



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Missouri

Private Schools

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 optional. OptimaEd has been accredited by Cognia.
 - 4.2. Teacher Certification: Teacher certification is not required by Missouri state statute for teachers in nonpublic schools.
 - 4.3. Registration: Is limited to those nonpublic schools that participate in federal and state grant programs.
 - 4.4. Licensing: Business licensing may be required by local government.
 - 4.5. Approval: Is not required.
 - 4.6. Length of School Year and Days: Missouri state law does not specify a required length of school year or days for private schools.
 - 4.7. Curriculum: See statutes below for requirements.
 - 4.8. State Testing: Missouri state law does not require general testing of nonpublic school students.
 - 4.9. Health and Safety: Immunizations are required. Other minimal requirements. See statutes below.
 - 4.10. Nursing and Health: Nonpublic school students have access to state and county health services on the same basis as their public school counterparts.

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

- No requirements for Accreditation.
- [Registration](#) is limited to those nonpublic schools that participate in federal and state grant programs.
- No requirements for Licensing.
- No requirements for Approval.

Curriculum

- Private schools, except privately operated trade schools, must provide courses of instruction in the constitutions of the United States and of Missouri and in American history and institutions. Instruction must begin no later than the seventh grade and continue in high school to the extent determined by the commissioner of education. No pupil can receive a certificate of graduation from any private school, except private trade schools, without satisfactorily passing an examination on these subjects. The commissioner will prescribe a list of suitable texts. These provisions do not apply to foreign exchange students. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §170.011](#).
- There is no specific state policy regarding other course content at this time for private schools.
- The chief school officer of a nonpublic school has a duty to provide students information on available financial assistance for postsecondary education. The commissioner of higher education will provide nonpublic schools and their pupils with relevant information. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.278](#).

Health and Safety Requirements

- Students attending private, parochial, or parish schools must comply with the Department of Health regulations governing the immunizations against poliomyelitis, rubella, rubeola, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. A student may not attend school unless he or she has been immunized, presents evidence of having begun the process, or is exempt. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.181](#).
- Students are exempt from immunization if a parent or guardian presents to the school administrator a written objection based on religious beliefs or a written statement from a licensed physician that the immunizations are medically contraindicated. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.181](#).
- Private elementary and secondary schools may obtain information from Missouri's central registry of reports on child abuse and neglect pertaining to employees and volunteers or prospective employees and volunteers who provide services or care for children. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §210.150\(8\)](#).
- Students, teachers, and visitors are required to wear industrial quality eye protective devices for courses involving exposure to certain hazardous materials. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §170.005](#).

- Private and parochial schools were required to examine their structures for friable asbestos and report the results to the Department of Health by March 1, 1987. Schools that have not completed their removal plan must reevaluate the material biennially and file a report with the department. Schools that identified nonfriable asbestos must reevaluate the material every three years, file a report with the department, and make their findings available to its employees and the public. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §643.263.](#)
- Distribution of a controlled substance on or within 2,000 feet of a private elementary or secondary school in Missouri is a felony. [Mo. Rev. Stat. § 579.030.](#)
- “School-Based Nonviolent Conflict Resolution” materials developed by the Department of Health and State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education can be made available to all schools, including private and parochial schools, and the general public. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §170.046.](#)

Length of School Year and Days

- Students in Missouri have the opportunity to enroll at public, private, parochial, parish, and home schools or a combination of the above. State law requires compulsory school attendance between the ages of seven years and the compulsory attendance age for a given school district. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.031.](#)
- Missouri state law does not specify a required length of school year or days for private schools. For comparison, the public school minimum school day consists of three hours for schools with a five-day school week or four hours for schools with a four-day school week in which the students are under the guidance and direction of teachers. The first day of July through the thirtieth day of June of the following year defines the school year period. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §160.041.1.](#)

Nursing and Health

- Nonpublic school students have access to state and county health services on the same basis as their public school counterparts.
- Missouri provides special services to children enrolled in nonpublic schools identified as having a high risk of dropping out of school. Services may include skills assessment, tutoring, academic and personal counseling, family counseling, home visits, and staff development. Services must be provided at sites other than sectarian nonpublic schools. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.280.](#)

Professional Development

- There is no state policy at this time.

Public Aid for Private Education

- Constitutional Provisions: The Missouri Constitution provides “No person can be compelled to . . . support any . . . teacher of any sect.” Missouri Constitution, Art. I§6. The public school fund may not be used for any other purpose than establishing and

maintaining free public schools. The constitution further prohibits public aid to any private school controlled by any religious creed, church, or sectarian denomination. Missouri Constitution, Art. IX §8.

