

BLUE CARD POLICY

1.0 Introduction

Hillbrook Anglican School (Hillbrook) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment and protection to all children in their care. In accordance with legislation and this policy, staff, volunteers and members of the School Board require blue cards. The intent of this policy is to identify key stakeholders within the School community and summarise the requirements in relation to blue cards. This policy is not exhaustive of all situations which may occur in Hillbrook's environment, for individual situations outside the scope of the policy please refer to Blue Card Services.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Blue Card policy is to define blue card requirements for staff, coaches, tutors, volunteers, members of the School Board and contractors.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 **Blue Card Services:**

Blue Card Services aims to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people by contributing to the creation of safe and supportive environments, and is founded on the principle that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

3.2 **Blue Card Check:**

The blue card check is a national criminal history check assessing:

- Any charge or conviction for an offence (even if no conviction was recorded)
- Child protection prohibition orders
- Disqualification orders
- If a person is subject to reporting obligation under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 or Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003
- Disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations including teachers, child care providers, foster carers and certain registered health practitioners
- Information that the Police Commissioner may provide in relation to police investigations into allegations of child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid.

A person whose application is approved is issued with a positive notice letter or email and a blue card.

4.0 Requirements

Legislation requires those working with children for a period greater than 7 days per calendar year to hold a valid Blue Card. This applies to members of the Hillbrook community in the following ways:

4.1 Directors of School Board

- All Directors of the School Board are required to have a blue or exemption card before they commence in their position as director.
- For the purpose of completing relevant forms, directors of the School Board shall be deemed to be business operators and carrying on a business regulated by the Act.
- The School Board must ensure all directors have a valid blue or exemption card, and notify Blue Card Services of Hillbrook's governing body for which they are a director.

4.2 Registered Teachers:

- Teachers registered with Queensland College of Teachers do not require a blue card for their general teaching duties. Checks are made with Queensland College of Teachers and the National Register of Professional Standards through the Anglican Church of Australia.
- Registered teachers may require an exemption card when providing child regulated services. Some examples of this include private tutoring, participating in a homestay program, working in childcare (Hillbrook Early Learning Centre), working in an after school hours care facility or volunteering with a sporting club. Applications for exemption cards need to be processed through the organisation where you will be undertaking this work. Teachers who are School Board Directors are also required to apply for an exemption through the School. Exemption cards must be renewed every 3 years.

4.3 Support Staff:

- All Support staff at Hillbrook who are not a registered teacher or a registered nurse must hold a valid blue card for child-related employment.
- Support staff must not commence work until they hold a current blue card as required by the 'No Card No Start' law. The School must ensure the new staff's blue card is linked to Hillbrook prior to the staff member commencing their employment.
- When applying for a blue card, staff need to provide their Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. This will enable the driver's licence photo to be used on the blue card.
- Hillbrook covers the fee for processing renewal of blue cards for full-time and part-time employees.
- Support staff are required to submit their blue card renewal application including their CRN at least 45 days prior to the expiry of their current blue card (refer to 5.0).
- Staff members must ensure that their blue card is renewed prior to the card's expiry date or they will not be permitted to work.
- All Support staff members' blue cards must be for 'paid' employment and it should be noted that volunteer blue cards are not acceptable.

4.4 Coaches, Co-Curricular Instructors and Tutors:

- All Coaches/Tutors/Project Active/Outdoor Education casual employees and other instructors must hold a valid blue card for child-related employment prior to commencing employment at the School. This blue card must be linked to the School prior to commencement of work or activities.
- Registered teachers employed by Hillbrook who also coach or participate in similar activities for the School, like Project Active are not required to hold a blue card.
- If a Coach/Tutor/co-curricular instructor or Outdoor Education casual employee only works 7 or fewer days in a calendar year, a blue card may not be required.

4.5 Volunteers

- All formal volunteers at Hillbrook must hold a volunteer blue card before they commence working at the School (with the exemption of parents volunteering).
- There is currently no fee to apply for a volunteer blue card.
- The organisation representative is responsible for notifying any supervising staff that a non-parent volunteer/contractor is eligible to begin once a blue card has been issued or validated.
- Volunteers must sign up annually to allow the Volunteer Register to be updated.

4.6 Contractors

- Where employees are engaged through a labour hire company the employee requires a blue card or to have submitted an application for a blue card prior to commencing work with Hillbrook. In such instances the blue card application fee is at the cost of the employee or the recruitment agency.
- External contractors including builders, electricians, plumbers or construction workers and other providing services directed towards the school building and facilities rather than the students are not required to possess a blue card. If there is any opportunity that the contractor will deal directly with any students they must possess a blue card.
- External contractors who provide programs or activity for students must have a current valid blue card at the cost of the contractors.

5.0 Risk Management

A Blue Card register is maintained by the School and the appropriate application forms are provided to staff members 3 months prior to the expiry of their Blue Card. Forms are to be completed by the employee and returned to the nominated organisation representative to apply for the renewal.

5.1 Nomination of the Organisation Representative

There is a designated organisation representative who is responsible for managing blue cards and exemption cards and managing the Organisation Portal. This person must certify that documents confirming an employee's identity have been sighted.

5.2 **Warning to Potential Staff or Volunteers**

The organisation representative must explicitly warn potential staff (paid employees, volunteers) that it is an offence for a 'disqualified' person to sign a blue card application form or a renewal form.

- *Restricted Person*

It is an offence to employ or continue to employ a restricted person. This includes a person who either has been issued a negative notice, has a suspended blue card, is a disqualified person or has been charged with a disqualifying offence that has not been finalised.

- *Restricted Employment*

Restricted employment refers to the situations or exemptions that allow a person to work with children without a blue card, such as if they are a volunteer parent, a volunteer who is under 18 or paid or unpaid staff who work for not more than 7 days in a calendar year.

It is an offence for a restricted person to start or continue working or volunteering in restricted employment.

5.3 **Validity of an Existing Blue Card**

The organisation representative is responsible for checking the validity of a prospective employee's or contractor's blue card. The organisation representative can validate a Blue Card online at the Blue Card Services website. It is also mandatory that the organisation representative links an applicant/cardholder to Hillbrook via the Organisation Portal.

5.4 **Termination**

When an employee leaves the School, the organisation representative delinks the person via the Organisation Portal.

5.5 **Internal Audit Process**

Monthly internal audits will be undertaken to ensure all information on the Blue Card Register is current and valid. All new or updated entries for the relevant monthly period are to be checked by the contact person (the Principal).

5.6 **Statement of Compliance**

Each quarter the Principal shall ensure that a statement is presented to the Finance Audit & Risk Committee that the School complies with the Blue Card Policy.

5.7 **Cross-checks of Data**

Each term all data on employees, volunteers and contractors in the Blue Card Register is to be cross-checked against all primary data sources (payroll records, volunteer register and co-curricular records).

6.0 Related documents

6.1 **Legislation:**

- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 (Qld)*

6.2 **External:**

- Blue Card System in Anglican Schools Policy
- Anglican Church Southern Queensland – Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy & Procedures

6.3 **Internal:**

- Hillbrook's Blue Card Register
- Procedures to Implement the Anglican School Student Protection at Hillbrook
- Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
- Contractors Working on School Premises Health & Safety Checklist
- Curricular and Co-Curricular Instructors Policy