

SLSQ Policy

Title: Blue Card Screening Policy - Members	Division: Board of Directors
Policy No: B01	Version: 6.1
Effective Date: 18.03.2026	Approved Date: 18.03.2026
Revision Date: 18.03.2029	Approved by: SLSQ Board of Directors

1. Introduction

This policy supports Surf Life Saving Queensland's (SLSQ) commitment to the safety and welfare of members and others who engage with SLS.

This policy provides direction to all SLS Clubs, Branches and SLSQ regarding the legislative and compliance requirements of the Blue Card System administered under the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(the Act\)](#) and its amendments and [Working with Children \(Risk Management Screening\) Regulation 2020](#). This policy is also a mandatory component of the SLSQ Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the safety and wellbeing of SLSQ members who are under 18 years of age from all forms of harm while under the care of SLSQ or its affiliates. Surf Life Saving Queensland's (SLSQ) commitment to the safety and welfare of members and others who engage with SLS is demonstrated through the provision of robust organisational practices and procedures in line with the legislative requirements for Working with Children Screening. SLSQ employees, both unpaid and paid, are captured under the [Churches, clubs and associations involving children](#) and [Health, counselling and support services](#) categories of regulated employment.

3. Blue Card Screening

Before Blue Card Services start the blue card check, all blue and exemption card applications are subject to a National Reference System database search to determine if another state or territory has made an adverse working with children decision about them.

Once this is completed, they continue with the blue card check to determine a person's eligibility to work with children and young people based on their known past behaviour.

All blue card applicants and holders are monitored daily. If any information changes (i.e. if a card holder is arrested for an offence against a child and is deemed a risk to children) Blue Card Services can immediately suspend or cancel a blue card and let SLSQ know of the change in the person's blue card status.

A person can apply for a Working with Children Check three months prior to turning 18 years of age in preparation to begin/continue volunteering at the age of 18. Their blue card will be issued on their 18th birthday.

Blue Card Services can suspend an application in progress if information has emerged during the process that is deemed a risk to children.

3.1 Volunteer Blue Card

Volunteer blue cards are for SLSQ members over the age of 18 who perform volunteer roles that require them to hold a blue card. The fees for applications for volunteers are waived when linked to an organisation.

3.2 Paid Blue Card

Paid blue cards are for paid staff of Surf Life Saving Clubs, Surf Life Saving Branches, or Surf Life Saving Queensland. A paid blue card is required to work or continue to work in paid employment for staff over and under the age of 18.

SLSQ recommends that clubs and affiliated entities develop their own policies and procedures for managing paid staff Working with Children Checks. SLSQ staff should refer to HR036 – SLSQ Blue Card Screening Policy – Staff.

3.3 Exemption Blue Cards

Exemption blue cards are for current Queensland police officers and Queensland registered teachers only. This is a type of Working with Children Check for people working in these professions who volunteer with children in regulated employment outside of their ordinary employment. 'Exemption card' does not mean they are exempt from requiring a blue card when volunteering.

If you have an exemption blue card, you still need to advise SLSQ of this so we can update your records and link your card to SLSQ. Please email this information to bluecards@lifesaving.com.au.

4. National Reference System

Queensland participates in the Working with Children National Reference System to share information between jurisdictions regarding individuals who have been deemed ineligible to work with children in another participating state or territory. All applicants are searched in the National Reference System database to determine if another state or territory has made an adverse working with children decision.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all members and volunteers of SLSQ and its affiliated or recognised organisations during the conduct of surf lifesaving activities within Queensland. This policy does not apply to SLSQ staff, nor staff of SLSQ clubs or affiliated entities. SLSQ staff should refer to HR036 – SLSQ Blue Card Screening Policy – Staff.

6. Policy

6.1 Who must hold a Working with Children Check (Blue Card)

Volunteers over the age of 18 years who work with children and young people must hold a Working with Children Check if their work falls into a category of regulated employment, regardless of how often they may come into contact with children and young people, unless an exemption applies.

Due to surf lifesaving's unique nature and large, varying scope of activities, SLSQ acknowledges that parent members who are actively involved in working with and/or supervising their children are not, or are very unlikely to be, involved in activities without their children from week to week. Therefore, parent members who are not involved in roles or functions listed under positions held in SLS that require a Working with Children Check as below are not required to complete the Working with Children Check requirements.

However, obtaining a blue card is strongly recommended for parents and the Volunteer card is free. It ensures that, should you decide to take on additional responsibilities, you are eligible for certain functions within the club.



