



Understanding the blue card system

How the blue card system works

Blue Card Services administers the blue card system—Queensland's Working with Children Check.

All children have the right to be safe and protected from harm. In Queensland, Blue Card Services administers the blue card system – the Working with Children Check. Under legislation, anyone working or volunteering with children in Queensland must have a blue card. This also applies to certain self-employed people and businesses. The blue card system is governed by 2 pieces of legislation: the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (the Act) and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020*.

The blue card system contributes to the creation of safe service environments for children in various ways. Just as each piece of a jigsaw comes together to make a complete picture, the same applies to the blue card system. The different parts all play an essential role in keeping children and young people safe and it works best when all parts work together.

The 4 components of the blue card system are:

1. Who needs a blue card?
2. A National Reference System and the blue card check.
3. Ongoing daily monitoring and compliance with blue card requirements.
4. Requirements to develop and implement a child and youth risk management strategy.

Who needs a blue card?

The blue card system does not apply to every environment in which a child may be present.

Under the Act, there are 16 categories of regulated employment and 12 categories of regulated businesses. To require a blue card, a person's paid work, volunteer or business activities must fall within the scope of one of the categories of regulated employment or business. Organisations should not adopt a policy requiring individuals to obtain a blue card if the work they are doing is not regulated by the blue card system.

If a person's activities don't fall within the categories of regulated employment or business, a blue card is not required. Whether a person requires a blue card will depend on several factors including the:

- environment where the work is performed
- type of work
- frequency of work.

The blue card check

Before we start the blue card check, all blue and exemption card applications are subject to a National Reference System (NRS) database search to determine if another state or territory has made an adverse working with children decision about them. [Learn more about the NRS.](#)

The next component of the blue card system is what we refer to as the blue card check which assesses a person's eligibility based on their known past police and disciplinary information. This process prevents people from working with children if their past behaviour indicates that they are unable to protect a child from harm.



Fact sheet - Understanding the blue card system

People who have committed certain disqualifying offences are prevented by law from applying for a blue card (i.e. those convicted of a serious child-related sex or child pornography offence or the murder of a child).

The blue card check is more than a police check and looks for:

- a charge or conviction for any offence in Australia, even if no conviction was recorded (this includes spent convictions, pending and non-conviction charges)
- child protection prohibition orders (both respondents and subjects to the application)
- disqualification orders
- reporting obligations under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004 or Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003
- disciplinary information from certain organisations (this includes information about teachers, childcare licensees and foster carers)
- domestic violence information
- other information about the person that is relevant to deciding whether it would be in the best interests of children to issue a blue card
- police investigative information relating to allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid.

If an application is approved, we will issue you a blue card. If an application is refused, we will not issue a blue card and the applicant will not be able to work or volunteer with children. Before we make this decision, we may ask the applicant for their side of the story by requesting a submission.

Ongoing daily monitoring and compliance

All applicants and blue or exemption card holders are monitored daily by the Queensland Police Service. If any police information changes (i.e. if a card holder is arrested for an offence against a child and is deemed a risk to be working with children) we can immediately suspend or cancel a blue card and let all organisations that the person works or volunteers will know of the suspension or cancellation of the blue card.

We also monitor organisations and business operators to ensure they are complying with their obligations, particularly ensuring that they have risk management strategies in place.

Child and youth risk management strategies

All organisations and self-employed persons who work or volunteer with children are required by the Act to have a responsible person develop, implement, and maintain child and youth risk management strategies.

These strategies aim to ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise the potential risk of harm to children.

These strategies represent an organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care. It outlines the policies and procedures within an organisation that promote the welfare of children and protect children from harm.

Resources to help organisations develop their child and youth risk management strategies are at www.qld.gov.au/bluecardriskmanagement.

Need more information?



Please call us on **1800 113 611** or **07 3211 6999** or visit www.qld.gov.au/bluecard. If you need an interpreter, contact **Language Loop** on 1800 512 451.