



Child Protection Policy

Purpose

Compete 360 is an organization that creates and facilitates *design thinking* programs for school teachers/staff to implement with their students. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Compete 360 is providing a safe environment for partnering with schools.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, **an Employee** is defined as an adult applying for a paid position with Compete 360, and **a Volunteer** is defined as an adult applying for an unpaid position to mentor a school design team for Compete 360.

Required clearances

The following certifications are required for the personnel defined above:

- Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police
- Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse).
- Additionally, a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police if the volunteer has not been a Pennsylvania resident continuously for the past 10 years
- Volunteers who are not required to obtain the FBI Clearance because they are applying for a volunteer position and have been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past ten years must affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under section 6344.

These forms can be accessed at www.compete360.org/volunteer

Record Keeping

Clearances will be kept on file with Compete 360 and are required to be updated every 60 months (5 years).

Contact with Youth

Compete 360 partners with interested schools to help teachers and staff in those schools implement a design thinking program with their students. The program is led by school teacher or other school staffer, but Compete 360 employees or volunteer design mentors who have their required clearances may visit the classroom throughout the project to assist the teacher and students with program activities. Contact between Compete 360 employees/volunteers and students is to be supervised by the teacher who enrolled in the design thinking program; volunteers cannot be left alone with students.

Procedures for reporting suspected abuse

Anyone may report suspected child abuse. However, the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law ("CPSL") imposes a reporting mandate, or requirement, on any adult who comes into contact with children in the course of his or her work or professional practice, specifically including "someone who is employed by the school or who provides a program, activity or service sponsored by a school."

The CPSL stipulates that a report is required when

1. The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service;
2. The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child; and,
3. The mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the care, supervision, guidance or training of the reporter, has been abused.

The following two items require a report, regardless of whether the child is under the care of the reporter:

- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse; or
- An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

The mandate to report applies to all suspected child abuse. Possible abusers could include, for example, parents, relatives, older siblings, neighbors, coaches, school teachers, family friends and other children.

A mandated reporter need not be able to determine who is responsible for the abuse, i.e., identify the alleged offender.

A mandated reporter need not make a first-hand observation of the suspected child abuse victim.

The CPSL specifically grants legal immunity to any individual who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected abuse by a mandated reporter can result in charges and fines. A mandated reporter may also be charged as a “perpetrator” in some cases for failure to protect a child.

Links to websites containing additional information and guidance

- Official Pennsylvania website - Keep Kids Safe – comprehensive website containing information on the Child Protective Services Laws
<http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/laws/index.htm>
- Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/findaform/childabusehistoryclearanceforms/>
- Report Abuse Phone Number - 1-800-932-0313
- Mandated Reporter website
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check website
<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- Federal Criminal History Background Checks
[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/background_checks_\(act_114\)/7493/federal_criminal_history_background_checks/601327](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/background_checks_(act_114)/7493/federal_criminal_history_background_checks/601327)