

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All schools located and operating within the Catholic Diocese of Peoria must have a completed criminal background check for each full-time or part-time employee or volunteer. This background check must be completed for all personnel working in the schools and is a condition for employment. It is also required for all volunteers. In addition, all employees and volunteers must complete the diocesan Safe Environment program.

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BACKGROUND CHECKS

The background check consists of two separate procedures: a fingerprint-based criminal history records check as well as a background check done through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, known as the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS).

The following adults are subject to the background check requirements:

- All employees (full and part-time), including personnel who work in the school under a contract with another business or organization (e.g. food service, janitorial service, etc.)
- Substitute teachers
- All coaches (head coach and assistants)
- All volunteers, even those who come to school for a one time event
- All vendors/contractors who work consistently inside the school and/or for an extended period of time in the school must have background checks (see Policy C-403). Vendors who just deliver milk, food, mail, etc. do not have to go through a background check.

As long as the criminal history records check and CANTS check are in process, an adult can begin working/volunteering in the school.

Effective July 1, 2007, all newly hired elementary and secondary school employees shall be fingerprinted electronically using Live Scan technology. The results of the electronic fingerprinting will be returned to the Office of Catholic Schools, and the school principal will be notified of the results. Ink-based fingerprinting will continue to be used for volunteers.

The principal shall perform a check against the Illinois Sex Offender Management Database and the Statewide Murder and Violent Offender Against Youth Database. Employment is provisional pending satisfactory results of a live-scanned, fingerprint background check, a CANTS check, drug screening and the check of the two databases.

All student teachers should have a criminal background check from their college or university. If the college or university does not require a criminal background check, then the local school must have the student teacher submit to an electronic fingerprint-based criminal history records check using Live Scan technology before he or she can begin teaching in the school. In such cases, the local school would be responsible for covering the expense of the background check. Additionally, all student teachers are required to fill out a CANTS form when they begin working in the school.

All college and university employees who work in the Catholic schools of the diocese must also have a criminal background check and CANTS check.

All Illinois public school districts are required under Illinois law to conduct criminal background checks for employees for certified and non-certified positions. Therefore, public school district employees who work in the Catholic schools of the diocese are only required to fill out a CANTS form before they begin working in the schools.

Special guest speakers are not required to have background checks. They should never be left alone with children. Classroom teachers should be with their class at all times.

All reports related to the CANTS and criminal history records checks are to be kept in a secure place that is other than the personnel files of the individuals. Reports will be kept in a separate file away from normal traffic. Only the principal, pastor, canonical pastor, the Office of Catholic Schools, and other diocesan authorities shall have access to these files. Copies of all reports are to be retained at the individual school location as well as sent to the Office of Catholic Schools for review and retention.

All incidents of criminal conviction, or indicated incidents or pending investigations by DCFS must be fully addressed by the principal with the employee or volunteer. To determine whether such information prohibits employment with the school, the principal must consult with the Superintendent of Schools prior to meeting with the employee or volunteer.

OPTION FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Individuals working as substitute teachers in schools in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria who are also working as substitute teachers in local public schools/districts and have been fingerprinted using Live Scan technology are **not** required to be fingerprinted again. Copies of the FBI response and the Illinois State Police Bureau of Identification report from the Regional Office of Education or public school district holding the Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) number for the individual's report will be accepted. Copies may be mailed or hand delivered to the school(s).

A background check done through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (CANTS), screening for drug usage, and evidence of completion of safe environment training are also required for an individual to work as a substitute teacher in the schools in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria.

When a substitute teacher only works in the Catholic schools or is later offered full- or part-time employment in a school in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria, he/she is then required to be fingerprinted by Live Scan technology using the Catholic Diocese of Peoria ORI number.

All incidents of criminal conviction or indicated incidents or pending investigations by DCFS or drug usage indications must be fully addressed by the principal with the substitute. To determine whether such information prohibits employment with the school, the principal must consult with the Superintendent of Schools prior to meeting with the substitute.

