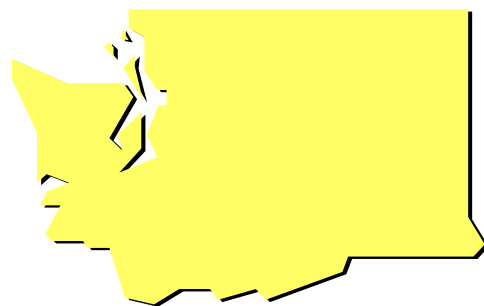


# WASHINGTON



Washington approves private schools based on their compliance with minimum requirements pertaining to (1) length of school year/day; (2) teacher certification; (3) safeguarding of permanent records; (4) compliance with reasonable health and fire safety requirements; (5) curriculum; and (6) an up-to-date policy statement regarding the administration and operation of the school. The state Board of Education has the power to accredit all private schools that voluntarily apply for accreditation. The legislature of Washington state “recognizes that private schools should be subject only to those minimum state controls necessary to insure the health and safety of all the students in the state and to insure a sufficient basic education to meet usual graduation requirements.”

## ACCREDITATION, LICENSING & APPROVAL

### **Applies to all private schools**

- At least 90 days prior to the start of the school year, private schools must apply for approval by filing a certificate of compliance documenting that the school meets state standards. The state superintendent of public instruction reviews each certificate. The review must be completed within 30 days after receiving the application. If the superintendent finds no minor, major or unacceptable deviations, he or she notifies the school and recommends approval of the school to the state Board of Education. Otherwise, the superintendent recommends corrective action to fix any deficiencies in the school, and may deny approval.
- Private school teachers must hold appropriate state certification, excluding teachers for courses of which no counterpart exists in public schools (such as religious courses). In exceptional cases, people of unusual competence who are without certification may teach, as long as a certified person exercises general supervision. Annual written statements must be submitted explaining such circumstances.
- Approval must be renewed annually. However, evidence of accreditation by an accrediting body approved by the board may be submitted annually in lieu of renewal.
- The state may rescind approval of a school for failure to meet any requirement.

## TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

### **Applies to all private schools**

- Private schools must report to the local school superintendent on or before June 30 any information the superintendent requires to complete the educational records of all students.
- Private schools must retain each student’s health and immunization records for at least the period the student is enrolled; retain a record at the school of the name, address and date of exclusion of each child excluded from school for health reasons for at least three years after the student’s exclusion; file a written annual report with the state Department of Health on the immunization status of students; and allow agents of state and local health departments access to records during business hours for the purposes of inspection and copying.
- If a student who previously attended a private school enrolls in a public school but has not paid tuition, fees or fines at the private school, the private school may withhold the student’s official transcript, but must transmit information to the public school about the student’s academic performance, special placement, immunization records and records of disciplinary action.
- Private schools must file a statement each year with the state superintendent of public instruction certifying that minimum requirements (see below) are being met, noting any deviations. After reviewing the statement, the superintendent notifies schools of deviations that must be corrected.

- Measures must be taken to safeguard permanent records against loss or damage through either the storage of such records in fire-resistant containers or facilities or the retention of duplicates in a separate area.
- Private schools must maintain up-to-date policy statements related to administration and operation.

## CURRICULUM & ACADEMICS

### **Applies to all private schools**

- Private schools must meet the following minimum requirements: the minimum school year must consist of at least 180 school days or the equivalent in program hours; the school day must be the same as that required of public schools, except that the program-hour requirements for basic skills, work skills and optional subjects and activities do not apply.
- Private school curricula must include the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling and the development of appreciation of art and music, all in sufficient units to meet state Board of Education graduation requirements.
- The state Board of Education may not require private school students to meet the student learning goals or to obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school, to master the essential academic learning requirements or to be assessed. However, private schools may choose, on a voluntary basis, to have their students master these essential academic learning requirements, take the assessments and obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### **Applies to all private schools**

- Students enrolling in private schools must present proof of immunization. Exceptions are made for religious objections or health reasons.
- Private schools must provide procedures for the administration of oral medication to students.
- Private schools must provide for clean, intermittent bladder catheterization of students, or assisted self-catheterization of students. Each private school must have a policy to address this issue and document training given to employees who perform these services. These records must be made available for review at any audit.
- On highways divided into separate roadways and highways with three or more marked traffic lanes, private school bus routes must serve each side of the highway so that students do not have to cross the highway, unless there is a traffic control signal or an adult crossing guard within 300 feet of the bus stop to assist students.
- The physical facilities of private schools must be adequate to meet the program offered, and all school facilities and practices must be in substantial compliance with reasonable health and fire safety standards. Compliance must be substantiated by inspection reports of health and fire safety officials kept on file in the office of the school's chief administrator.
- Private schools may conduct a criminal background check on job applicants.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- The state recognizes the following rights of every private school: to teach its religious beliefs and doctrines, if any; to pray in class and in assemblies; and to teach patriotism, including requiring students to salute the U.S. flag if that is the school's custom.

- The state superintendent of public instruction appoints a private school advisory committee that must be broadly representative of educators, legislators and private school groups.
- Private schools may appeal the actions of the state superintendent of public instruction or state Board of Education.
- Private school buses are exempt from license fees.
- School districts may authorize private school students to ride public school buses to and from school as long as this does not require altering those bus routes or stops; private school students are allowed to ride on a seat-available basis only; and the district charges an amount sufficient to reimburse it for the actual per-seat cost of providing transportation.
- Private schools may not be placed on the list of accredited schools if school officials knowingly allow secret societies to exist among its students.



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.