



Blue card requirements of Lay Workers Lay Preachers and Volunteers

C/2.1.2.11

Purpose

Outlines the obligations required for all lay child-related roles, to comply with the Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) [Policy](#).

Scope

Applies to all people aged 18 or over in lay roles working or volunteering with children within the United Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, including lay religious representatives.

Definitions

1. Child-related role

A person is considered to be 'working or volunteering with children' under state legislation if that person undertakes a volunteer activity as defined below:

- 1.1. Child-related activities are those activities or programs which are provided only or mainly to children.
 - 1.1.1. Note that worship services and other activities aimed at only or mainly adults or families, are not child-related activities, with the exception of some tasks that meet the threshold of a 'religious representative' defined in *Section 4*.
- 1.2. If your role is not a child-related role, but you start supervising a volunteer under the age of 18. For example:
 - 1.2.1. You coordinate the property maintenance. You do not usually need a blue card in this role, as this is not a child-related activity.
 - 1.2.2. However, this year you have a volunteer aged 16 that has commenced volunteering, and whom you oversee.
 - 1.2.3. You are now undertaking a child-related role, as you are directly supervising this volunteer's work, and the volunteer is under 18.
- 1.3. All First Aid Officers are required to hold a valid linked blue card or exemption card, in case emergency first aid treatment is required for anyone under 18 years of age.

2. Volunteer

A person is a volunteer, for child-related activities, if they undertake a volunteer activity on a regular basis, such that:

- 2.1. They volunteer on more than 7 calendar days per year; or
- 2.2. They are scheduled to undertake a volunteer activity or task on a regular basis (i.e. is part of a roster for that volunteer task or activity).

3. Junior Volunteer

A child or young person aged between 12 years and 18 years may undertake a volunteer activity as a junior volunteer after participating in a pre-appointment screening process suitable for their age, maturity, and ability. Junior volunteers do not usually require a blue card.

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4. Threshold as a 'religious representative'

Under the Act, all persons considered to be a 'religious representative' must hold a valid linked Blue Card or Exemption Card. This includes a person who is training to become a religious representative.

Once the following threshold has been reached, the person is required to hold a Blue Card or Exemption Card as a religious representative and must complete additional Lay Training specific to this role. This requirement remains the same for congregations which do not offer child-related activities.

- 4.1. **The threshold** - Once a volunteer performs the following ministerial functions **on more than seven days in a calendar year**:
 - 4.1.1. Preach and/or lead worship in their own congregation; or
 - 4.1.2. Preach and/or lead worship in any other worship services (including weddings and funerals);
or
 - 4.1.3. Preside at the sacraments; or
 - 4.1.4. Perform any systematic pastoral care
- 4.2. For example, a person is not a lay preacher as defined under *The Uniting Church in Australia Regulation 2.2.3*. However, for this example, the person takes on one or more of the above tasks or roles (*Section 4.1 above*) on a regular or ongoing basis as there is no ministry agent in placement at their congregation. In this example, the person has taken on extra tasks, but is not a lay preacher. This person must comply with the additional requirements described above, as they are now considered a 'religious representative'.

Obligations

5. All people working or volunteering in a child-related role must hold a valid blue card or exemption card which is linked to your congregation or presbytery.
 - 5.1. All blue card and exemption card applications and renewals can be made [online](#) using Blue Card Services.
 - 5.1.1. On the application form, you should list the details of your church council chairperson as the organisation's contact person.
 - 5.1.2. The church council secretary should be listed as the organisation's contact person on the application form for the church council chairperson.
 - 5.2. If you work or volunteer in more than one location, you must [link](#) your blue card or exemption card to each place, unless your position is a presbytery position.
 - 5.2.1. For example, volunteer with the Kids Church at your home Church, and you also volunteer doing Religious Instruction for a local school.
 - 5.2.2. In this situation you must ensure that your blue card is linked to the school where you volunteer with Religious Instruction and also the Church where you volunteer with Kids Church.
 - 5.2.3. In the case where you hold a presbytery position and work across several congregations or locations, your blue card or exemption card must be linked to the presbytery.
- No card, no start:**
 - 5.3. No card, No Start means that paid workers must have a blue card (not just a pending application) before they can start working with children. You must not use a volunteer blue card for paid child-related work.
 - 5.4. You can continue to work in paid employment, volunteer, run your business or undertake your student placement as long as you submit your renewal application before your current card expires.
 - 5.5. If you don't apply to renew your card before it expires, you will be subject to the No Card, No Start policy and will not be able to continue working or volunteering until a new blue card has been issued.



- 5.6. Failing to hold a valid blue card or exemption card is a breach of the SMC Policy as well as a breach of legislation. Following the [Safe Church Breach Procedure](#), complete a [Breach Report](#), recording the breach in a [register](#).
- 5.6.1. The individual may receive a fine of up to \$68,925 (500 penalty units) or 5 years imprisonment.
- 5.6.2. The organisation may be subject to a fine of up to \$27,570 (200 penalty units) or 2 years' imprisonment.

Change in police information:

- 5.1. If you hold a valid blue card or exemption card and have a [change](#) in your police information, you must advise Blue Card Services and your presbytery. If you are charged with a serious offence, your blue card will be automatically suspended, and you must cease child-related work immediately.
- 5.2. Failing to notify your presbytery or Blue Card Services of the change in police information, is a breach of the SMC Policy as well as a breach of legislation. Following the [Safe Church Breach Procedure](#), complete a [Breach Report](#), recording the breach in a [register](#).
- 5.2.1. The individual may be subject to a fine of up to \$13,785 (100 penalty units).
- 5.2.2. The organisation may be subject to a fine of up to \$27,570 (200 penalty units) or 2 years' imprisonment.

Change in type of employment:

- 5.3. If you hold a blue card, you must tell Blue Card Services when you change roles, or type of work. If you are an existing volunteer card holder and intend to start in paid child-related work or business, you need to transfer your existing volunteer blue card to a paid blue card or a business blue card. This process can be completed [online](#). You must not use your volunteer blue card for paid child-related work.
- 5.4. A person who holds a paid blue card can use their paid card for all types of child-related work, including volunteering.
- 5.5. Failing to hold a paid blue card for a paid child-related role or failing to advise Blue Card Services of your change in employment status is a breach of the SMC Policy as well as a breach of legislation. Following the [Safe Church Breach Procedure](#), complete a [Breach Report](#), recording the breach in a [register](#).
- 5.5.1. Failing to hold a valid paid blue card for paid child-related work may result in a fine of up to \$68,925 (500 penalty units) or 5 years imprisonment.
- 5.5.2. Failing to advise Blue Card Services of your change in employment status may result in a fine of \$1,378.50 (10 penalty units).
- 5.5.3. The organisation may be subject to a fine of up to \$27,570 (200 penalty units) or 2 years' imprisonment.

Information and support

This is a general guide only and if you need specific advice, please contact the Synod office or Blue Card Services. Additional information may be obtained from bluecard.qld.gov.au

For blue card applications, renewals and linking blue cards to church entities contact the Human Resource Officer on 07 3377 9755 or hr@ucaqld.com.au.

For blue card questions in relation to the Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) Policy (audits, blue card types, registers), contact the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9833 or safechurch@ucaqld.com.au.



Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.2.11			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
6.0	27.09.2022	Strategic Risk Manager	27.09.2022	ED Strategic Resources and Assurance	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		27.09.2027			