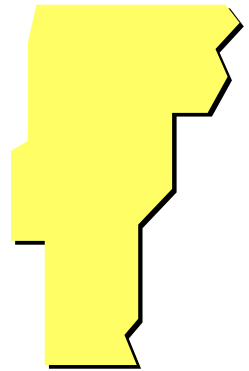


VERMONT

Private schools must be either approved or recognized to operate in Vermont. Both recognized and approved schools may seek accreditation from a regional accrediting agency if they wish.



ACCREDITATION, LICENSING & APPROVAL

Applies to all recognized schools

- Private schools wishing to operate as “recognized” schools may do so by filing an enrollment notice with the state education commissioner no earlier than three months before the beginning of the school year for the local public schools. The enrollment notice must contain:
 - A statement that the school will be in session an amount of time substantially equivalent to that required for public schools
 - A detailed description of the minimum course of study for each grade level offered
 - Assurance that the school will prepare and maintain attendance records for each pupil enrolled or regularly attending classes
 - Assurance that at least once each year the school will assess each pupil’s progress, and will maintain records of that assessment, and present the result of that assessment to each student’s parent or guardian
 - Assurance that the school will prepare and maintain attendance records for each student enrolled or regularly attending classes
 - Assurance that the school will assess each student’s progress at least annually. will maintain records of that assessment and will present the result of that assessment to parents
 - Assurance that the school will have teachers and materials sufficient to carry out its educational program
 - Assurance that the school will meet applicable state and federal laws and regulations concerning physical facilities, health and safety.
- If a school is unable to comply with any specific requirements because of religious conviction shared by an organized group, the state education commissioner may waive those requirements and recognize the school if he or she determines that the educational purposes of the law are being or will be substantially met.
- A recognized private school must renew its enrollment notice every year, or every five years if it is accredited by a regional accrediting agency.

Applies only to approved private schools

- The state Board of Education approves a private school if it finds the school has the resources required to meet its stated objectives, including financial capacity, faculty who are qualified by training and experience in the areas in which they are assigned and physical facilities and special services that are in accordance with state or federal law or regulation. Approval may be granted without an evaluation by the board if the school is accredited by a private agency recognized by the board for accrediting purposes.
- The board approves a private school that offers only pre-kindergarten and/or kindergarten if it finds that the school substantially complies with the board’s rules for approved private kindergartens. This approval is good for no longer than two years.
- Approvals for private schools offering grades above kindergarten are valid for a term established by board rules, not to be greater than five years.
- Applications for approval require the following information:

- Name and address of the school
- A statement of the school's philosophy and purpose
- A description of the school enrollment
- A description of the plan of organization for the school, including its governance, faculty and student body and the names and addresses of the governing board
- A description of the curriculum, methods of instruction, evaluation procedures and special services that the school has designed to achieve its educational objectives and to provide a minimum course of study as defined by state law
- A description of physical facilities including plant, materials and equipment and assurances that the facilities meet all applicable state and federal requirements
- Evidence of compliance with local, state and federal requirements pertaining to the health and safety of students
- A description of the faculty and its credentials.
- When a private school applies for approval (including renewal of approval), the state education commissioner appoints a review committee of at least two people. The review committee must visit the school. To the extent possible, the visit must be coordinated with other agencies of state government that inspect such facilities. The committee presents a written recommendation regarding approval to the commissioner.
- State law provides a process by which the state can revoke approval status for a school that fails to comply with state requirements.
- Teachers in an approved private school must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in their field of instruction or substantially equivalent time in training and experience in their field of instruction.

TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools must provide the names and addresses of its students on Oct. 1 of each year.
- Within seven days after a student leaves, private schools must notify the state of the student's name and address.
- School districts must consult with local private schools to determine how to conduct an annual count of the number of private school students with disabilities. The child count must include all children who would be eligible to receive special education services if they attended public school.
- Approved private schools must provide a written statement of their approval status to parents prior to accepting any payment.
- Approved private schools must maintain a register of the daily attendance of each student and make required reports.

CURRICULUM & ACADEMICS

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools must provide learning experiences for students in the minimum course of study, which requires learning experiences adapted to a student's age and ability in basic communication skills, including reading, writing and the use of numbers; citizenship, history and government in Vermont and the United States; physical education and comprehensive health education, including the effects of tobacco, alcoholic drinks and drugs on the human system and on society; English, American and other literature; the natural sciences; and the fine arts.

Applies only to approved private schools

- Approved private schools must provide at least as many instructional hours each year as a public school serving the same grades.
- The state commissioner of education, upon written recommendation of the Council of Independent Schools, may recommend denial, renovation or suspension of approval. The

commissioner must afford the school an opportunity to be heard by the state Board of Education. After providing an opportunity for a hearing, the board may revoke or suspend the approval of an approved private school for substantial failure to comply with the minimum course of study. Upon revocation or suspension of a school's approval, its students must transfer to another school.

- Local school superintendents must arrange for the establishment of a driver education and training course for all approved private schools within their jurisdiction, upon request.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Applies to all private schools

- Private schools must adopt harassment- and hazing-prevention policies, establish procedures for dealing with harassment and hazing of students and provide notice of these policies and procedures.
- Each private school job application must contain a statement that, if the superintendent or headmaster is prepared to recommend the person for a job, the applicant will be required to undergo a criminal record check, including an FBI fingerprint record check, and that employment may depend on the results.
- School districts must consult with representatives of local private schools and parents of children with disabilities on how to implement "child-find," a student identification program, in a manner comparable with implementation of child-find in public schools.
- Private schools must satisfy lawful requirements applying to their facilities, fire drills and the immunization of its students against disease.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Students "tuitioned" at private schools under the state's "town tuitioning" school-voucher program must attend approved schools.
- The state has a council of private schools consisting of 11 members, at least three of whom must be representatives of recognized private schools. The commissioner appoints nine members from the private school community and two from the public at large. Each member serves two years and may be reappointed for up to two additional terms. The council selects its own chair. The duties of the council include advising the commissioner on policies and procedures with respect to private schools.
- Publicly owned equipment and supplies may be placed in a private school for the period of time needed to provide services to disabled children and may be used only for the purpose of providing such services.



This list was compiled by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice based on publicly available laws and regulations. In each state we sought the assistance of the state's Department of Education in ensuring the accuracy of our information. However, given the enormous volume of relevant laws and regulations, some errors or omissions may still occur. The Friedman Foundation welcomes suggestions for corrections or additions to this list. For more information on the regulation of private schools, see "Fifty Educational Markets: State Laws and Regulations Governing Private Schools" by Friedman Foundation Senior Fellow Chris Hammons.