

7. Compliance with the requirement of the Blue Card system

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ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Parish Priest or Administrator, Parish Secretary, Agency Director or Human Resource Manager</p> <p>Parish Priest or Administrator or Agency Director to identify and appoint who has the responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure this procedure is included when all relevant paid staff and volunteers within the Parish, Ministry or Agency receive their induction and they acknowledge their understanding and commitment to comply with this procedure; • Maintain records relating to safeguarding training of this procedure and ensure signed receipt notices for safeguarding procedures are documented for reference and auditing purposes; • Identify nominated contact person for Blue Cards and Exemption Cards to work with Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator. The Human Resource Manager has been nominated as the contact person for Mary Mackillop Childcare North Queensland and will maintain the safeguarding register, working with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator as required; • Employee (Personnel) and Blue Card registers are to be maintained and filed in a secure location; • Ensure any concerns received on any personnel, or negative notices, cancellations or suspension notices received from Blue Card Services are reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator for an immediate risk assessment.
Church personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure understanding of the priority to protect children irrespective of what role it is in the Parish, Ministry or Agency. Every lay worker, paid staff member and volunteer has a responsibility in safeguarding and complying with blue card requirements. Any breaches must be reported to the supervisor or Human Resource Manager. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator if the breaches are considered serious; • Engage in constructive conversation as people make comment or raise questions or concerns about safeguarding or this procedure and encourage them to discuss with Parish Priest/Administrator or Safeguarding Representative within Parish, Ministry or Agency.
Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate updates and changes to this procedure in consultation with parishes, ministries and agencies; • Encourage discussion and awareness of this procedure and to make time available to meet and discuss any concerns of breaches or potential breaches, working proactively and in partnership with the parishes, ministries and agencies;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Parish, Ministry and Agency Employee and Blue Card Registers for compliance, working with the nominated person and process applications as requested, maintaining an overarching diocesan register; • Liaise with relevant authorities on any clarification required with this procedure.
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**1. Compliance with the requirement of the Blue Card system - procedure outline:
(Working directly with children under 18 years)**

1.1. The Blue Card system is one important factor in a suite of strategies to safeguard children as they participate in ministry within the Catholic Diocese of Townsville. Blue Cards determine a person **eligibility** to work with children and young people. It does not determine their **suitability** and that is why compliance with all safeguarding policy and procedures are important. Church personnel should ensure they are aware of this throughout their ministry as it will help to identify risks as they arise and will direct the steps to follow to best safeguard our most vulnerable;

1.2. The parishes, ministries and agencies welcome and invite people to volunteer their time to support ministries and activities involving children. It is the Parish, Ministry and Agency's responsibility to ensure that a volunteer is appropriate for the role, by following the recruitment and selection processes contained within the safeguarding procedures. Not all volunteers will require a Blue Card as part of their ministry. However, where a Blue Card is not required by legislation; parishes, ministries and agencies should consider a National Criminal History (Police) Check to safeguard, in addition to complying with the recruitment and selection procedure. This will assist in determining if the volunteer is suitable where they may have some contact with children as part of their ministry or they are working with vulnerable adults. Some volunteers with Commonwealth subsidised aged care services are required under the Aged Care Act 1997 to have a National Police Check;

1.3. The Blue Card system is regulated by specific categories of employment or business which are outlined in the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. To apply for a Blue Card, an individual must have an agreement to work (either in a paid, voluntary or student capacity) or carry on a business that falls within the scope of one of the categories of employment or business regulated by the Act;

1.4. *Restricted Person* and *Restricted Employment* legislation has been introduced in Queensland. A restricted person must **not** start or continue in restricted employment under these changes. This change excludes a limited range of people from being able to carry out regulated child-related work in particular circumstances. Parishes, ministries or agencies must not employ or continue to employ a person in restricted employment if:

- The person is a restricted person; and
- The parish, ministry or agency knows, or ought to know, the employee is a restricted person.

1.4.1. A **restricted person** means:

- A person who has a negative notice;
- A person with a suspended blue card;
- A disqualified person;
- A person charged with a disqualifying offence.

1.4.2. **Restricted employment** means:

- Employment which does not meet the minimum frequency (7 days in a calendar year);
- Unpaid employment of a person under the age of 18;

- Volunteers parents in certain categories of regulated employment. This includes employing a volunteer parent, a volunteer under 18 years of age or a person who work 7 days or less in a calendar year under the following categories of regulated employment:
 - School employees other than teachers and parents;
 - Education and care services and similar employment;
 - Child Care and similar employment;
 - Churches, clubs and associations involving children;
 - Sport and recreation;
 - Health, counselling and support services.

1.5. Roles Requiring Positive Notice Blue Cards

1.5.1. Any Parish, Ministry or Agency role which works with children as part of their role description, or has a leadership or decision-making role on a committee, board or council requires a Positive Notice Blue Card. Parish roles which are likely to provide ministry directed mainly towards children include:

- Safeguarding Representative;
- Sacramental Coordinator;
- Sacramental Leader;
- Children’s Liturgy of the Word leaders;
- Youth Ministry Coordinator;
- Youth Ministry Leaders;
- Altar Servers trainer;
- Sacristan if they are in contact with children;
- Choir Leader – where children are included in the general choir and for children’s choir,
- Nativity Play Leader
- Holiday Activities Leader;
- Parish Pastoral members (if their role is decision-making on children/youth programs such as recruiting ministry leaders or coordinating children’s/youth events etc);
- Any other role that involves working closely with children and young people through any Church ministry.

