



Guidance notes: blue card requirements for ministry agents

Contents:

Relevant policy	1
Purpose	1
Ministry agents appointed as volunteers or employees	2
Ministry agents engaged in a covenantal relationship (remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend)	3

Relevant policy

Safe Ministry with Children

Purpose

This guidance note provides basic information about blue card and exemption card requirements for people who are engaged as a ministry agent (Ministers of the Word and deacons, pastors, lay pastors, lay preachers, youth workers and community ministers) within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Church). Additional information may be obtained from bluecard.qld.gov.au. This is a general guide only and if you need specific advice please contact the Synod office.

Before any person can work with children and young people (aged under 18 years), an appropriate screening process must be undertaken. All ministry agents are required by law to comply with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (“the Act”) and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* (“the Regulation”).

All ministry agents are considered as ‘religious representatives’ for blue card purposes and are therefore required to hold a current, valid, appropriate blue card. Your statutory obligations may differ depending on how you are appointed. Please see below for further information.

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 current positive notice.



Ministry agents appointed as volunteers or employees

This section refers to ministry agents who are not in a placement but are engaged as an employee (and paid a wage) or ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis (such as lay preachers).

Which forms?

1. You must hold a paid or volunteer blue card i.e. apply using the [blue card application \(BC\)](#).
2. On the application form you should list the details of your Presbytery chairperson in the organisation's contact person section. If you completed step one, you are linked to the Presbytery and your details are on their blue card register. You may be required to complete additional blue card linking forms if you work in more than one part of the church. In this instance, complete the '[Link an applicant/card holder to this organisation](#)' form, listing the details of the person nominated in the organisation's contact person section.

What if I already have a blue card?

Contact [Human Resources](#) for direction about which application suits your situation.

Police and teachers

Police officers and registered teachers who become ministry agents may already have an exemption card if they are providing child-related services which are outside of their professional duties. [The exemption card application \(E\)](#) is to be used in this instance, listing the details of your Presbytery chairperson in the organisation's contact person section.

When should I submit my renewal application?

Blue Card Services must receive your application at least 30 days prior to expiry.

When can I commence working?

Volunteers: Unless a particular exemption applies you must NOT commence volunteering until such time as the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services is received.

A paid employee may commence employment whilst waiting for their blue card or exemption card, once their application has been submitted by the church council to Blue Card Services.

What happens if I don't receive a letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services before the expiry date of my existing blue card?

Volunteers:

If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services more than 30 days prior to expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your volunteer conditions. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You must cease volunteering activities until you receive the letter of positive notice.

Employees:

If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services before expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your employment conditions. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You must cease employment activities until you receive the letter of positive notice.

Volunteers and employees:

The general secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of wage, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a current positive notice.



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

This section includes those available for supply.

Notes:

Due to your covenantal relationship with the church you are determined under the Regulation as conducting your own regulated business as a religious representative.

Which forms?

1. You must hold a business blue card i.e. apply using the [BCB application](#). On the application form, you should list the details of the general secretary in the organisation's contact person section. There is a pre-populated version of this form available on the Synod website.
2. It is requested that you also complete a '[Consent to discuss information](#)' form i.e. allowing Blue Card Services to liaise with the general secretary on matters relating to suspension or cancellation of your blue card.
3. If you completed step one, you are linked to the Synod office and your details are on their blue card register. You may be required to complete additional blue card linking forms if you work in more than one part of the church. In this instance, complete the '[Link an applicant/card holder to this organisation](#)' form, listing the details of the person nominated in the organisation's contact person section.

What if I already have a card?

Contact [Human Resources](#) for direction about which application suits your situation.

Police and teachers

Police officers and registered teachers who become ministry agents may already have an exemption card if they are providing child-related services which are outside of their professional duties. In this case the [exemption to business application \(EB\)](#) is to be used, listing the details of the person nominated in the organisation's contact person section.

When should I submit my renewal application?

Blue Card Services must receive your application at least 30 days prior to expiry.

When can I commence working with children?

You must NOT commence your placement or supply until such time as either:

- the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services is received by the general secretary's office, or
- the email approval from Blue Card Services is received by the general secretary's office, or
- in the event that you have an existing blue card, the general secretary's office receives confirmation from Blue Card Services that the linking form has been submitted.

What happens if I don't receive a letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services before the expiry date of my existing blue card?

If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services more than 30 days prior to expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your ministry. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You should cease all ministry duties and responsibilities until you receive the letter of positive notice. You are at risk of fines/penalties from Blue Card Services if you continue ministry after the expiry date.

The general secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of stipend, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a current positive notice.



Where can I find out more?

To find out more, you can contact Human Resources via email at payroll@ucaqld.com.au

Document Review History

Version Number	Reason	Author/reviewer	Consulted	Approved by	Date of Approval
1	Adapted from Guidance notes: blue card requirements and updated	Safe Ministry (children) administrator	Human Resources manager Associate general secretary	General secretary	30.05.2017
1.1	Reviewed and updated links to Blue Card Services forms	Safe Ministry, Legislative and Compliance Officer	Blue Card Services website	Manager, Risk and Compliance	10.07.2018
1.2	Review cycle – to align with changes to Blue Card Services website and forms				