



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
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CHRISTINE NORBUT BEYER, MSW
Commissioner

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Dear District or Nonpublic School Administrator:

New Jersey Law now permits specific individuals to participate in the transportation of school students in certain vehicles. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-20.1, any board of education, governing body of a nonpublic school, or State agency may designate school personnel to transport school children to and from school in a vehicle with eight passengers or less. These designated personnel must meet a series of eligibility criteria to be deemed qualified, which includes a Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) background check from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This letter serves to inform your organization that if your transportation department implements this program to facilitate "the transportation of school students in certain vehicles," **all** drivers within the program must have a CARI clearance.

What Is a CARI Check?

A CARI background check is a review of DCF's system to determine whether an individual has been substantiated for an incident of child abuse and/or neglect. A CARI background check may only be conducted in relation to a person's involvement or employment with certain types of agencies, as permitted by law.

Who Should Be CARI Checked Under N.J.S.A. 18A:39-20.1?

It is important to determine who would be subject to a CARI background check if your organization desires to implement the "transportation of students in certain vehicles." To clarify, a CARI check is only required and permitted for those who are drivers in the specific program of "transporting students in certain vehicles." Furthermore, the authorization of drivers can only be extended to school personnel. CARI background checks are authorized for drivers within the program only, and shall not be submitted for any other personnel. **New Jersey law, N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.11 prohibits further disclosure or use of the results of CARI checks outside the express purpose for which they were obtained.**

How to file a CARI?

1. Identify an Administrator

The CARI approval process and the Online Application System must be administered at the district administrative level. School districts will need to identify a district administrator to create and maintain the district's account. The district administrator will also be responsible for submitting and receiving CARI applications and results.

2. Create a District Account

To access the CARI Online Application System, a school district with participating drivers will need to set up a facility account by visiting <https://www.njportal.com/DCF/CARI>. The website will prompt the identified administrator to **“Create a New CARI Account”** and will provide tutorials for setting up the district's account. When creating an account, select **“Department of Education — Student Transportation”** from the drop-down list of **Program/Application Types**.

To set up a CARI account, the school district's CARI administrator will need to provide their **“District Code”** and provide the **“Portal Pin # 045126.”**

Next, the administrator will be prompted to create a *My New Jersey* account username. This will be the username and password used by the account administrator to log in to the Online Application System moving forward.

3. Invite Applicants to Submit CARI Check Requests

The Online Application System will allow the account administrator to invite potential drivers to complete an online CARI form and to check the status of submitted applications. Potential drivers will be able to complete the electronic CARI application through an emailed link, or on-site at the school. The application can also be completed using a personal computer or smart phone; however, the email invitation link will expire after two weeks. All completed CARI checks are returned through the Online Application System, with the results emailed directly to the school's CARI account administrator.

Please note, a fifteen (\$15) dollar service fee is associated with this CARI check and is to be paid either by the CARI applicant or applicable School District, whichever the School Board determines.

If your organization **does not** plan to authorize the transportation of students pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-20.1, then your organization may disregard the notification contained in this letter. However, your organization should keep this letter in the event it decides to implement this option in the future.

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families thanks you for your partnership and your collective efforts to keep New Jersey students safe, healthy, and connected.