



2014.242 Blue Card Policy

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Background

Paid employees need a Blue Card if their work within a church, club, association or similar entity includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed mainly towards children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month, over six months

unless an exemption applies.

(Ref: Queensland Government Blue Card Services)

A person seeking to operate a business needs a blue card if the usual activities of the business include, or are likely to include, providing services as a religious representative that are directed mainly towards children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children, unless an exemption applies.

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Examples of people who need a blue card...

Religious leaders such as priests, chaplains, ministers or rabbis whose role includes, or may include, providing religious instruction to children or conducting activities as a religious representative on an paid basis.

Operators of businesses promoting spiritual beliefs and guidance to children.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all children who engage with the Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District (the Church).

Objective

The objective of this policy is to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all children who engage with the Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District by ensuring that all Pastors, Lay workers, employees, members and volunteers who provide services directed towards children in the District hold a current Blue Card.

Policy Statement

The Church is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all children who engage with the Church, though ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements for the prevention of harm to children. All active Pastors and paid employees of the LCAQD must hold a current Blue Card. Volunteers who provide services directed towards children in the District must hold a current Blue Card.

Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District

Definition of Child Abuse

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines child abuse or mistreatment as:

All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, power or trust.

Recognising Children's Interests

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and accordingly the Church is committed to upholding the rights and obligations of the Convention.

Pastors, Lay workers, employees, members and volunteers must consider the needs and rights of children in any decision making process. The Church encourages children to express their views and make suggestions especially in matters that directly affect or involve children.

Policy Implementation Measures

A) Pastors

All Pastors in the LCAQD who provide a service in any capacity must possess a current Blue Card. Failure to possess a current Blue Card means the Pastor may not provide a service.

A Pastor who is a registered teacher and hold a teachers registration and is employed by a College/School is not required to hold a Blue Card, but must hold an Exemption Card; however if the Pastor works outside the College/School environment on non-school sponsored activities the Pastor must hold a Blue Card.

A Pastor who is in active service and whose Blue Card is cancelled, suspended, or lapses will be immediately suspended from service and may face church judicial action that leads to further suspension or dismissal.

A Pastor who is retired and whose Blue Card is cancelled or suspended will be immediately suspended from service and may face church judicial action that leads to further suspension or dismissal.

A Pastor who is retired and allows his Blue Card to lapse may not provide a service in any capacity until his Blue Card has been renewed.

A Pastor who fails to renew his Blue Card and has not submitted a renewal form at least 30 days before their current blue card expired must cease all children related activities which would include conducting worship services.

Pastors who accepts a call into the LCAQD should be immediately informed by the Office of Bishop to apply for a Blue Card to ensure their compliance with the policy at their installation.

B) District Staff, Congregation and Parish staff

All District staff, Congregation and Parish staff who are in paid employment must possess a current Blue Card or submitted an application form for a Blue Card). Position/Staff/Job descriptions for District, Congregation and Parish staff must include a requirement for the person to hold and maintain a current Blue Card. Failure to hold a current Blue Card will result in immediate suspension or dismissal.

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Volunteers and trainee students who work with children and young people must hold a current Blue Card or have submitted an application form for a Blue Card if their work falls into a category of regulated employment, regardless of how often they will come into contact with children and young people, unless an exemption applies.

Application of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All Pastors (working in the LCAQD)
- All Employees of Parishes and Congregations
- All District Staff
- All Members of LCAQD Congregations and Preaching Places
- All Volunteers and Key Office Holders
- All Departments of the LCAQD

2014.242 Procedures

Reporting to Bishop – All Pastors in the LCAQD who provide a service in any capacity whose Blue card is suspended or cancelled or is allowed to lapse is to report the matter immediately to the Bishop and Professional Standards Unit.

Check of Currency – Chairpersons and Managers. Chairpersons and Managers are to have in place systems and procedures to ensure they are aware all staff Position/Staff/Job descriptions include a requirement for the person to hold a current Blue Card.

Systems and procedures designed to alert Chairpersons and Managers when a card has lapsed or been suspended or cancelled are to be implemented.

Definitions

Pastor: Any active Pastor available for call, any active Specific Ministry Pastor, any active Pastor on Leave of Absence, secondment, or any other type of leave

Active Retired Pastor: Any retired Pastor who undertakes any activity on behalf of the Church – i.e. Leads a worship service, preaches, leads a Bible Study, counsels people etc.

Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who is employed by another person not for financial reward but who may receive reimbursement for out of pocket expenses.

Employment

A person is employing another person if there is an agreement with the other person to carry out work, irrespective of the nature of that work, regardless of the following:

- whether the agreement is written or unwritten, and
- whether the work is carried out voluntarily or for financial reward, and
- what a person's motivation is for carrying out the work, and
- the time for which the person is engaged to carry out the work, and
- whether the agreement provides for the person to carry out work on 1 occasion or on an ongoing basis, whether regularly or irregularly.

Examples of employment

A person is engaged by a school as a cleaner under a written contract of employment

A person orally agrees with the manager of a club to coach a children's sporting team during a season

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The manager of a counselling organisation agrees with an adult student that the adult student attend the organisation's office each day during a semester and carry out various duties

A tour operator arranges with the parents of a family to provide a child accommodation service in their home to an international student.

Version Control	
Document ID: Prepared By:	2014.nn V0.02 M Turner
Reviewed by: Policy Ownership: Draft publication: Comments made by	A Glover, K Stiller PSU LCAQD District Office August 2014
Version 1.0 Status: Policy of the District	Blue Card Policy V1.0 2014:242
As per DCC Resolution 2014:242 25 Sept 2014	