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# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

To: All Volunteers  
From: John Doherty, Superintendent of Schools  
Re: Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS)

First and foremost, I hope everyone is enjoying a safe and happy summer. This memo is intended to bring you up-to-date with the recently implemented state mandated Fingerprinting Identification Process which will affect volunteers within the Reading Public Schools. This memo is intended for any person who wishes to volunteer to participate in various school activities, which might place you in a position which both the state and federal government has deemed positions requiring a background review via both a **CORI** (Criminal Offender Record Information) and a new state required **SAFIS** (Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System). Below, I've include a brief description of the law, how it affects certain school volunteers, and the process that we will use for those volunteers. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Reading Public Schools Administrative Offices or your child's building principal.

**A brief description of the law:** In January 2013 (and amended in September 2013 by Acts of 2013 Chapter 77 ), Governor Duval Patrick signed into law, G.L. Chapter 459 of the Acts of 2012, "An Act Relative to Background Checks." This new law expands what public, private and parochial schools, including approved private special education schools and child care facilities, already do in conducting state Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on all employees at least once every three years. Specifically, it requires a fingerprint-based state and national criminal record check for all school employees and certain volunteers. The SAFIS (Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System) was developed to provide this service.

**How this process will affect current and future volunteers within the Reading Public Schools:** All volunteers will continue to receive a CORI background check once every three years. Beginning on October 15, 2014, anyone who volunteers and may/could have 'unsupervised contact with **Reading Public School students' after school hours and/or on overnight field trips**, will be subject to the same fingerprint (SAFIS) based checks as the staff of the Reading Public Schools are currently being subjected. The reports from this procedure must be processed and submitted to the Reading Public Schools before your help as a volunteer for such activities as "after school activities or overnight school events" can be accepted. Although this is a major change in the way schools have done such activities in the past, the ultimate reason for these actions is to protect our students.

## Questions and Answers:

1. What is the difference between a CORI background check and a fingerprint (SAFIS) based check?
  - a. A CORI background check provides background information on any crime committed in Massachusetts. Therefore, if a person committed a crime in another state, the information would not be reported on a CORI. A SAFIS based check is completed on all crimes committed in the United States. A CORI check is free of charge while the state charges a fee (see below) for an employee or volunteer to have a fingerprint background check.

2. When will I need to be fingerprinted?
  - a. The Reading Public Schools has begun the process. **If you have volunteered for an activity that may/could have unsupervised contact with Reading Public School students' after school hours and/or on an overnight field trip after October 15, 2014, you will need to get a fingerprint based check.** This should be done as soon as possible to ensure the process is complete before any event which you have volunteered to participate.
3. What will the process be for doing the background check?

Unfortunately, we cannot provide the background checks onsite. Volunteers will need to go to a state designated location to be fingerprinted. Currently there are several locations that can be found on the website <http://www.identogo.com/FP/Massachusetts.aspx>

The current locations are:

* Framingham	* Brockton
* Leominster	* Fall River
* Milford	* Martha's Vineyard
* Worcester	* Plymouth
* Dorchester	* Raynham
* Beverly	* Westport
* Tewksbury	* Greenfield
* Wilmington	* Pittsfield
* Bourne	* Springfield
4. How often will I need to submit to the fingerprint-based state and national criminal history checks?

Every effort will be made to minimize the need for submitting additional fingerprints. Volunteers who continue to participate/volunteer in the same school/district are not required to re-submit to fingerprint-based state/national criminal history checks once the district has deemed them suitable (referred to as "Suitability Determination") to participate/volunteer (this is a determination made by the school administration concerning whether anything contained in the individual's Criminal History Record Information [CHRI] renders the individual unfit to participate in any activity that may include direct and unmonitored contact with children) during certain school functions. CORI checks will continue as they have in the past, every three years.
5. For how many years will the Reading Public School District retain my SAFIS report?

Seven years or as long as you participate in school programs held by the district, whichever is longer.
6. Who is subject to this process?

All current and prospective school volunteers and employees in the following categories:

  - a. Any full or part-time employee who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.
  - b. Any substitute employee who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.
  - c. Any student teacher, apprentice, volunteer, or intern working at a school who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.
  - d. Any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.
  - e. Any volunteer who may/could have unsupervised and direct contact with children after school hours and on overnight field trips.

7. What information is retained by the Reading Public Schools on the SAFIS report?

A record of suitability determination will be retained. The following information will be included in the determination:

- a. The name and date of birth of the employee or applicant.
- b. The date on which the school volunteer received the national criminal history check results.
- c. The suitability determination (either 'suitable' or 'unsuitable')

8. What if I decide to work/volunteer within another district in the state? Is my SAFIS report 'transferable'?

A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation **must** be provided to another school employer, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom the school employer conducted a suitability determination.

Attached, in this email, is some important information regarding SAFIS: *SAFID Registration Guide for PreK-12 Grade Education (ESE)*. This guide should assist you as you schedule an appointment for fingerprinting. In addition, I've attached a copy of the *SAFIS Form 004: How to Change, Correct, or Update Your National Criminal History Record Response*. This form is necessary should you need to request to change anything on your national criminal record.

In order to comply with this employment requirement, please follow the steps below:

- \* Visit <http://www.identogo.com/FP/Massachusetts.aspx> to schedule an appointment at one of the locations listed above as soon as possible..
- \* When prompted, you should indicate: READING IS A PreK-12 EDUCATION (ESE)  
DISTRICT/AGENCY.
- \* **Provider ID** is the building code. Use the code listed **below** for your individual building.
  - If you are a substitute teacher or a district employee, use the **Reading(District)** code.
  - Each school building has a different code that must be used when scheduling an appointment.
  - All volunteers can either choose the school that they will volunteer in or, if they have Children in multiple schools, they can select the **Reading (District)** code.
- \* Select a payment method (you can pay online or at the time of your appointment)
  - \$55.00 for licensed educators
  - \$35.00 for all other school personnel and volunteers
- \* Bring registration confirmation sheet with you to appointment with the appropriate ID.
- \* **IMPORTANT** : As soon as possible, bring the receipt from your fingerprinting appointment to Kristyn Cohen at Central Office. You can drop it off in person or send it via inter-office mail.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE BUILDING CODES

<b>Reading (District)</b>	<b>02460000</b>	Killam Elementary	02460017
Barrows Elementary	02460002	Parker Middle	02460310
Birch Meadow Elementary	02460005	RISE	02460001
Coolidge Middle	02460305	RMHS	02460505
Joshua Eaton Elementary	02460010	Wood End	02460020

In closing, I hope this information is helpful and look forward to your help and support of our students for the 2014-2015 school year. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Reading Public Schools Administrative Offices.