



# Start·a·School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

## Connecticut

### Private Schools

#### **Procedures for Application as an Approved Nonpublic School**

Nonpublic school approval by the State Department of Education is a voluntary matter for the individual school.\* In order to attain such approval, schools must obtain accreditation from an agency approved by the State Department of Education. In the case of a school accredited by an approved agency, such designation ensures that established procedures have been followed and that approval by the State Department of Education is warranted. At this time, the Department of Education has given formal recognition to the approval procedures of certain accrediting agencies listed. (See Approved Accrediting Agencies).

Schools seeking state approval must:

- Obtain accreditation by an agency recognized by the State Department of Education;
- Request that the recognized agency submit to the State Department of Education a copy of the Visiting Committee's report and formal notification from the agency to the school regarding the school's accreditation; and
- Submit copies of the current clearance by fire and health authorities to the State Department of Education.

**\*NOTE:** Nonpublic schools may operate in Connecticut without state approval. However, section 10-188 of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that attendance at a nonpublic school shall not be regarded as compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws unless such nonpublic school (approved or unapproved) files a yearly attendance report with the Commissioner of Education. Filing the attendance report does not imply State Department of Education approval of the nonpublic school.

In addition, nonpublic schools that are not approved by the Department of Education and serve children under the age of five may be required to obtain a license to operate a child day care facility from the [Office of Early Childhood](#).

Public Virtual Schools are allowed. See "[Standards for Remote Learning Grades 9-12](#)".

## Agencies approved by the State Board of Education

The accrediting agencies currently recognized by the State Board of Education are:

- The American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) [www.aacs.org](http://www.aacs.org) (through June 3, 2033)
- The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) [www.acsi.org](http://www.acsi.org) (through March 1, 2029)
- The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) [www.caisct.org](http://www.caisct.org) (through February 28, 2033)
- The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) [www.neasc.org](http://www.neasc.org) (through March 31, 2033)
- The National Lutheran School Accreditation <https://www.luthed.org/nlsa/> (through August 30, 2029)

## Certificate of Exemption for Residential Facilities

[Sections 17a-145 through 17a-152](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes govern the licensing of child-care facilities and child-placing agencies. According to those statutes, a non-special education residential facility, or boarding school, must receive a Certificate of Exemption from the State Board of Education prior to opening said facility. A Certificate of Exemption indicates that the school is “an educational institution as determined by the State Board of Education” and that, therefore, the licensing requirements for child-care facilities and child-placing agencies do not apply. [Sections 10-8a-1 through 10-8a-8](#) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies specify the information an application for exemption must contain, exemption procedures and criteria, and procedures for the renewal and revocation of exemption.

A Certificate of Exemption permits the operation of a non-special education residential facility. However, the Certificate is not the equivalent to State Board approval of the school. Please note that a nonpublic school that is currently approved by the State Board of Education is not required to maintain a Certificate of Exemption.

- [Regulations 10-8a-1 through 10-8a-8](#)
- [Department of Children and Families](#)

## Steps to Start a Private School

1. Select a name for your school. Retain this name throughout the duration of the school’s operation.
2. Designate a Chief Administrative Officer. Select a title, such as Director, Principal, Superintendent, etc.
3. Register as a corporation. This is usually a for-profit LLC. Register with your state’s Division of Corporations.
4. Things to consider

- 4.1. Accreditation: is required to obtain approval by the State Department of Education. OptimaEd has been accredited by Cognia.
- 4.2. Teacher Certification: Is not required for private school teachers.
- 4.3. Registration: Is not required.
- 4.4. Licensing: Business licensing may be required by local government.
- 4.5. Approval: Is optional.
- 4.6. Length of School Year and Days: Is not specified.
- 4.7. Curriculum: Has requirements. See statutes below.
- 4.8. State Testing: Is not required.
- 4.9. Health and Safety Requirements: Immunization is required.
- 4.10. Nursing and Health: Nonpublic school students are eligible for health services that are currently offered to public school students by the local district.

