



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

**MAY 28, 2021**

**VIA EMAIL ONLY: [lcrockett@safecommunitiespa.org](mailto:lcrockett@safecommunitiespa.org)**

Ms. Linda Crockett, Director  
Safe Communities  
Lancaster Plain Communities Task Force  
313 West Liberty Street, Suite 242  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603

Dear Ms. Crockett and Members of the Lancaster Plain Communities Taskforce:

The Department of Human Services (department), Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) appreciates the opportunity to discuss the important work the Lancaster Plain Communities Taskforce is doing to strengthen culturally responsive support for ensuring children and families have access and information to align with Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (Title 23 section 63).

As we discussed during our meeting, non-public, non-licensed schools sponsored by bona fide religious organizations meet the CPSL definition of non-public schools and are required to obtain background checks under Section 6344(a.1)(2) which applies to "School Employees not governed by the provisions of the Public school Code..." Non-public school employees are required to comply with Section 6344.

Additionally, the employees/teachers in these schools are mandated reporters under CPSL Section 6311(a)(4) which makes school employees mandated reporters. As noted above, Nonpublic schools are included under the definition of school in Section 6303. The mandated reporter training requirements in the CPSL under Section 6383 apply to those holding licenses under the Department of State and those subject to the department's regulations. Nonpublic school employees do not fit within these categories. However, it is the position of OCYF that these non-public school employees, as mandated reporters, are required to receive training and those requirements are under the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) guidance. The OCYF [KeepKidsSafe website](#) advises "[Act 126](#) requires that all school entities (a public school, charter school, cyber charter school, private school, nonpublic school, intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school) and independent contractors of school entities provide child abuse recognition and reporting training to all employees, including contracted substitute teachers who have direct contact with children. For more information and for a list of approved trainings, please visit the [Pennsylvania Department of Education's website](#)."

OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Act 126 amends the Public-School Code. Section 1205.6 makes the training requirements applicable to nonpublic schools, so these schools are covered by the training requirement. PDE issued guidance on this training requirement which is available at <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Safe%20Schools/Act%20126%20-%20Child%20Abuse%20Reporting/Act%20126%20FAQ.pdf> and <https://www.centennialisd.org/cms/lib/PA01001061/Centricity/Domain/28/Act%20126%20Info%20Sheet.pdf>.

Ensuring all teachers and employees for schools receive background checks prior to employment and ensuring all mandated reporters receive training on meeting this requirement increases safety for our children across the State.

OCYF looks forward to our ongoing partnership with the Lancaster Plain Community Taskforce in all efforts to improve and strengthen child protection efforts. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or opportunities for partnership.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Rubin  
Deputy Secretary

c: *(via email only)*

Ms. Jennie Pettet, Director, OCYF Bureau of Children and Family Services  
Members of the Plain Communities Task Force:

The Hon. Dennis E. Reinaker; Alice Yoder, Executive Director, Community Health, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health; Mandy Billman, LSW, Director, Sexual Assault Prevention and Counseling Center, YWCA Lancaster; Brittany Leffler, Counselor and Educator, YWCA Lancaster; Ann Martin, Esq., Gibbel Kraybill & Hess, LLP; Scott MacDerment, Parole Officer, Sex Offender Unit, Lancaster County Adult Probation/Parole Services; Gene and Nancy Forrey, and Mary Boll.