

INTRODUCTION

This Policy supports Townsville Hockey Association's position in upholding the rights of children and young people and its commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment for all players and participants who engage in activities run by the Townsville Hockey Association Inc.

This Policy has been created to protect all Townsville Hockey Association members who are under 18 years of age from all forms of physical or mental violence, exploitation and abuse (including sexual abuse) while under the care and conduct of any coach, manager or other official.

This Policy provides direction to all Townsville Hockey Clubs and the Townsville Hockey Association on the procedures for complying with the requirements of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (the Commission's Act)*.

BACKGROUND OF THE BLUE CARD SCREENING PROCESS

The blue card screening process assesses a person's eligibility to hold a blue card or exemption card based on their known past police and disciplinary information. The Commission monitors the Police information of all card holders and applicants. If the information changes, the Commission can take steps to immediately protect children from harm. The Commission also monitors service providers and card holders to ensure they are meeting their blue card system obligations and providing safe environments for children.

A volunteer whose application to work with children and young people is approved is issued with a **positive notice** letter and blue card.

A volunteer, whose application is refused, is issued with a **negative notice** which prohibits him/her from working in the particular categories of employment defined by the Commission's Act.

WHO REQUIRES A BLUE CARD or EXEMPTION CARD?

All volunteers and paid employees over the age of 18 who work with children or young people must apply for a blue card or exemption card.

Police and registered teachers who provide child-related services (such as coaching) can apply for an exemption card.

Townsville Hockey Association has recognised and accepted that parents who are actively involved in working with and/or supervising children are not always involved in the same or similar activities as their child. Therefore parents who are involved in an official capacity with juniors are required to complete the blue card screening procedures.

Children under 18 years of age who are volunteers are **not** required to obtain a blue card unless they are a trainee student doing a placement as part of their studies with an education provider.

The following is a list of persons who must obtain a positive notice blue card:

- Board Members
- Club and Association Committee Members
- Coaches
- Managers
- Umpires
- Technical Bench Operators
- First Aid Officers
- Paid Employees

NOTE: The list above provides examples of roles that require a blue card, there may be more roles that are not listed. Any volunteer involved in working with participants under the age of 18 years must complete the screening process.

PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING THE BLUE CARD APPLICATION/RENEWAL

- 1 The Townsville Hockey Association advises each Club administrator that they must warn any employee/volunteer prior to signing a blue card application, that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application. Penalties may apply to the organisation if a person is not warned. Each individual person who applies for a blue card or renewal is then responsible themselves for deciding whether they fall into the 'disqualified person' category. It is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application. Penalties of up to five years imprisonment or a fine of up to \$50,000 may apply.
- 2 The Townsville Hockey Association shall require all volunteers and paid employees of the four Hockey Clubs and the THA to complete the appropriate blue card application/renewal form which includes consent to check police information.

Note: Proof of Identity must be sighted by the Club or Association administrator when completing the application forms as specified on the application forms.

- 3 All volunteers must hold a blue card **before** they start volunteering in any area of regulated employment. Paid employees can commence regulated child-related work after they have lodged a completed application with the Commission.
- 4 Volunteers who currently hold a blue card or who have submitted an application through another organization/employer will be requested to complete an "Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card/application" form. This form then updates employment details with the Commission and enables the Commission to advise the Townsville Hockey Association of related matters.
- 5 If a volunteer changes to paid employment they will need to lodge a Volunteer to Paid Transfer form with the Commission.

Note: It is an offence for an employee to fail to notify the Commission on the appropriate form of any change in personal details within 14 days.

EMPLOYEE REGISTER

The Townsville Hockey Association and each Hockey Club are required to maintain a Blue Card Employee Register that records all volunteers and paid employees involved in child-related activities. (Appendix 1)

The Register includes the following details:

- Name and Date of Birth
- Club and Team that the Volunteer is associated with
- Whether or not the person requires a blue card
- The type of application (paid or volunteer)
- The status of the blue card
- If a negative notice or change of status has been issued and any action taken
- The blue card number
- The expiry date of the blue card
- The renewal date (this should be at least 30 days before expiry)

MONITORING

The Townsville Hockey Association and Hockey Clubs may require a volunteer to sign an "Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application" or request that the blue card be sighted from time to time.

NEGATIVE NOTICE, SUSPENDED BLUE CARD, WITHDRAWN APPLICATION – ACTIONS

All parties involved in the following procedures and processes will ensure that any information or actions relating to such issues remain confidential.

Where a person cannot provide proof of holding a current blue card the following will apply:

- (a) In the case of an applicant for a position of office at the Association or a Club, the person shall not be appointed to that position.
- (b) In the case of a person already acting in such a position, the person shall immediately cease to carry out that position.
- (c) Where the person is employed by the Association or a Club, and the member is required to work with children under the age of 18 years, the volunteer will be given the opportunity to respond, with the purpose of determining whether the person should have their employment/participation terminated.