## Private School Statutes & Rules

*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.*

### Accreditation, Registration, Licensing, and Approval

- Accreditation: optional
  - Accreditation by an agency approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education is required in order to receive state approval. [Connecticut State Department of Education](#).
- Registration: no requirements
- Licensing: no requirements
  - A private school that is not state approved (i.e., that is not accredited by a state-approved accrediting agency) and has students under the age of five must obtain a daycare license from the Department of Public Health. [Connecticut State Department of Education](#)
- Approval: optional
  - A private school applying for state approval must obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education, have the agency submit a copy of the site visit performed and formal notification of the accrediting status to the Connecticut State Department of Education, and submit copies of fire and health clearances. [Connecticut State Department of Education](#)

### Curriculum

- Connecticut parents have the duty to instruct their children or cause them to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and

United States history and citizenship. Instruction may occur outside the public school if the parent or person having control of the child is able to show that “the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.” [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-184.](#)

- Private elementary and high schools, whose property is tax exempt, must provide instruction in United States history, government at all levels, and the duties, responsibilities, and rights of citizenship. Graduation from such schools is contingent on familiarity with these subjects. The state board of education will make available samples of appropriate educational materials for use in private schools. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-18\(a\)\(2\)\(b\).](#)
- The English language is to be the medium of instruction in private elementary schools except in bilingual or bicultural programs for pupils who, by reason of foreign birth, ancestry or otherwise, experience difficulty in reading and understanding English. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-17.](#)
- Private schools may, with the approval of the Connecticut State Board of Education, establish bilingual and bicultural programs of study in which languages other than English are predominately spoken to enable children to become proficient in English. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-17a.](#)
- Private secondary schools may contract with licensed driving schools approved by the commissioner of motor vehicles for behind-the-wheel instruction in driver education programs. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-36f.](#)

### **Health and Safety Requirements**

- Children enrolled in nonpublic schools must be protected by adequate immunizations against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, and hemophilus influenza type B and any other vaccine required by the schedule for active immunization adopted pursuant to Conn. Gen Stat. §19a–7f before being permitted to enroll in any program operated by the nonpublic school. Certain exemptions apply, e.g., a child whose parents object to immunizations on religious grounds is exempt. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-204a\(2a\).](#)
- A school nurse, other licensed nurse, principal, or teacher of a school may administer medicine to any student in accordance with the written order of a licensed physician or dentist and the written authorization of the child’s parent or guardian. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-212a\(2\).](#)
- Every private and parochial school must maintain toilet accommodations, water supply drinking cups, washing facilities, heating, lighting, and ventilation in sanitary conditions. [Public Health Code Regulation §19-13-B30.](#)
- Information that a student communicates to a professional employee at a nonpublic primary or secondary school concerning alcohol or drug abuse is privileged communication if the employee chooses to make it so. An employee who acts in good faith is immune from any criminal or civil liability. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-154a.](#)
- Professional employees of a nonpublic school are required to turn over physical evidence indicating a crime has been or is being committed to school officials or law enforcement officials. The employee is not required to disclose the name of the student from whom the evidence was obtained. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-154a.](#)

- Buildings and facilities of public service are required to be inspected by the local fire marshal at least once a year and as necessary. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §29-305](#).
- No person other than a certified pesticide applicator may apply a lawn-care pesticide on the grounds of any public or private preschool or public or private elementary school, except to eliminate a threat to human health as determined by the local health director, the commissioner of public health, or the commissioner of environmental protection. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-231b](#).
- Nonpublic school teachers (including substitutes), principals, nurses, social workers, physicians, school paraprofessionals, coaches, and guidance counselors are required to report suspected child abuse. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §§17a-101\(b\)](#).
- All private elementary and secondary schools must comply with state regulations concerning eye protection devices in laboratories and workshops. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-214a](#).
- Connecticut law outlines when physical force, otherwise criminal, is justifiable when exercised by a teacher or other person entrusted with the care and supervision of a minor for school purposes. For example, a teacher's physical force is justifiable to protect him- or herself or others from immediate physical injury or to obtain possession of a dangerous instrument but not merely to maintain discipline. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §53a-18](#).

### **Length of School Year and Days**

- No state policy currently exists.

### **Nursing and Health**

- Nonpublic schools may participate in the school breakfast, lunch, and other feeding programs as regulated by the state board of education and governed by federal laws. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-215a and b](#).
- Nonpublic school students are eligible for health services that are currently offered to public school students by the local district. "Health services" include the services of a school physician, school nurse, and dental hygienist. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-217a](#).