6.2 Positions held in SLS who must apply for a Working with Children Check

The following is a list of positions in Surf Lifesaving where the people in those positions, if over 18 years of age, **must** complete the screening procedures and hold a positive notice blue card:

- Board/Management Committee/Committee/Panel Members,
- Junior Activities Chairperson and Committee Members,
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers,
- Age Managers,
- Age Manager Delegates,
- Cadet / Youth Officers,
- Chief Training Officer,
- Training Officers,
- Assessors,
- Patrol Captains,
- Patrol Members,
- Coaches/Assistant Coaches,
- Chaperones,
- Officials,
- Water Safety Personnel (including Nipper Safety Assistants),
- Photographers,
- Peer Support Officers,
- All People in Positions of Authority involved in a “live-in” situation or camp,
- Caretakers (including live-in),
- Grievance Officers/Complaint Officers/MPIOs,
- Child Safety Representatives,
- All members who are participating in any surf lifesaving educational courses (accredited or non-accredited). This includes awards for lifesaving, surf sports and membership/junior activities, and
- All members applying for a credit transfer/RPL.

SLSQ’s affiliated or recognised entities, including Branches, Clubs and Supporters Clubs, shall not add any further positions to this list without the prior written approval of SLSQ.

If you are unsure if a person needs a blue card, please contact bluecards@lifesaving.com.au.

6.3 Award Holders under 18

Members under the age of 18 who hold one of the roles above are strongly encouraged to complete their Child Safety Awareness Courses through the education portal.

6.4 Linking

Individuals who already hold a valid blue or exemption card with another organisation must link their card to SLSQ before they engage with SLSQ. This allows SLSQ to receive any important updates about an applicant or card holder's status. Visit www.qld.gov.au/bluecardchangingwork for more information.

Blue cards must be linked to SLSQ for Blue Card Services to notify SLSQ of any changes to an individual’s card status or police information. If an individual is involved in the SLSQ organisation without being linked a penalty may incur.

6.5 Members who have Blue Cards that are expired

If a member's blue card has expired, SLSQ reserves the right to restrict the member from lifesaving activities until their new Blue Card has been issued, even if the renewal application was submitted prior to expiry.

A member whose blue card has expired or is otherwise not current will remain on Leave/Restricted and subject to all restrictions until a new and valid blue card has been issued and formally verified by SLSQ.

Restrictions will only be lifted upon confirmation that the Member's Blue Card status has been updated and recorded in the relevant SLSQ system.

6.6 Who doesn't need a Working with Children Check

6.6.1 Exemptions

Volunteers under 18 years of age are exempt from requiring a Working with Children Check unless they are a trainee student doing a practical placement as part of their studies with an education provider.

A person does not need a blue or exemption card if their work is less than 7 days a calendar year.

- This applies to any regulated child-related work between 1 January and 31 December, and
- a 'day' includes a full day or part of a day (e.g. 2 hours of work on 1 day is considered to be a day).

If the persons work is more than 7 days a calendar year, they will need a blue or exemption card.

The 7-day frequency exemption only applies to volunteers, paid employees, and students doing practical placements for their course. The frequency exemption does not apply to business operators.

A [restricted person](#) cannot rely on the frequency exemption. A person is considered restricted if they fulfil one of the following criteria:

- Issued with a negative notice,
- Blue card has been suspended,
- A disqualified person,
- Charged with a disqualifying offence that has not yet finalised, or
- Subject of an adverse interstate Working with Children Check decision in effect.

A blue card or exemption card holder is required to notify Blue Card Services within 14 days of the following:

- If they no longer work with children,
- Change of name, address or contact details,
- Card is lost or stolen,
- Begin working or volunteering with children in a new or additional organisation, or
- Change from volunteer to paid work with children.

6.6.2 Participation only

Members who are solely participating in programs, e.g. Inclusive and Adaptive programs, and who are not supervising training, conducting lifesaving activities, or roles outlined above do not require a Blue Card.

SLSQ advises that all individuals supervising or supporting the delivery of that program **must** have a valid Blue Card, given that these are structured programs involving children.

Clubs must closely monitor participation contexts, particularly in mixed-age settings, to ensure that no adult is placed in a position where they may have unsupervised access to children without appropriate screening.



If a member's role expands to include training, supervising, providing services primarily to children or is outlined in one of the roles above, they must obtain a valid blue card.

