Working With Children (Bluecard) Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to: (a) ensure that Montessori International College (MIC) provides a safe, secure and supportive environment for students by complying with the Queensland Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and associated regulations, and by implementing robust screening, monitoring and risk-management processes for people engaged in child-related work.	
Scope:	This policy applies to all persons engaged by MIC in any capacity that involves child-related or student-related activities, including: • employees (teaching and non-teaching); • volunteers; • contractors and consultants; • trainee students and placement students; • Board Directors and committee members; • visitors where required under legislation.	
Status:	☐ In review ☑ Approved	**Supersedes**: None
Authorised by:	School Principal	**Date of Authorisation**: 04/02/2026
References:	• *Working with children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)* • *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)* • *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* • *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)* • *Queensland Blue Card Services – Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit* • *Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) – Child Protection and Governance Guidance* • *Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) requirements* • Child Risk Management Strategy • Duty of Care Policy	
Review Date:	Annually	**Next Review Date**: February 2027
Policy Owner:	Executive Leadership	

POLICY STATEMENT:

Montessori International College (MIC) is committed to protecting students from harm and

promoting their wellbeing by ensuring that all persons engaged in regulated child-related work are appropriately screened, authorised, monitored and managed in accordance with Queensland law.

MIC will comply with all requirements of the Queensland Blue Card System, including screening, linking, record-keeping, notification, monitoring and risk-management obligations. Decisions relating to screening and engagement will always prioritise the safety, welfare and best interests of students.

PROCEDURE:

Under the legislative framework, MIC is required to comply with all components of the Working With Children (WWC) Blue Card System.

This policy, associated procedures and working instructions outline the obligations, roles, and responsibilities of employers, employees, volunteers and visitors to MIC to create a safe and supportive service environment through:

- Eliminating or mitigating risk to students' health and wellbeing through the MIC Child Risk Management Strategy;
- WWC clearance screening in accordance with this policy; and
- Ongoing compliance and monitoring.

Blue Card System

The Blue Card System is managed by Blue Card Services and:

1. Is a key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children and young people in Queensland;
2. Aims to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people by contributing to the creation of safe and supportive environments; and
3. Is founded on the principle that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Who Requires a WWC Card or Exemption

The Working with Children Check is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work or volunteer with children and involves a check of a person's national criminal history (including all spent convictions, pending and non-conviction charges) and other disciplinary and police information.

As an education provider engaging people as paid employees, volunteers or trainee students to work with children, there are specific categories, exemptions and obligations that apply to each group of people.

MIC cannot make it a compulsory requirement for employees, volunteers or trainee students to hold a WWC Card or an Exemption Card unless they are providing child-related services that are regulated by the Act.

At MIC:

- Registered teachers are not required to hold a WWC Card when teaching within their professional duties but must hold a Working with Children Exemption if undertaking regulated child-related work outside those duties.
- Non-teaching employees must hold a valid WWC Card before commencing regulated employment.
- Volunteers who are not parents of currently enrolled students must hold a WWC Card where required by legislation.
- Board Directors must hold a valid WWC Card before commencing their role, in accordance with Schedule 1 of the WWC Act and the Non-State Schools Accreditation framework.
- Members of the MIC Parents' and Friends' Association do not require a WWC Card if they are the parent of a child currently attending MIC but do require a WWC Card if they are not the parent of a child currently attending MIC.
- Contractors and consultants are assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with legislative requirements.
- Trainee and placement students must not commence placements involving students unless appropriately authorised.

A new employee or volunteer may already hold a current WWC Card / Exemption Card with another organisation. Linking the relevant Card with Blue Card Services will validate the card and link the person to the school. Linking ensures MIC will be notified by Blue Card Services of any change in that person's police information or eligibility status.

It is an offence for a 'regulated business' to share this information with another 'regulated business'.

No Card, No Start: Except where a legislative exemption applies, no person may commence or continue regulated child-related work at MIC without a valid WWC Card or Exemption.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal, the Business Manager and the Administration/Finance Officer are responsible for ensuring that all requirements of the Blue Card screening process are met, including:

- All relevant persons performing regulated employment are required to complete Blue Card screening;
- The appropriate approved form is completed;
- The current required forms are lodged in a timely manner to Blue Card Services;
- The application is accompanied with any required fee, paid in advance, where applicable;
- Existing applications are linked to the organisation by way of formal advice to Blue Card Services;
- The Blue Card Register is accurately maintained and complete;
- All relevant current employees have their renewal applications processed as per legislative requirement; and

- That Blue Card Services are advised of all employees (including volunteers) who leave the organisation and/or cease undertaking 'regulated employment' with that organisation.

