



## **Blue Card Policy and Procedures**

*Note: This policy is subject to change from time to time. Please check all GSI Policies on a regular basis for updates.*

### **Application of this Policy**

**Global Student Institute** (hereafter called **GSI**) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment and protection to all children in their care.

The Policy relates to the implementation of the Queensland Blue Card System as required by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (WWC Act)*, and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011 (WWC Reg)*.

As a 'regulated business', schools and Education and Care Services (ECS), namely Homestay Accommodation Services are required to comply with all components of the Blue Card System.

### **Purpose**

This policy, associated procedures and working instructions applies to all matters concerning the implementation of the Blue Card System to promote safe and supportive service environments for children and young people under the age of 18 years associated with all employees and Homestay Hosts of GSI. The purpose of this Policy is to set the guidelines for the requirement to hold a Working with Children Check (Blue Card) with GSI.

This procedure sets-out:

- the types of work that require a person to hold a Blue Card;
- the way in which GSI manages Blue Cards; and
- the responsibilities of Blue Card holders and other persons.

### **Statement of Commitment**

GSI supports the rights of children and young people and is committed to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children. GSI is therefore committed to responding to allegations of harm resulting from the conduct or actions of any person including that of employees. This commitment includes the provision of a safe and supportive living and learning environment for all children and young people and requires all employees, to model and encourage behaviour that upholds the dignity and protection of students from harm. In support of this commitment, GSI is dedicated to their *Risk Management (Child Protection) Strategy* which includes having relevant policies, procedures and training in place to effectively address the safety and wellbeing of students in their care.

### **Compliance**

Regular monitoring and other auditing procedures will facilitate this process.

### **Policy Review**

**GSI** will review this policy and associated procedures as required by amendments to legislation.

*Reviewed 2023*

## **Overview**

GSI ensures it complies with its responsibilities under *WWC Act* in relation to employment and volunteer arrangements with GSI.

Specific information on Blue Card requirements can be found at: [Blue Card Website](#).

Unless otherwise exempt under a statute or order (as outlined below), all paid employees, who present for work to undertake child-related employment or activities, require a Blue Card if their duties include, or are likely to include, providing services directed mainly towards a child or children, or conducting activities that involve contact with children for at least:

Eight consecutive days, or

- Once a week, each week, for over four weeks, or
- Once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- Once a month, each month, over six months.

Homestay hosts and adult residents, over the age of 18, living in the Homestay home are defined as Volunteers when referring to the requirement for a Blue Card and will be referred as **Volunteers** for the purpose of this Policy.

*WWC Act* requires that a person who provides accommodation (homestay host) for a child in their home as part of a homestay arrangement is required to hold a Blue or Exemption card. Volunteers must have a Blue Card PRIOR to hosting a child in homestay. A volunteer requires a Blue Card irrespective of the frequency of the child related work.

*WWC Act* provides an exemption from the Blue Card requirements for any person who is a Registered Teacher or Police Officer or Health Practitioner (who is registered as a Registered Health Practitioner in accordance with the [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009](#)) and, who works with children as part of their professional duties.

However, where a Registered Teacher, Police Officer or Registered Health Practitioner is providing child-related services, either in a volunteer, paid or self-employed capacity, that are not part of their normal employment, such as hosting homestay students they will need to apply to Blue Card Services for an Exemption Card (refer to definitions).

A fact sheet providing helpful information in relation to Blue Card Requirements for specific employee groups working in child-related employment or activities is provided at: [Who Needs a Blue Card?https://bluecard.qld.gov.au/faqs/general-faqs.html](https://bluecard.qld.gov.au/faqs/general-faqs.html)

Additional information can also be found on the Blue Card Services website at: <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/blue-card-system-changes>

## **Responsibilities**

### **GSI Employees**

All GSI employees must not contravene *WWC Act*.

All GSI employees must complete an online blue card application on commencing employment with GSI.

Paid employees not holding a Blue Card may commence work in *child-related employment* (refer to definitions) on lodgement of their Blue Card application. The Blue Card application must be lodged as soon as the employee commences work.

Employees must ensure that their Blue Card does not expire at any time, including during periods of absence from duty.

Employees must immediately notify Blue Card Services and the Director of GSI as soon as they become aware that their Police Information (refer to definitions) has changed (e.g. if they have been charged or convicted of a criminal offence).

## **Contact Blue Card Services**

If a Blue Card is suspended or cancelled or, if the employee is issued with a negative notice, the employee is unable to either, commence or to continue work in child related employment or services.