6.7 Renewals

Volunteer blue cards are issued with an expiry date of three (3) years if not cancelled or suspended prior. The card holder is responsible for renewing their card under the following conditions:

- Renewal applications must be submitted to Blue Card Services before the current card expires to continue working in regulated child-related employment.
- If a renewal application is not submitted prior to the expiry date of the current card, the member will be subject to *No Card, No Start* legislation and be unable to continue working in regulated child-related employment until a new blue card is issued.
- A reminder is sent by Blue Card Services to renew blue cards 10 weeks prior to the current card's expiry.
- A current card holder can renew a valid blue card 16 weeks prior to the expiry date.
- If a member's Blue Card has expired, SLSQ reserves the right to restrict the member from lifesaving activities until their new Blue Card has been issued, even if the renewal application was submitted prior to expiry.

6.8 Offences and Restrictions

SLSQ is notified by Blue Card Services when an individual's card is cancelled, suspended, withdrawn, issued with a negative notice, or is under review. This is actioned promptly by notifying the Club President confidentially and suspending the member from duties. This is recorded in Surfguard.

6.8.1 Persons who are prohibited from applying for, or renewing, a Working with Children Check

A disqualified person or restricted person is prohibited from applying for or renewing a blue card or exemption card. They must not work in child-related employment and cannot rely on exemptions. Refer to the offences and restrictions section for further details.

6.8.2 Disqualified Person

A disqualified person is someone charged or convicted with committing a disqualifying offence. All disqualifying offences are listed in the [QLD Government - Disqualified Person](#).

6.8.3 Serious Offences

People charged or convicted of serious offences will have their blue card application withdrawn or suspended if they currently hold one. All serious offences are listed in the [QLD Government - Serious Offences](#).

6.8.4 Negative Notice

A negative notice is issued when Blue Card Services assesses an applicant's eligibility to hold a blue card based on an individual's past police or disciplinary information and determines that the applicant may present a risk to children. The individual may make a submission to Blue Card Services to review; see [Blue Cards Negative Notices](#) for further information.

6.8.5 Cancellation of blue or exemption card

A person's blue card or exemption card may be cancelled if they are assessed as no longer eligible by Blue Card Services through daily monitoring.

- A person whose blue card or exemption card has been cancelled must not apply for, start, or continue child-related work (paid or voluntary) or a child-related business regulated by the blue card system.
- Cancelled cards must be returned to Blue Card Services immediately.
- If an individual has been issued a negative notice, they are a restricted person.

6.8.6 Restricted person

A restricted person cannot start or continue employment or volunteer work and cannot rely on any exemptions in restricted employment. A person is considered restricted if they fulfil one of the following criteria:

- Issued with a negative notice,
- A suspended blue card,
- A disqualified person,
- Charged with a disqualifying offence that has not yet finalised, or
- Subject of an adverse interstate Working with Children Check decision in effect.

Restricted employment allows particular people to work with children without a blue card:

- A volunteer parent, so long as the parent is volunteering in a role that provides the same or similar service that their child receives at the club.
- A volunteer who is under the age of 18.
- Paid or unpaid staff working in regulated child-related employment for not more than 7 days in a calendar year (one day is not determined by the number of hours worked that day).

Where a member advises that they are exempt from holding a blue card under the relevant legislation, they will be required to complete the *Restricted Employment and Restricted Person Declaration*. This process ensures SLSQ maintains accurate records of all exemptions (for example, where a parent volunteers only with their own child and does not hold a role as outlined in the Blue Card Policy).

6.8.7 Withdrawal

A withdrawal notice may be issued if the:

- Blue card applicant does not provide the information requested by Blue Card Services by the stated time (for example, documents to establish the identity of the applicant),
- Employer has not sighted the employee's proof of identity documents,
- Applicant has not declared that he or she is not a disqualified person,
- Applicant is charged with a disqualifying offence,
- Applicant withdraws their consent to employment screening,
- Applicant is no longer employed by the employer stated in the application, or
- Applicant is not engaged in employment or carrying on a business that falls within the scope of the blue card system.

6.8.8 Change to police information

Applicants and card holders must immediately notify Blue Card Services of changes to their police information. More information can be found here: [Change in police information notification](#).

7. Reinstatement

Where a member's blue card has been reinstated following the outcome of court proceedings, SLSQ acknowledges the legal clearance provided. However, reinstatement of a blue card does not automatically result in reinstatement of the member's active status within SLSQ.