When advice is provided to the Board that any person has any of the following notices from the Commission:

- (a) The person has **withdrawn** their **consent** to Employment Screening and a suitability notice has not been issued; or,
- (b) A notice has been received in relation to **discontinuance** for Employment Screening indicating that the Commission was unable to contact the applicant and the application has been discontinued; or
- (c) The person has had a **change in criminal history** which may be relevant to their child-related employment; or,
- (d) The person has been sent a **negative notice** indicating that the application has NOT been approved under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 and a blue card has NOT been issued.

The Board or its appointee shall do the following:

- (a) **Withdrawn Consent or Discontinuance of Screening** – the volunteer must not fulfill any positions or activities involving young people under the age of 18 years, pending a suitability notice being issued by the Children’s Commission and clearance from the Board or its appointee. The Townsville Hockey Association will advise the Club via a confidential letter and request the President to speak with the volunteer in question in confidence and ensure that the volunteer does not fulfill any positions or activities involving young people under the age of 18 years.
- (b) **Change In Criminal History** – the Board or its appointee will advise the Club President via a confidential letter that the volunteer has had a “Change in Criminal History” and requesting the President to speak with the volunteer in question in confidence and ensure that the volunteer does not fulfill any positions or activities involving children and young people under the age of 18 years. If he/she is acting in a position, he/she must cease to carry out that position. NOTE: The Act states that an Employer must not terminate a person’s employment or continued employment solely or mainly because of the notification of this change however should ensure that the Risk Management strategies cater for this situation.
- (c) **Negative Notice** – A negative notice will be issued if a person has been convicted of a serious offence. Unless they can satisfy the Commissioner that their case is an exceptional one in which it would not harm the best interests of children. The Board or its appointee will suspend the volunteer automatically who has been charged with a “disqualifying offence”.

NOTE: There is no right of appeal where a volunteer has been issued with a negative notice for a conviction for a disqualifying offence where they were sentenced to imprisonment or a disqualification order was made. This means the person is banned for life from holding or applying

for a "Blue Card. If an applicant is issued with a negative notice for any other kind of offence, the person is notified of the decision and the reasons for it. They then have the right to have the decision reviewed by the Children Service Tribunal. The THA will monitor closely the outcomes of any such Negative Notices.

A blue card holder can also become a 'disqualified person' if:

- they are convicted of a disqualifying offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment; or
- become subject to reporting obligations; or
- become subject to a final offender prohibition order; or
- become subject to a disqualification order.

BLUE CARD RENEWALS

All volunteers will be required to renew their blue card every three (3) years.

Volunteers must submit their renewal application **at least 30 days before their blue card expires** to continue working while their renewal application is being processed. Paid employees must submit their renewal application **before their blue card expires** to continue working while their renewal application is being processed.

The Commission will send card holders an invitation to renew their blue card 16 weeks before their card expires. Individuals must notify the Commission of any changes to their contact details.

Please note: exemption cards do not have an expiry date and remain valid as long as the card holder remains a registered teacher or police officer in Queensland.

MAINTENANCE OF INFORMATION

- (a) When the Townsville Hockey Association or Club appointee receives information from the Commissioner which shows that an applicant has a Positive Notice and a blue card was issued, information will be recorded into the blue card Employee Register.
- (b) When the Townsville Hockey Association or Club appointee receives a Negative Notice, Withdrawal, Discontinuance or Change of Criminal History Letter which shows that the person **has not** been issued with a blue card, the volunteer will be identified on the blue card Employee Register and any action taken recorded. For example, action may include restricted activities or suspended to ensure that the volunteer does not fulfill any activities or work that are related to children or young people.
- (c) Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

Blue Card – Employee Register

Name of Organisation:

Nature of services provided to children and young people: Coaching, umpiring, managing, supervision

Categories of Regulated Business and Employment: Sport and active recreation Churches, clubs and associations involving children

Name	DoB	Club & Team <small>T = THA B = Brothers C = Commercials P = Parks W = Wests</small>	Employment Type <small>P = Paid V =Volunteer E = Exec Officer</small>	Is a Blue Card/Exemption Card Required?		Status <small>1. Holds valid blue card 2. Application being processed 3. Negative Notice 4. Blue Card Suspended 5. Application withdrawn</small>	Action <small>If negative notice, suspended or withdrawn</small>	Blue Card Number -----/--	Expiry Date of Blue Card	Renewal Date 30 days prior to expiry
				Y/N	If no, state reason					

Employee Register completed by: _____

Position held: _____

Date Reviewed: _____

The requirement to maintain a register of staff is made pursuant to Section 171 and 172 of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 and Section 3(a)(f)(ii) of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001.