If the employees' Blue Card expires, the employee CAN NOT continue to work in child-related work or services until a renewal application has been lodged with Blue Card services.

Employees must, within 14 days, notify Blue Card Services and the Director of GSI:

- when their Blue Card and/or positive notice has been lost or stolen;
- when they change their name or contact details; and
- if their employment ends on a date earlier than that which was stated on their Blue Card application form.

More information about an employee's responsibilities under *WWC Act* can be found on the [Blue Card Services](#) website.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers must not contravene *WWC Act*.

Legislation requires that a person who provides accommodation (home stay provider) for a child in their home as part of a home stay arrangement is required to hold a Blue or Exemption card. Volunteers must have a Blue Card PRIOR to hosting a child in homestay. A volunteer requires a Blue Card irrespective of the frequency of the child related work.

In addition, each adult residing in the home in which the home stay is conducted is also required to hold a 'V' BC unless they are already holders of a 'P' or 'E' card.

If the home stay provider provides the home stay as a volunteer and not more than twice in the same year and for a period that, or for periods that are each, 7 days or less, a BC or 'E' card is not required.

A student is not to be accommodated in a 'home stay' arrangement without GSI ensuring that all adult persons (including adult international students residing more than 7 days) residing within that home have a 'positive notice'.

Volunteers must ensure that their Blue Card does not expire at any time. If a Blue Card held by a volunteer expires, the volunteer CAN NOT continue to work in child related work until the volunteer has been issued with a new Blue Card by Blue Card Services. The homestay student, who is under 18 years of age, will be removed from the home until such time as a positive notice from Blue Card Services is received.

## **Blue Card Administration Officer**

Responsibility for implementing Blue Card screening ultimately rests with the **GSI Director**.

Implementation can be delegated according to the requirements of **GSI**. GSI will assign a Blue Card Administration Officer to undertake the delegated duties associated with the implementation of the Blue Card for GSI employees and volunteers. Blue Card Services provides the appropriate paperwork for all applications, validations, renewals, notifications and changes.

The BC Administration Officer must not contravene *WWC Act*.

The BC Administration Officer must audit the Blue Card register [Appendix 1](#) weekly to ensure all GSI employees and volunteers who require a Working with Children Check or renewal of Blue Cards that are recorded as having expired are immediately notified and request that a Blue Card application/renewal is lodged immediately.

The BC Administration Officer must take action in the event that an employees' Blue Card expires, that a renewal application is lodged immediately with Blue Card Services. The employee must not be engaged in child related employment until such time as the Blue Card renewal application has been lodged.

The BC Administration Officer must take action, in the event that a volunteer's Blue Card expires, that a renewal application is lodged immediately with Blue Card Services. The volunteer must not be engaged in child related employment until such time as the volunteer is issued with a new Blue Card from Blue Card Services.

The BC Administration Officer must report on the number of employees and volunteers who have a Blue Card due to expire within the next 90 calendar days and immediately notify the employee and volunteer that a renewal application must be lodged at least 30 days prior to the expiry date.

The BC Administration Officer must maintain a register of all employees and volunteers who undertake child-related employment or activities.

### **GSI Director**

The GSI Director must not contravene *WWC Act*.

The GSI Director must take immediate and appropriate action, on a case-by-case basis when they are notified that an employee or volunteer has had their Blue Card suspended or cancelled, or has received a negative notice. If notified by Blue Card Services of a negative notice, action must be taken immediately to contact the student's school, the Homestay host and the student alerting them that the student will need to be moved to another homestay until such time as a positive notice is received.

### **GSI Staff and GSI Director**

GSI Staff and GSI Director must not contravene *WWC Act*.

GSI Staff and GSI Director must advise applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a Blue Card application form in accordance with *WWC Act Part 4, section 174*.

GSI Staff and GSI Director must sign the declaration on the application form stating the applicant has been warned of offences, and verifies that the applicant has signed the declaration stating they are not a disqualified person, before the application is lodged.

GSI Staff and GSI Director must ensure the applicant's identifying documents are sighted.

GSI Staff and GSI Director must not sign a form to verify that they have sighted an Employee or Volunteer's Blue Card if they have not yet done so.

### **Process**

To assist the Director to meet their obligations under *WWC Act* a process flowchart [Appendix 2](#) is provided as a guide for when individuals are engaged in child-related employment or activities.

The flowchart steps out the Blue Card process requirements:

- for engaging new employees and volunteers in child-related employment or activities; and
- for managing existing employees and volunteers.

The Blue Card process requirements contained in the flowchart are detailed below.