Nominated Representatives

The following MIC staff are Nominated Representatives to perform carrying out the tasks necessary to ensure that anyone required to hold a WWC card or Working with Children Exemption are correctly linked with MIC and that accurate and current records are maintained:

- The Principal;
- Business Manager; and
- Administration/Finance Officer.

Nominated Representatives are required to have read this policy and, in particular, be aware of their obligations when supporting the application or linking of an applicant or cardholder, including:

- Taking reasonable steps to verify a person's identity;
- Confirming that the applicant is aware of the procedure being undertaken;
- Handling personal information appropriately and not disclosing personal information where they are not authorised or it is not appropriate to do so;
- Understanding that it is an offence to employ or continue to employ a person who does not hold a Blue Card in regulated employment (unless an exception applies or the person is a registered teacher or police officer who has applied for or holds an Exemption Card);
- Understanding that it is an offence to employ, or continue to employ a disqualified person or negative notice holder in regulated employment and that the organisation cannot employ a restricted person to work with children, even if an exception applies to their role; and
- Being aware that it is an offence to provide a false or misleading statement or document.

Outcome of the Screening

Blue Card Services will issue either;

- A Working with Children Clearance or Working with Children Exemption – a notice declaring the application is approved.

  OR

- A Negative Notice – a notice declaring the application is refused.

Negative Notice

Blue Card Services will inform MIC in writing when an application has been withdrawn or has resulted in a Negative notice. MIC will not be told why, unless the applicant was a disqualified person.

MIC must ensure the applicant does not provide any paid or volunteer 'child-related' services within or for MIC.

It is prohibited for a regulated business to employ a person with a current Negative Notice. A person with a current Negative Notice may not apply for, start, or continue in regulated employment.

Notification of Changes in Details

Employees and volunteers have certain obligations in advising Blue Card Services to ensure eligibility to undertake child related work, including:

Personal information

- Move or change postal address;
- New telephone or contact number;
- Change of name;
- Change in eligibility (e.g. no longer registered as a teacher).

Employment circumstances

- No longer working with an organisation;
- Starting new child-related work or study.

Lost or stolen cards

Report to Blue Card Services within 14 days all lost or stolen Blue Cards.

Change in police information

An employee or volunteer must immediately notify Blue Card Services and their employer of any change to their police information.

Suspension or cancellation

An employee or volunteer cannot apply or continue to work in regulated employment if their Blue Card is suspended or cancelled.

Notification obligations of MIC

MIC is required to notify Blue Card Services of any:

1. Police information of a person currently holding a Blue or Exemption Card, if known, linked to that organisation.
2. Change in MIC contact details.
3. Person/s who leave the organisation.

MIC is responsible for:

4. Complete and transparent processes to support compliant implementation and maintenance of the Blue Card System;
5. Maintaining a complete and accurate Blue Card Register;
6. Ensuring timely renewal of Blue Cards;
7. Responding to Negative Notices and suspension of Blue Cards; and
8. Regular internal audits to ensure reliability of data and records.

Cancellation of Blue Card or Exemption Card

If MIC receives written notification that a Blue Card or Exemption Card belonging to an employee or a volunteer has been cancelled, Blue Card Services are required to immediately

notify MIC in writing (an e-mail to one of the Nominated Representatives is appropriate), providing the details of the card holder and a copy of the correspondence.

MIC will take the necessary steps to ensure that the relevant card holder no longer continues in 'regulated employment'.

The relevant Blue Card Register is to reflect the cancellation and a notation of the action taken.

Renewal

Employees including volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their Blue Card is renewed prior to the card expiry date. Blue Card Services will contact the card holder prior to the expiry date. No contact is made by Blue Card Services to MIC.

Employees and volunteers without a current Blue Card may not continue to provide child-related employment to the MIC unless a renewal application has been lodged before a current card expires.

MIC cannot employ or continue to employ a person, other than a registered teacher, without a current and valid WWC Card.

Penalties

There are a range of penalties for not complying with the Blue Card system laws.

