

Questions and Answers about Homeschooling taken from the California Department of Education

Schooling at Home

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1. **Is schooling at home recognized in California as exempting a student from public school attendance?**

California statutes do not explicitly authorize home schooling. Whether a home schooled child is attending a private school, and therefore is exempt from public school attendance, is a decision made by local school districts and law enforcement authorities.

2. **What public school options are available to kindergarten through grade twelve students in California for schooling at home?**

Many public schools offer independent study or home-based study as an option. California has a growing number of charter schools which offer different types of schooling in non-traditional settings. To learn what options your local schools offer, start by asking the public school district in which you live what programs allow schooling at home. You might also contact other school districts near yours or your county office of education. If your district or county does not offer a program that a neighboring district or county offers, you may be able to obtain an inter-district transfer that allows your child to be registered in another district's program. A more detailed discussion of the various educational options available is located in the CDE *Fact Book 2009* (pages 94-99) on the CDE [Fact Book](#) Web page.

For assistance with determining the best public school option, use the Internet to read about [independent study](#) and about [charter schools](#). You can also call the Educational Options Office at 916-322-5012 or listen to pre-recorded schooling at home information at 916-319-0878.

3. **May a parent who is schooling his/her own child at home file a Private School Affidavit?**

Yes. A parent offering or providing private school instruction and who meets the requirements of [EC Section 33190](#) may file an Affidavit in the manner described. However, filing such an Affidavit with the CDE does not constitute any opinion by the CDE as to whether a student enrolled in that school is exempt from public school attendance.

4. **Can a child being taught by a parent at home be exempt from the compulsory education laws?**

Yes. If the Private School Affidavit is properly filed, and the school meets the criteria for a full-time private school, a local school district can allow an exemption. [EC Section 48200](#) requires all children between ages 6 and 18 to attend public, full-time day school, and requires the parent or guardian to send the child unless the child is exempt. Public school officials have an obligation to ascertain whether a child not in public school is truant or being privately educated in accordance with an exemption from the compulsory education law. [EC Section 48222](#) says that children may be exempt from compulsory public education if they are attending a private full-time day school. [EC Section 33190](#) requires such schools to file the Private School Affidavit annually with CDE. For families schooling at home, filing the Affidavit is a required first step toward an exemption from compulsory school attendance.

The exemption has two parts: first, parents or guardians schooling their student(s) at home must file the Private School Affidavit, thereby registering the intent to educate their student(s) privately. Second, the public school district listed in the Affidavit makes a determination of whether a home-schooled child has met statutory requirements and therefore is exempt from public school attendance.

5. **Since the Affidavit is not available until after school begins, how can parents schooling at home prevent absence notifications from the local public schools?**

The annually required Affidavit becomes available October 1. Since most public schools open prior to that date, parents/guardians of students not in attendance may be notified of absence. First time Affidavit filers whose children have been attending public schools might consider contacting the school district attendance officer to inform the district of an intent to school at home under [EC sections 33190](#) and [48222](#).

Parents continuing to school at home who filed an Affidavit in the prior year have an exemption from compulsory public school attendance in place until September 30. Should absence notification be received in the new school year, showing a copy of the prior year's Affidavit to the appropriate school official should re-establish the attendance exemption.

Parents intending to school at home whose students have been identified as eligible for special education services under an individualized education program (IEP) or identified as truant should communicate directly with the school district to satisfy all requirements before pursuing schooling at home.

6. **Am I required to report to the school district in which I live once I have filed the Affidavit, or do I have to send the district a copy of my Affidavit?**

No. You are not required to report to your school district. However, keeping in mind that the school district has responsibility for checking on school-age children not attending school, you might avoid confusion by informing the district that you intend to home school or privately educate your children.

7. **Am I required to maintain any records while I school my child at home?**

Yes. [EC Section 33190](#) requires a copy of the Affidavit be kept at the school. Requirements of what must be included in the Affidavit are also outlined in [EC Section 33190](#).

[EC Section 48222](#) states:

"The attendance of the pupils shall be kept by private school authorities in a register, and the record of attendance shall indicate clearly every absence of the pupil from school for a half day or more during each day that school is maintained during the year."

8. Am I required to show the records to the local school district's attendance supervisor?

Yes. [EC Section 48222](#) states:

"Exemptions under this section shall be valid only after verification by the attendance supervisor of the district, or other person designated by the board of education, that the private school has complied with the provisions of [EC Section 33190](#)."

9. Are there state or local curriculum guidelines or materials a student home schooling under the Affidavit is required to follow?

There are no written state or local school district curriculum requirements or guidelines because California's grade level standards and adopted materials do not apply to students schooled at home under the Affidavit.

10. Is there a course of study I must follow?

Because the Affidavit can be filed only by full-time private schools in order to get the exemption under [EC Section 48222](#), a student being schooled at home in California should receive instruction in the various branches of study required in the public schools of the state. The State Board of Education-approved content standards and curriculum frameworks for core subjects that comprise these branches of study are both available on the CDE [Standards and Frameworks](#) Web page. These standards and frameworks are the foundation for what is taught in public schools and can serve as guides for curriculum in schools outside the public system.

11. Where do I locate curriculum, tests, or materials?

Parents who are privately educating or schooling their children at home must select and provide all curriculum, instruction, and materials.

12. Is there networking support for families schooling at home?

The State of California does not provide networking support for schooling at home. However, there are private associations of home schooling that may be located on the Internet.

13. Does filing the Affidavit to school my child affect my child's right to public school education?

No. You may enroll your child in public school at any time.

14. I have been teaching my child at home and now want to enroll my child in public school. May a public school refuse to recognize the credits I have conferred on my child?

Yes. Public school districts establish their own policies regarding the placement of new enrollees. Students from other schools, states and even countries must be placed in public schools in a fashion that is consistent with school district policy and practice.

15. Can graduation requirements be established for my high school child who has been schooled at home?

Parents schooling at home and exploring a student's next steps after high school might check with specific colleges, technical schools and prospective employers (e.g., branches of the U.S. military) to learn about student admission or eligibility. Because there is no law or regulation that establishes graduation or diploma requirements for California private schools, any such requirements set for an individual home school may not be generally recognized. Understanding how post-secondary institutions and prospective employers recognize course work completed in alternative education settings is important for parents/guardians considering home school for their high school student.

Inquiring about post-secondary program and job eligibility requirements is also recommended for high school students schooled at home and using commercial curricular programs or enrolled in out-of-state, online courses of study.

Alternative diploma equivalencies for students not attending public school include the General Education Development (GED) Test and the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE). For information about the [GED](#) (Outside Source) and [CHSPE](#) (Outside Source), please visit the respective Web sites.

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Questions: [Private Schools](#) | privateschools@cde.ca.gov | 916-445-7331
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