



# Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

## California

### Home School

In California, there are several ways that parents educate their children at home: through an existing private school, through a public charter or independent study program, and in many instances by opening their own private home-based school and filing the Private School Affidavit (PSA) with the California Department of Education (CDE).

### Steps to Start a Home School

Starting a homeschool in California involves several steps to ensure compliance with state regulations. Here's a general guide:

- 1. Understand California Homeschool Laws:** California homeschooling is governed by several laws, including compulsory education laws and homeschooling regulations. Familiarize yourself with these laws to ensure compliance. As of our last update, you can legally homeschool your child in California, but you must file an affidavit with the California Department of Education (CDE) to establish yourself as a private school or enroll in a private school satellite program (PSP). You can find detailed information on your state's Department of Education website or through homeschooling advocacy groups such as [Home School Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#).
  - [Frequently Asked Questions on Schooling at Home](#)
  - [Laws that apply to Private Schools](#)
- 2. Choose a Homeschooling Method:** Decide on the homeschooling approach that suits your child's needs and your teaching style. Common methods include traditional curriculum-based homeschooling, unschooling, and eclectic homeschooling, which combines various approaches.
- 3. File an Affidavit:** Complete and file a Private School Affidavit (PSA) with the California Department of Education. This affidavit establishes your home as a private school. The affidavit is due by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year for existing private schools (including homeschools). You can find the affidavit form on the CDE website.

4. **Select a Curriculum:** Choose a curriculum or educational materials that align with your child's learning goals and interests. You can purchase pre-packaged curricula or create your own using resources available online or through homeschooling organizations.
5. **Keep Records:** Maintain detailed records of your child's educational activities, including attendance, coursework, and assessments. California law requires private schools (including homeschools) to keep attendance records for each student.
6. **Stay Updated:** Stay informed about any changes to homeschooling laws or regulations in California. Joining a homeschooling support group or organization can help you stay updated and connected with other homeschooling families.
7. **Consider Joining a PSP:** While not required, some homeschooling families choose to enroll in a Private School Satellite Program (PSP). PSPs provide support, resources, and sometimes legal protection for homeschooling families. Research PSPs in your area and consider whether joining one would benefit your homeschooling journey.
8. **Plan Socialization Activities:** Ensure your child has opportunities for socialization and extracurricular activities. This could include joining homeschool co-ops, sports teams, music lessons, or community groups.

Remember that homeschooling laws and regulations can vary, so it's essential to check the most up-to-date information from the California Department of Education and consult with local homeschooling organizations or support groups for guidance specific to your area.

## Home School Statutes

*The Education Freedom Foundation has relied on the [U.S. Department of Education's State Regulation of Private and Home Schools Map](#) for relevant statutes. Over time, the state pages on this map have been updated since their initial creation. In some cases, states have changed their laws without these updates being reflected on the map. Given the various methods each state uses to publicize changes to its laws, the most recent information for the Start-A-School project was often obtained directly from the U.S. Department of Education website. Users are encouraged to verify any information before making decisions based on it.*

- California parents have access to three approaches to schooling their children at home: public school independent or home-based study programs; public charter independent study schools; and home schooling under the Private School Affidavit.
  - The first option: Public school home-based or independent study programs require enrollment in public school and use the public school curriculum. If this option is selected, then the child is considered a public school student and subject to the rules and policies of the public school, including participation in state testing. [Cal. Educ. Code §51745](#).
  - The second option: Parents may also enroll a child in a public charter school that offers independent study. These California charter schools allow enrollment to students living either in the county in which the charter school is located or in any contiguous county. Computer access to curriculum is common; state testing is required. [Cal. Educ. Code §47600 et seq.](#)

- The third option: Parents may submit annually the Private School Affidavit. Under this provision, a child being taught by "persons capable of teaching" is exempt from compulsory public school attendance, is not enrolled in a public school, and does not have access to state curriculum, materials or testing. [Cal. Educ. Code §§33190, 48222](#).
- A related exemption allows schooling at home without filing the Affidavit. Under this exemption, a child must receive at least three hours of instruction "in the several branches of study required to be taught in the public schools of this state and in the English language," between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. a day for 175 days each calendar year by a tutor with a valid state teaching credential for the grade taught. [Cal. Educ. Code §48224](#).

### **Assessment and Diplomas**

- No California statute requires testing for homeschooled students at this time.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

- A parent or guardian may legally homeschool their child without a teacher certification in the state of California. On August 8, 2008, the Court of Appeals for the Second Appellate District in California unanimously reversed their previous decision made on February 28, 2008 to require parents to possess a teaching certification in order to provide home instruction.
- In grades one through six, the following courses must be taught: English, math, social science, science, visual and performing arts, health, and physical education. [Cal. Educ. Code §51210](#).
- In grades seven through twelve, courses should be offered in: English; social sciences; foreign languages (starting no later than seventh grade); physical education; science; mathematics; visual and performing arts; applied arts; career technical education; automobile driver education; and other studies that may be prescribed by the governing board. [Cal. Educ. Code §§51220, 51222](#).

### **Initial and Renewal Applications**

- Each person or organization providing private school instruction for elementary or high school students must file annually between the first and fifteenth of October an affidavit or statement to the superintendent of public instruction that contains the following information: name of person or organization; address where instruction is provided; address where records are housed; names and addresses of directors, if any, of the organization; school enrollment specified by grade and teachers; any records required by law; courses of study; names, addresses, and qualifications of faculty members; and criminal record summary information. [Cal. Educ. Code §§33190, 44237, 48222](#).

## **Public School Access**

- There is no statute at this time permitting students schooled at home access to public school classes and activities. Parents or guardians requesting permission for homeschooled students to participate in public school curricular, athletic, or extracurricular activities should contact the student's school district of residence.

## **Resources**

### **California Homeschool Network (CHN)**

Supports and informs California homeschooling families, helping with legal requirements and offering resources.

[Website](#)

### **Information and Legislation**

- [CDE: Selected California Education Codes](#)
- [California Legislative Information](#)