



# Blue card requirements of Ministry Agents

C/2.1.5.2

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## Purpose

Outlines the obligations required of all Ministry Agents to comply with the Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) [Policy](#).

## Scope

Applies to all ministry agents and religious representatives within the bounds of the Queensland Synod.

## Definition

Under the Act, all persons considered to be a 'religious representative' (this includes all lay preachers and all ministry agents) must hold a valid linked Blue Card or Exemption Card. This requirement also applies to a person who is training to become a religious representative.

## Obligations

1. You must hold a valid blue card or exemption card which is linked to your congregation or presbytery.
  - 1.1. All blue card and exemption card applications and renewals can be made [online](#) using Blue Card Services.
  - 1.2. 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.
    - 1.2.1. For example, you work part-time as a Chaplain for Scripture Union, volunteer with the Kids Church at your home Church, and you work part-time for Blue Care.
    - 1.2.2. In this situation you must ensure that your blue card is linked to Scripture Union, Blue Care and the Church where you volunteer with Kids Church.
    - 1.2.3. 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:

- 1.3. 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 your volunteer blue card for paid child-related work.
- 1.4. You can continue to work in paid employment, volunteer, run your business or undertake your student placement if you submit your renewal application before your current card expires.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. NOTE: The General Secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of stipend or wage, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a valid blue card or exemption card.
- 1.7. 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](#).
  - 1.7.1. The individual may receive a fine of up to \$68,925 (500 penalty units) or 5 years imprisonment.
  - 1.7.2. The organisation may be subject to a fine of up to \$27,570 (200 penalty units) or 2 years' imprisonment.

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**Change in police information:**

- 1.8. 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.
- 1.9. 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](#).
  - 1.9.1. The individual may be subject to a fine of up to \$13,785 (100 penalty units).
  - 1.9.2. 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:**

- 1.10. 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](#).
- 1.11. You must not use your volunteer blue card for paid child-related work. However, a ministry agent who holds a business blue card or a paid blue card can use their card for all types of child-related work, including volunteering.
- 1.12. 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](#).
  - 1.12.1. Failing to hold a valid paid blue card for paid child-related work may result in a fine for the individual of up to \$68,925 (500 penalty units) or 5 years imprisonment.
  - 1.12.2. Failing to advise Blue Card Services of your change in employment status may result in a fine for the individual of \$1,378.50 (10 penalty units).
  - 1.12.3. The organisation may be subject to a fine of up to \$27,570 (200 penalty units) or 2 years' imprisonment.

## Religious representatives

2. This section refers to ministry agent candidates, and any person who is training to become a religious representative.
  - 2.1. Students and trainees should apply for a volunteer blue card as soon as possible after enrolling in a course to become a religious representative. You must hold a valid linked blue card or exemption card.
  - 2.2. You must comply with the obligations in *Section 1* above. Pre-filled [forms](#) are available on the Synod website.

## Ministry agents appointed as volunteers or employees

3. This section refers to ministry agents who are engaged as an employee (and paid a wage) or ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis.
  - 3.1. You must comply with the obligations in *Section 1* above. Pre-filled [forms](#) are available on the Synod website.
  - 3.2. Ministry agents engaged as an employee and paid a wage must hold a valid linked Paid blue card or exemption card.
  - 3.3. Ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis must hold a valid linked Volunteer blue card or exemption card.



### Ministry agents engaged in a covenantal relationship (remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend)

4. This section refers to ministry agents providing supply, ministry agents in a placement as well as ministry agents available for supply or placement.
  - 4.1. You must comply with the obligations in *Section 1* above.
  - 4.1. Due to your covenantal relationship with the Church, you are conducting your own regulated business as a religious representative. You must hold a Business Blue Card. Pre-filled [forms](#) are available on the Synod website.
  - 4.2. You must complete a 'consent to discuss information form' which allows Blue Card Services to liaise with the General Secretary on matters relating to suspension or cancellation of your blue card. There is also a pre-populated version of this [form](#) on the Synod website.
  - 4.3. You must complete and sign a ministry agent [statement of commitment](#) to safe ministry on an annual basis, to ensure that you have a current child and youth risk management strategy in place.
  - 4.4. Failing to have a child and youth risk management strategy in place each year, while carrying on a child-related business 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](#).
    - 4.4.1. Failing to have a child and youth risk management strategy in place each year may result in a fine for the individual of \$2,757 (20 penalty units).

### 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:safechurch@ucaqld.com.au).

### Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.5.2			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
6.0	23.09.2022	Strategic Risk Manager	23.09.2022	ED Strategic Resources and Assurance	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		23.09.2027			