

Office of Human Resources
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NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS: WHY CORI REPORTS?

The Newton Public School System is required by state law (Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002) to conduct criminal background checks on current and prospective employees, volunteers, school transportation providers, and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Criminal offender record information ("CORI") must be obtained from the Criminal History Systems Board. These checks must take place at least every three years. The legislature entitled this law, "An Act Further Protecting Children." In other words, it is designed to safeguard the students in our schools. In the process of carrying out this obligation, it is also the intent of the district to protect the rights and privacy of those who are asked to complete a CORI check.

In order to accomplish all of the above, we ask that volunteers complete a CORI Request Form. This will provide us with the authorization and the information needed to conduct a CORI check. An authorized staff member (the principal or office secretary) must verify the information on the form by reviewing some form of government-issued photographic identification (such as a driver's license). Signed verification is required by legislation.

Please understand that a CORI report will give us access to all available (conviction, non-conviction, and pending) criminal offender records. For this reason, you should be aware that you have the right to obtain a CORI report yourself, and may do so by contacting the Criminal History Systems Board. (You can get information about this and download forms from <http://www.mass.gov/chsb>.) Information contained in a CORI report is not subject to the public records law and may not be disseminated to unauthorized individuals for any purpose "other than to further the protection of children." CORI requests are submitted by the school district's Office of Human Resources. Reports are reviewed only by the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and/or the Assistant Director. If the report reveals information that the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources reasonably determines may put students at risk, that information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only. In most cases, this means that the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources may inform the prospective volunteer directly and possibly the building principal. Within these bounds, this information is held in strictest confidence.

No-one with direct and unmonitored contact with students can be allowed to volunteer without first having had a satisfactory CORI check. All of this is motivated by a desire to protect the safety of our students, while respecting your privacy to the degree possible. We take this responsibility very seriously, wish that we all lived in a world that this was simply not necessary, but understand why the need for CORI reports emerged. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

August, 2005