1.6. Exemptions

1.6.1. Police officers and registered teachers do not apply for a Blue Card and should instead apply for an **exemption card** under this category if they are providing child-related services in a Parish, Ministry or Agency which are outside of their professional duties.

1.7. Certain people are prohibited from applying for or renewing a Blue Card. The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (the Act) details who is a disqualified person and what disqualifying offences are by accessing their webpage on [disqualified people from applying for a blue card](#).

A disqualified person must not:

- Sign a Blue Card application, or
- Make an application to run a regulated child-related business, or
- Work in child-related employment or carry on a child-related business that is regulated by the Act.

1.8. Each Parish, Ministry and Agency should have a nominated contact person for managing Blue Cards and Exemption Cards. Each Blue Card or Exemption Card application form for a paid employee or volunteer has a space in the ‘Organisation details’ section for a ‘contact person’. This is the person who Blue Card Services will send all notifications to and this is the only person who Blue Card Services can discuss the person’s Blue Card status with unless additional authorisation is provided.

Some parishes have decided to hand over responsibility for managing their blue card system to the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator. A nominated contact person for the Parish should still be identified to ensure there is a cross-checking of personnel who are accurately reflected on the overarching diocesan blue card register.

2.0. Blue Card Processes

2.1. Managing Blue Card applications:

- 2.1.1. Parish, Ministry and Agency leaders including Parish Priests or Administrators must ensure paid persons or volunteers identified as requiring a Positive Notice Blue Card or Exemption Card, have a current Blue Card; have applied for a Blue Card; or have an Exemption Card and these details are reflected on a register in each Parish, Ministry and Agency. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator must be notified of all people requiring a Positive Notice Blue Card or Exemption Card;
- 2.1.2. Managing existing Blue Card holders – If a person joins a Parish, Ministry or Agency and already has a Positive Notice Blue Card, the following must occur:
 - Verify the validity of the Blue Card;
 - Link the Blue Card to the Parish, Ministry or Agency organisation number and to the overarching Catholic Diocese of Townsville organisation number registered with Blue Card Services.
- 2.1.3. If the person holds a volunteer Blue Card and will be undertaking paid employment lodge a *Volunteer to paid transfer form* with Blue Card Services. This will transfer their card from volunteer to paid status;
- 2.1.4. If a person ceases working with the Diocese, an *Applicant/cardholder no longer with organisation (for organisations) form* must be lodged to advise Blue Card Services immediately.

2.2. Managing changes in police information:

- 2.2.1. Parish, Ministry or Agency management must ensure that individuals understand their obligation to advise if there is a change in their police information. Employees/volunteers are not required to disclose the specific nature of the change, only that a change has occurred;
- 2.2.2. If there has been a change in police information received by the Parish, Ministry or Agency, the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator must be notified to discuss the next steps and to ensure safeguarding measures are in place where deemed necessary.

2.3. Managing high risk individuals:

- 2.3.1. Relevant notices must be kept in a confidential and secure file for notifications from Blue Card Services in relation to high-risk individuals, and that a copy of these notices are provided immediately to the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator. For example:
 - An employee/volunteer receives a negative notice or is a known disqualified person; or
 - An employee/volunteer has their Blue Card or Exemption Card cancelled or suspended; or
 - An employee/volunteer has their Blue Card application withdrawn; or
 - A notification in relation to a serious change in criminal history is received from Blue Card Services.

- 2.3.2. If an employee/volunteer has had a card cancelled or suspended or receives a negative notice after a change in police information, the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator must be immediately advised for a risk assessment to be undertaken. The employee/volunteer must not continue to undertake child-related work within the Church until a determination is made on how the risk can be managed and if authority to manage the risk has been provided;
- 2.3.3. Any consideration to the employee/volunteer undertaking non child-related work within the Church must be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator and documented accordingly. Consideration will be on a case-by-case basis as circumstances and the context of risk can vary. Blue Card Services may also provide advice on specific cases as required.

Important things to note

All information, including notices from Blue Card Services on high risk individuals, disqualified persons, Blue Card cancellation or suspensions or any notices or information received which could impact on a person's eligibility or suitability to work with children, must be immediately provided to the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator. All documents received by the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator will be confidentially documented in a secure file for monitoring and auditing purposes.

3.0. Future Changes in 2020

- 3.1. The 'No Card. No Start' policy will be introduced and an online streaming process will be in place using the Blue Card Services Organisation Portal;
- 3.2. Change to the existing frequency (threshold) test;
- 3.3. Change to the existing 30 day rule for volunteer, student and business renewals;
- 3.4. Change to the volunteer guest exemption;
- 3.5. Police and Teacher exemption cards will have a 3 year expiry date and not be subject to the NCNS policy;
- 3.6. Changes to how Change in Criminal History (CCH) are managed;
- 3.7. Restricted person/ Restricted employment

This procedure will be reviewed and amended pursuant to these changes coming into effect.