- Employing paid or volunteer workers without Blue Cards. ***Maximum penalty:*** *$6,672.50 (50 penalty units).*
- Employing a person when employee has been notified that:
    - The employee's application has been *deemed withdrawn* because they have been charged with a disqualifying offence; or
    - That a current negative notice has been issued to the employee; or
    - That the employee's Working with Children Clearance has been cancelled; or
    - That the employee is a disqualified person and unable to perform work within regulated employment; or
    - That, due to a change in their police information, the employee is no longer able to perform work within regulated employment; or
    - The employee's Working with Children Clearance (Blue Card) has been suspended; or
    - Anything other than a positive notice with respect to that person.

Maximum penalty: *$26,690 (200 penalty units) or 2 years imprisonment*.

Failure to develop a risk management strategy **each year**, as required by the Act.
Maximum penalty: *$2,669 (20 penalty units).*

Failure to warn an employee, before they sign a WWC Card application, that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a WWC card application.
Maximum penalty: *$1,334.50 (10 penalty units).*

- A person carrying on a regulated business without holding a Working with Children Clearance. ***Maximum penalty: $66,725.00*** *(500 penalty units) or 5 years imprisonment*.

Full details can be found on the Blue Card Services website:
www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/offences-andpenalties.html

Complaints

In the event that any person has a concern that the processes within this WWC Blue Card Policy and associated procedure have not been complied with, the person is able to make a complaint in writing to the School Principal.

If the complaint directly relates to non-compliance of the Child Protection Policy (mandatory component) then the complaint must be made as outlined in the Child Risk Management Strategy.

Managing Breaches

All breaches of the Act and/or of this policy and associated procedure either reported or identified are to be managed appropriately and as soon as practicable by the Principal and Business Manager.

The MIC Board Chairperson is to be immediately notified in writing by the Principal of all reported or identified breaches of the Act.

The MIC Board may consult with the Blue Card Services to assist in the determination of action required. Such actions may include; an internal investigation by MIC, the engagement of an external investigator or the commission of a review or an audit.

Online Portal and Online Applications

Once established and where possible, MIC will utilise the Blue Card Services Organisation Portal to manage its Blue Card records.

The Portal will enable MIC to perform tasks in real-time and will allow for secure exchange of sensitive information.

The Online portal will allow MIC to:

- See all Blue Card records, including current status and outcome of applications;
- Create and manage a link between MIC and an applicant/card holder; and
- Access real-time information and important updates and notifications.

The Nominated Representatives will each be authorised as 'portal users' to support the management of the Blue Card obligations of MIC.

MIC will encourage applicants to apply for or renew a Working with Children Clearance via the Blue Card Services online applicant portal. However, applicants will continue to be able to complete and submit paper applications by email, post and in-person delivery if they are unable or reluctant to apply using the online applicant portal.

Managing Existing Blue Card Holders

If a person joins MIC and already has a Blue Card, MIC will verify the validity of the Blue Card and, if the person holds a paid Blue Card, lodge a Link an applicant/cardholder to this organisation form through the Blue Card Services Portal. This will ensure that important

notifications in relation to the WWC Card holder are received, including if the card has been cancelled or suspended.

To check the validity of a prospective employee's card, it is possible to do so on the Blue Card Services website provided that you have details of the employee's name as it appears on the card, full card number (including the number following the '/' on the card) and its expiry date.

It is still a mandatory requirement to link an applicant/card holder to MIC.

Access and Communication

The Principal will ensure that the Working With Children Policy is made available:

- to all staff members via electronic copy kept in an easily accessible online location;
- to all families via electronic copy kept in an easily accessible online location; and
- on request to staff and families in hardcopy.

The Principal will ensure that any changes to the Working With Children Policy are communicated:

- to staff members via email;
- to families via the school newsletter Pathways.

Compliance and Monitoring

In line with the *Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011*, MIC will ensure that:

- Copies of this policy and any related procedures are readily accessible and available for inspection by the Nominated Supervisor, staff and families.
- Parents of students enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before the service makes any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the service's provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service or the family's ability to utilise the service.

Blue Card Services constantly monitor change in status to police information of WWC Card holders and take immediate steps to protect children from potential harm.

MIC has a legislative requirement to ensure:

- All employees, volunteers, and contractors who are required to hold a WWC Card or Working with Children Exemption are correctly linked to MIC;
- That an employee and volunteer register (Blue Card Register) is established and maintained;
- All employees, volunteers and business operators' details are accurate and complete in the Blue Card Register regardless of whether they require a Blue Card or Exemption Card or are exempt by virtue of legislation;
- maintain the Blue Card Register and associated documents through diligent quality control.

Significant penalties apply for non-compliance.