Missouri's Constitution notwithstanding, "educationally deprived children attending nonpublic schools" in Missouri "are entitled to receive allocation of federal funds for programs of special services comparable in quality, scope, and opportunity to children in public schools." *Barrera v. Wheeler*, 475 F.2d 1388 (1973).

- Programs for Financial Assistance for Attendance at Private Schools: There is no such program at this time.

Recordkeeping and Reports

- Each school superintendent of a private, parochial, or parish school must prepare a record showing the immunization status of every child enrolled. The superintendent must report the name of any parent or guardian who neglects or refuses to permit a nonexempt child to be immunized. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.181\(4\)](#).
- Student immunization records may be disclosed without a parent's or guardian's written authorization to individuals with a need to know, as specified by statute, e.g. employees of public agencies and departments. Anyone releasing the information for any other purpose would be liable for damages. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §167.183](#).

Reimbursement for Performing State and Local Functions

- There is no state policy at this time.

Special Education

- Special educational services may be offered during the regular school day to children who attend private, parochial, and parish schools. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §162.996](#).
- LEAs must determine how and where services will be provided to children with disabilities attending private or parochial schools and could consider the provision of services at a neutral site. [Missouri State Plan for Special Education – Part B \(2014\)](#).

Tax Exemption

- Sales by or to public and nonpublic not-for-profit elementary and secondary schools are exempt from local sales tax. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §144.030.2 \(19\) and \(22\)](#).

Teacher Certification

- Teacher certification is not required by Missouri state statute for teachers in nonpublic schools. Nonpublic school teachers that hold state certification are subject to discipline by the State Board of Education for misconduct under [Mo. Rev. Stat. §168.071](#).
- The State Board of Education may refuse to issue or revoke a nonpublic school teacher's certificate upon conviction of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §168.071\(2\)](#).

Technology

- Public, private, and homeschooled students are eligible to enroll in the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP), which offers online K–12 courses for students statewide. The Missouri Department of Education requests public or private schools, with any participating students in the MoVIP program, to provide a site liaison who will assist a student or virtual teacher if any challenges arise. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §161.670](#).

Testing

- Missouri state law does not require general testing of nonpublic school students.
- Any student (public, nonpublic, or homeschooled) enrolled in a Missouri Virtual Instructional Program (MoVIP) course must take part in the Missouri Assessment Program through MoVIP. [Mo. Rev. Stat. §161.670](#).

Textbooks

- Materials, supplies, or equipment, paid for with public funds, may not be provided to nonpublic schools. The provision of textbooks to teachers in private schools violates the Missouri Constitution. [Paster v. Tussey, 512 S.W. 2d.97 \(Mo. 1974\)](#).

Transportation

- Transportation is not provided for students attending private schools. The provision of transportation to parochial school students by public school bus that also transports public school children violates the Missouri Constitution. [McVey v. Hawkins, 258 S.W.2d 927 \(1953\)](#).

Resources

Forms

- [Web-based Nonpublic Registration Form Login Screen](#)

Information and Legislation

- [Missouri Virtual Instruction Program \(MoVIP\)](#)
- [Missouri Revised Statutes – Title XI Education and Libraries](#)
- [Missouri General Assembly](#)

Contact Information – State and Federal Departments of Education Missouri Department of

- Elementary and Secondary Education
205 Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480
Phone: (573) 751-4212
Fax: (573) 751-8613
TTY: (800) 735-2966
Website: <http://dese.mo.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Education: [Missouri](#)

School Choice Programs

MO Scholars Education Saving Accounts (ESA)

In 2021, the Missouri General Assembly passed HB349 and SB86 which established the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program, MOScholars. The law provides state tax credits for contributions to approved, non-profit Educational Assistance Organizations (EAOs). These EAOs use the contributions to award scholarships to Missouri students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and students living in low-income households.

Participating schools must be incorporated in Missouri. All schools must be partnered with a certified Educational Assistance Organization (EAO), and all schools other than home schools must be accredited through one of the [approved accrediting associations](#) to be an eligible school within the program.

An EAO is a nonprofit organization that, after approval by the Missouri State Treasurer's Office, can receive qualified contributions from individuals and businesses to establish MOScholars scholarship accounts for qualified Missouri students.

ESA Application Process

- Incorporate in the state.
- Select a partnering [EAO](#):
 - [Herzog Tomorrow Foundation](#) seems to be receptive to partnering.
 - Apply via [Class Wallet](#)

Statutes and Rules

- [135.712-135.719](#)
- [166.700-166.720](#)

Useful Websites

- [Frequently asked Questions](#)