SLSQ reserves the right to maintain a suspension or place other restrictions on a member's involvement, with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer, if there remains any perceived or actual risk to members, particularly children or vulnerable individuals. This decision will be made in alignment with SLSQ's duty of care obligations, risk management protocols, and child safety responsibilities.

Each case will be assessed individually and consider the nature of the allegations, the outcome of proceedings, and any ongoing concerns or risk indicators.

8. Obligations

The Act places obligations on applicants and card holders. Failure to comply with these obligations may attract penalties outlined by Blue Card Services, [Offences and penalties under the blue card system](#).

9. Child Misconduct Offence Reporting

When a child misconduct offence occurs, it is mandatory to report this to SLSQ and the Queensland Police.

10. Responsibilities of Affiliated Entities, Branches and State

10.1 Responsibilities of Affiliated Entities

- a) Maintain a register of all volunteers,
- b) Audit all club members and identify those required to hold a card,
- c) Advise Blue Card Services immediately if a volunteer, student, or person defined as working in regulated employment proposes to commence child-related work with the club by lodging the appropriate form with SLSQ,
- d) Advise SLSQ if the volunteer ceases being a member within the club (the card will be delinked from SLSQ),
- e) Advise Blue Card Services and SLSQ if they receive notification that there is a change in the person's police information ([Change in Police Information notification](#)),
- f) Not accept a person whose card has been suspended, a disqualified person, or negative notice holder in regulated child-related employment within your organisation.
- g) It is an offence to not provide every applicant with a warning that they must not sign an application form if they are a disqualified person. Further information is available on the [Blue Card Services website](#). If an applicant is unsure whether they are a disqualified person, they should not complete an application, and you should direct them to contact Blue Card Services immediately for further information,
- h) Report any concern relating to misconduct to SLSQ for monitoring, and
- i) Implement child and youth strategies which address legislative requirements.

10.2 Responsibilities of Branches

- a) Required to implement child and youth strategies which address legislative requirements,
- b) Maintain a register of all volunteers,
- j) Audit all branch members and identify those required to hold a card,
- c) Advise Blue Card Services immediately if a volunteer or student proposes to commence child-related work with your organisation by lodging the appropriate form with SLSQ,
- d) Advise SLSQ if a member ceases being a member with the Branch,
- e) Advise Blue Card Services & SLSQ if you receive notification that there is a change in the person's police information,
- f) Not accept a person whose card has been suspended, a disqualified person, or negative notice holder in regulated child-related employment within your organisation,
- g) It is an offence not to provide every applicant with a warning that they must not sign an application form if they are a disqualified person. . Further information is available on the [Blue Card Services website](#). If an applicant is unsure whether they are a disqualified person, they should not complete an application, and you should direct them to contact Blue Card Services immediately for further information, and
- h) Implement child and youth strategies which address legislative requirements.



10.3 Responsibilities of SLSQ

- a) Required to implement child and youth strategies which address legislative requirements,
- b) Audit State Position holders and key volunteers and staff engaged in the delivery of regulated services,
- c) Maintain a register of all volunteers,
- d) Advise Blue Card Services immediately if a volunteer or student proposes to commence child-related work by lodging the appropriate form,
- e) Advise Blue Card Services if the member ceases employment with SLSQ,
- f) Advise Blue Card Services if you receive notification that there is a change in the person's police information,
- g) Regularly review and update Blue Card records to ensure individuals are appropriately delinked from the organisation,
- h) May place members on Leave/Restricted within our member management system if and when the person's card has expired, and
- i) Not accept a person whose card has been suspended, a disqualified person, or negative notice holder in regulated child-related employment within your organisation.

11. Penalties

There are a range of penalties for not complying with the blue card system laws for individuals and organisations, Further information can be found at:

- [Individuals - Offences and penalties for individuals under the blue card system](#)
- [Organisations - Penalties for organisations under the blue card system](#)

12. Related Legislation and Policy Instruments

The following documents can be found in the Members Area:

- SLSQ Child Safety Standards - [Child Safe | Surf Life Saving Queensland](#)
- SLSQ Policy MS03 – Dealing with Police Investigations, Criminal Charges, Guilty Pleas and/or Convictions
- SLSA 6.05 Member Protection Policy
- SLSQ Reporting Disclosure of Harm

Further information regarding Blue Cards can be found at:

- Blue Card Services Website: <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>
- Blue Card Services Phone Number: 1800 113 611 or 07 3211 6999
- SLSQ Blue Card Queries: bluecards@lifesaving.com.au