Since 2004, the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) have required our teacher education students to undergo fingerprinting and criminal records checks in order to assure that nothing in their records precludes their working with school children. This requirement has been expanded to include any faculty member, staff member, or student whose activities (e.g., research projects, class visits to schools, technology support) involve direct access to children. Moreover, other nearby school systems, private schools, and nonprofit agencies now require fingerprinting and background checks. In addition, the State of Tennessee has enacted several statutes that require such background checks. Thus, it is extremely important that we comply with state law, demonstrate our commitment to protecting the welfare of children, and, thereby, help maintain our access to research, practicum, and internship sites with children.

Peabody teacher education undergraduate and graduate students are required to be fingerprinted within two weeks after they first begin courses. Clearance is considered valid, because of the commitment signed on the required Consent for Background Clearance form, as long as the student is continuously enrolled (not necessarily including summers) at Vanderbilt. Additionally, non-education majors enrolled in classes (e.g., EDUC 1020, SPED 1010) that visit schools or agencies where children are present are required to undergo fingerprinting and criminal records checks before they can participate. Instructors of these classes should alert their students at the beginning of each semester and should include a notice in the course syllabus. Class visits to schools should be delayed to allow time for completion of the criminal records check for all students enrolled in the course.

In addition, all students, staff, faculty, contractors, and others whose Peabody activities cause them to have contact with children or vulnerable adults either on or off campus in other capacities are required to undergo fingerprinting and criminal record checks. These persons include researchers, teachers, mentors, technical staff and any others who are engaged in activities such as testing, teaching, mentoring, documenting, or overseeing children and/or vulnerable adults.

For questions see the FAQ's or contact bco@vanderbilt.edu after reviewing the FAQ section.