### **Professional Development**

- All Connecticut educators are eligible to participate in programs of professional development offered by the Connecticut Department of Education in cooperation with the regional education service centers. Participation fees are charged. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a\(c\)](#).
- Certified teachers at private special education facilities approved by the commissioner of education may receive training to supervise, train, and evaluate student teachers and serve as mentors for beginning teachers. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220a\(d\)](#).
- Nonpublic schools may participate in the programs and services offered by the regional education centers. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-66d](#).
- Nonpublic schools pay a prorated share of the costs of any program or service to which they subscribe. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-66e](#).

## Public Aid for Private Education

- Constitutional Provisions: The “School Fund,” established to provide a perpetual fund for the support of public schools, cannot be diverted to any other use. Connecticut Constitution, Art. 8, Sec. 4. Municipalities may lend money to nonpublic schools located within the municipality for the construction or renovation of physical facilities used exclusively for educational purposes. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §§7-121a](#) and [10-289f\(a\)](#). Private high schools receiving state funds must provide the same directory information and on-campus recruiting opportunities to representatives of the national armed forces and state armed services as offered to nonmilitary recruiters or commercial concerns. Governing boards of these private schools must establish a written uniform policy for the treatment of all recruiters. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221b](#).
- Programs for Financial Assistance for Attendance at Private Schools: Connecticut passed a demonstration scholarship program to provide parents and guardians an opportunity to enroll their children in public or private schools in 1972. Participating schools needed to meet all educational, fiscal, health, and safety standards required by law and other specified criteria, including nondiscrimination based on race, color, or economic status. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-239a-b](#). However, the initiative has never been funded to date.

## Recordkeeping and Reports

- Private schools must file student attendance reports and reports similar to those required of public schools by the board of education except concerning finance. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-188](#).
- Nonpublic schools must implement a policy for reporting complaints related to school transportation safety and maintain a written record of complaints received. Within 30 days after the end of the school year, nonpublic schools must provide a copy of the written record of complaints to the commissioner of motor vehicles. Nonpublic schools must also make written reports to the commissioner of any accident involving a motor vehicle and a student pedestrian near a designated school bus stop within 10 days of the incident. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221c](#).
- Noncustodial parents have a right to student academic records unless otherwise ordered by the court. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §46b-56\(e\)](#).

## Reimbursement for Performing State and Local Functions

- No state policy currently exists.

## Special Education

- Local boards of education publicly place children with special education needs in approved private schools when the education needs of the child cannot be met by public school arrangements. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-76d\(d\) and \(g\)](#).

- The local or regional boards of education also provide transportation to and from the residence of the child with special needs to and from the school providing special education. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-76d\(19\)](#).

### **Tax Exemption**

- Property used for educational purposes is tax-exempt. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §12-81\(7\)](#).

### **Teacher Certification**

- Although teaching certificates are not required for nonpublic school teachers, teachers at nonpublic schools approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education may obtain provisional and professional educator certificates. [General Statutes of Connecticut \(Conn. Gen. Stat.\) §10-145b\(c\)\(1\)\(C\)\(e\)](#).

### **Technology**

- No state policy currently exists.

### **Testing**

- No state policy currently exists.

### **Textbooks**

- Connecticut law permits local or regional boards of education to loan textbooks to students attending nonpublic schools within the district. Administrators, parents, guardians, or the nonpublic school students may request to borrow textbooks currently in use in the public school free of charge. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-228a](#).

### **Transportation**

- When a majority of students attending a nonpublic school are residents of Connecticut, the municipality or school district must provide the nonpublic school students the same transportation services provided to k–12 students attending public schools. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-281](#).
- Transportation services for pupils attending private schools outside the school district may be provided at the discretion of any town or regional school district. [Conn. Gen. Stat. §§10-280a and 10-277](#).

### **Resources**

#### **Contact Information – State and Federal Departments of Education**

Connecticut State Department of Education  
165 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 713-6543  
Toll-Free: (800) 465-4014  
Fax: (860) 713-7001  
Website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/>  
U.S. Department of Education, [Connecticut](#)

### **Information and Legislative**

- [Procedures for Application as an Approved Nonpublic School](#)
- [Connecticut General Statutes](#)

### **School Choice Programs**

Connecticut currently does not have an Education Savings Account (ESA) program.