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Welcome

From the Office of Independent Education, welcome to the March Scholarship Programs Newsletter. As Spring break season sets in, it is important to take care of any issues you may have with compliance for the 2015-16 school year. Helpful links for compliance can be found under the [Compliance Resources](#) section of the Florida School Choice website. If you have any questions about how to update any information regarding your private school and you cannot find answers on the website, please contact your [regional manager](#).

Ethics Policy

Florida law requires private schools that participate in the state scholarship programs to adopt policies that establish standards of ethical conduct for teachers and administrators. To meet these statutory requirements, your school's policy must contain several specific elements. The policy must include

- a requirement that teachers and administrators be trained on your school's policy;
- the duty of school staff to report alleged employee or administrator misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of students; and
- the procedures for reporting alleged employee or administrator misconduct.

In addition, your school's policy must point out the laws that provide immunity from liability for those who report a teacher or administrator's misconduct.

Notices with information about how to report misconduct must be posted at your school site and on your school's website. Several sample notices are available through our website.

For more information on this and other compliance topics, contact your Regional

Fax: 850-245-0875
E-mail:
schoolchoice@fldoe.org
On the Web
at: www.floridaschoolchoice.org

Manager.

As private schools resolve compliance-related issues, it is important for both renewing schools and new participants to understand the employee fingerprinting requirements. Every employee or contracted personnel with direct student contact must electronically submit a set of fingerprints through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a state and national background screening. The screening results must be securely stored at the school's location and be available for inspection by the Department of Education should your school be selected for a site visit.

Please note that Department of Children and Families (DCF) background checks do not meet the statutory screening requirements for participation in the state scholarship programs because DCF does not provide the results to the private school for screening against [s.435.04](#) and [1012.315, F.S.](#) Only teachers with a valid Florida teaching certificate are exempt per [s.1002.421\(2\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

If you have any questions about these requirements, please review the [Employee Compliance Resources](#) available on the School Choice website.

Employee Fingerprinting

FTC Norm-Reference Testing

Private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program are reminded of the requirement to administer, or make provisions for FTC students in grades 3-10 to take one of the nationally norm-referenced tests identified by the Department of Education. The approved assessments and specific instructions are available on the School Choice website at:

[www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/
CTC/norm_referenced_assessment.asp](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/norm_referenced_assessment.asp).

Participating private schools must make arrangements to administer one of the approved listed tests during the 2014-15 school year, unless the private school has requested and received approval to use an alternate assessment. If you have any questions related to this requirement, please review the information on the page

lined above, or contact your Regional Manager.

McKay Guardian Reminder

According to the McKay Scholarship Program Rule (6A-6.0970, F.A.C.), prior to receiving a scholarship payment, all parents of participating students must have on file with the Department Form IEPC-AFF1, Affidavit, signed and notarized affirming the validity of the parent's signature. When a student begins participating in the McKay Scholarship Program or transfers to another private school while receiving the scholarship, the parent or guardian should complete the affidavit.

If a household needs to change the name listed on the scholarship checks, the private school should submit a Guardian Issue Form and attach the applicable supporting documentation, such as the adoption documentation, new social security number, marriage/death certificate, or power of attorney documentation. A Parent Affidavit for the new guardian should also be submitted. For more information on this and other McKay Scholarship topics, see the [McKay Training](#) section of our website.

Mark Your Calendar



March 1— Scholarship Compliance Forms due for 2015-16 participation.

March 2—Date by which a new student must be enrolled to receive the fourth quarterly payment.

March 3-10—Attendance Verification week for the final payment period.

May 1—Date by which all Compliance issues must be resolved.

June 1—Date by which requests for missing payments must be submitted.

July 3—Intent filing deadline for the September 1 payment.

August 2—Enrollment deadline for the September 1 payment.

Questions? Please contact your Regional Manager.
