 18 years.
<b>Disqualified person</b>	<p>A person is a disqualified person if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have been or are convicted of a <a href="#">disqualifying offence</a>;</li> <li>• are a reportable offender under the <a href="#">Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004 (Qld)</a>;</li> <li>• are the subject of an offender prohibition order under the <a href="#">Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008 (Qld)</a>;</li> <li>• are prohibited by a court from applying for or holding a blue card; or</li> <li>• are the subject of a sexual offender order under the <a href="#">Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003 (Qld)</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Disqualifying offence</b>	A disqualifying offence is an offence provided at s. 168 of the <a href="#">Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</a> .
<b>Education and care service</b>	<p>Education and care service means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each place an education and care service operates, or is going to operate, other than a family day care service</li> <li>• a family day care service's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ office</li> <li>○ approved venue</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ area(s) used to provide education and care to children as part of the day care—or the areas used to provide access to these parts of the residence.</li> </ul> <p>Education and care service includes kindergarten services delivered by the state (i.e. State Delivered Kindergarten) whether delivered at an individual kindergarten site or as a composite class in a school setting.</p>
<b>Employee</b>	A person employed by the Department of Education in paid employment.
<b>Exemption card</b>	For the Department of Education, an exemption card issued by Blue Card Services to teachers, registered with the Queensland College of Teachers, who work outside their professional duties (this includes, but is not limited to, all teachers who work in Education and Care Services e.g. State Delivered Kindergarten).
<b>Expired blue card</b>	An expired blue card/exemption card is one which has not been renewed before the expiry date noted on the current blue card (or exemption card for cards issued following 31 August 2020).
<b>Home</b>	Home, of a person, includes the person's principal place of residence and any holiday home of the person.
<b>Negative notice</b>	<p>A notice issued by Blue Card Services which prevents a person from performing regulated employment or activities.</p> <p>A current negative notice holder cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply for, start, or continue in child-related work (paid or voluntary); or</li> <li>• carry on a child-related business regulated by the blue card system.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent</b>	<p>Parent is defined at s. 390 of the <a href="#">Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</a> as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A parent of a child is the child's mother, father or someone else, other than the chief executive (child safety), having or exercising parental responsibility for the child</li> <li>• However, a person standing in the place of a parent of a child on a temporary basis is not a parent of the child</li> <li>• A parent of an Aboriginal child includes a person who, under Aboriginal tradition, is regarded as a parent of the child</li> <li>• A parent of a Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who, under Island custom, is regarded as a parent of the child.</li> </ul>
<b>Police information</b>	Any information issued by the Police Commissioner which may include an individual's criminal history (include charge or conviction history) and investigative information.

Term	Definition
<b>Registered health practitioner</b>	<p>A person registered with <a href="#">Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)</a> under the <a href="#">Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (Qld)</a>.</p> <p>Note: Speech language pathologists do not require AHPRA registration and, therefore, require a blue card.</p>
<b>Regulated employment</b>	<p>Regulated employment is employment of a type mentioned in <a href="#">Schedule 1, Part 1 of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</a>. There are 15 categories of regulated employment and if your work falls under a category of regulated employment you need to have a blue card (or exemption card) to work or volunteer with children in Queensland, unless an exemption applies.</p>
<b>Restricted employment</b>	<p>Restricted employment refers to exemptions which allow a person to work with children without a blue card, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a volunteer parent</li> <li>• a volunteer who is under 18</li> <li>• paid or unpaid staff who work in child-related employment for less than 7 days in a calendar year.</li> </ul>
<b>Restricted person</b>	<p>A restricted person means a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been issued a negative notice; or</li> <li>• has a suspended blue card; or</li> <li>• is a disqualified person; or</li> <li>• has been charged with a disqualifying offence which has not been finalised.</li> </ul>
<b>Serious offence</b>	<p>A serious offence is an offence provided at s. 167 of the <a href="#">Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</a>.</p>
<b>Suspended blue card</b>	<p>A blue card is suspended if the holder of the card is charged with a serious or disqualifying offence. Reassessment of eligibility to hold a blue card will not be made until the charge has been finalised in court.</p>
<b>Teacher</b>	<p>A person who holds full registration or provisional registration under the <a href="#">Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 (Qld)</a> and whose full or provisional registration is not suspended under section 48 or 49 of that Act.</p>
<b>Volunteer</b>	<p>An unpaid worker performing regulated work or activities for the department.</p>
<b>Working with children authority</b>	<p>A working with children authority means a working with children clearance (commonly referred to as a blue card) or a working with children exemption (commonly referred to as an exemption card).</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Working with children clearance</b>	A notice issued by Blue Card Services which permits a person to perform regulated employment or activities.

## Legislation

- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020 \(Qld\)](#) (Subordinate Legislation 2020 No. 131)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child Protection \(Offender Prohibition Order\) Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child Protection \(Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order\) Act 2004 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Criminal Law \(Rehabilitation of Offenders\) Act 1986 \(Qld\)](#) Parts 1-14
- [Dangerous Prisoners \(Sexual Offenders\) Act 2003 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Industrial Relations Act 2016 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Public Service Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#) Chapters 1-4

## Delegations/Authorisations

- [Human Resource Delegations Manual](#) (DoE employees only)

## Policies and procedures in this group

- [Child and student protection policy](#)
- [Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies procedure](#)
- [Information sharing under the Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\) procedure](#)
- [Student protection procedure](#)
- [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection procedure](#)

## Supporting information for this procedure

- [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy](#)

- [Flowchart – Blue Card requirements for contractors/tradesperson working in schools](#)
- [Flowchart - Commencing a new paid employee](#)
- [Flowchart - Commencing a new volunteer or trainee or tertiary student](#)
- [Flowchart - Renewing a blue card \(or exemption card\) prior to expiry date](#)
- [Working with children authority guidelines](#)

## Other resources

- [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#)
- [Standard of Practice for the Department of Education](#)
- [Enterprise risk management policy](#)
- [Student protection procedure](#)
- [School excursions and international school study tours procedure](#)
- [Community use of state school facilities policy](#)
- [Community use of state school facilities procedure](#)
- [DEi recruit and on-board homestay providers procedure](#)
- [DEi student homestay placement procedure](#)
- [DEi homestay provider management procedure](#)
- [Enterprise risk management procedure](#)
- [Student protection guidelines](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Blue Card Services](#)
- [Kindergarten in remote communities](#)

## Contact

For enquiries regarding the content of this procedure, please contact:

Integrity and Employee Relations

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## Review date

31/08/2023

## 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

1.0 Working with children authority

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