### **Appointing new Employees and Volunteers**

When engaging a person as a paid employee or volunteer in child related employment of activities:

Consider whether the person has either, a current Blue Card, a Blue Card application in progress or, an Exemption Card application in progress?

**If yes**, complete the Link an applicant form.

The paid employee can commence work once the link applicant form has been submitted to Blue Card Services.

**If no**, complete the paid Blue Card application.

A paid employee can commence work once the application form has been submitted to Blue Card Services.

A volunteer cannot commence as a homestay host until they have been issued with a positive Blue Card.

The Blue Card Administration Officer must ensure that the Blue Card information for all employees and volunteers is entered and maintained in the GSI Blue Card Register.

### **Managing existing Employees and Volunteers**

An application to renew the Blue Card of an employee or volunteer must be submitted PRIOR to the Blue Card expiry date.

If a Blue Card for an employee or volunteer expires, the following action must occur:

- For paid employees, the employee is removed from child-related employment or activities until a renewal application is lodged with Blue Card Service.
- For volunteers, the volunteer will not be permitted to have an under 18 year old student remain in homestay with them until a renewal application is lodged AND a new Blue Card has been issued.

### **Verifying and Confirming Blue Cards**

Employees and Volunteers who hold a valid Blue Card must comply with a lawful and reasonable request by GSI to produce their Blue Card for verification.

Employees and Volunteers who hold a Blue Card must comply with any request from GSI to complete a Link an Applicant form when it is lawful and reasonable to do so.

GSI must use the online Blue Card validation tool available on the Blue Card Services website to check the validity of an Employee or Volunteer's Blue Card.

### **Performing duties without a Blue Card**

Paid employees may commence child-related employment or activities without a Blue Card if they have already lodged a paid Blue Card application form and they have not had a Negative Notice issued upon them by Blue Card Services.

Volunteers may not undertake child-related work or activities without a Blue Card.

### **Suspended, Cancelled Blue Cards or Negative Notices**

If the Blue Card of an employee or volunteer is suspended, cancelled or, the person is issued with a negative notice, the GSI Director must immediately remove that person from performing child-related employment or activities and must immediately contact the school when a student is in residence at the volunteer's home.

### **Change in Police Information**

Any employee or volunteer who is engaged in child-related work or activities and who has a change in their police information must immediately complete the applicant/card holder sections of the Change in Police Information form and provide this form to the GSI Director.

On being notified of an employees' change in police information, the GSI Director must complete the Organisation sections of the Change in Police Information form provided by the employee/volunteer and submit the form to Blue Card Services.

The employee/volunteer cannot be engaged in child-related employment or activities until the form has been lodged.

The GSI Director must immediately contact the school when a student is in residence at the volunteer's home of the change in police information.

## **Definitions**

### **Blue Card**

A Blue Card is a plasticised card, issued to a person who is the holder of a current positive notice by Blue Card Service in the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) and is valid for three years from the date of issue. A Blue Card displays the following information about the Blue Card holder:

- Photo of the person;
- the name of the person;
- the registration number of the person;
- the expiry date of the person's positive notice; and

### **Child/Children**

A person under the age of 18 years.

### **Employee**

A person employed by International Student Care Australia (GSI).

### **Exemption Card**

An Exemption Card is a plasticised card, issued to a registered teacher, Police Officer or Registered Health Practitioner allowing them to undertake child-related services that are not part of their normal employment, such as private tutoring of a child, work in a child care centre, volunteering at a children's sporting club, participating in a homestay or reading program or supervising after hours school care.

### **Positive Notice**

A notice issued by Blue Card Services which permits a person to perform child-related employment or activities.

### **Negative Notice**

A notice issued by Blue Card Services which prevents a person from performing child-related employment or activities.

### **Police Information**

Any information issued by the Police Commissioner which may include an individual's criminal history and investigative information.

### **Registered Health Practitioner**

Includes Medical Practitioners, Nurses and Midwives, Podiatrists, Psychologists, Optometrists, Osteopaths, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists.

Note: Speech and Language Therapists are not Registered Health Practitioners and DO require a Blue Card.

### **Volunteer**

Homestay hosts and adult residents, over the age of 18 providing homestay accommodation for students for GSI.

## **Related Documents**

This Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with:

- *GSI Risk Management (Child Protection) Strategy*

- *GSI Staff Code of Conduct*
- *GSI Recruit, Assess, Approve and Engage Homestay Host Procedures*
- *GSI Ongoing monitoring of hosts and placements Procedures*
- *GSI Critical Incident Policy and Procedures*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*
- *Working with Children Check - Blue Cards*
- *GSI's Risk Management Framework*