



Strengthening the Voice of California Homeschoolers

Home-Based Private Schools

The Independent Option

2024 Edition

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California Homeschool Network (CHN) was founded in 1994 by a statewide group of homeschooling families. We are an inclusive group which means we serve families that choose all homeschooling styles and from all religious and ethnic affiliations. We are an organization of energetic and dedicated homeschooling families working to preserve our own educational freedom and helping families provide an excellent education for their children.

California Homeschool Network
2640-A7 S Myrtle Ave.
Monrovia, CA 91016
(800) 327-5339

www.californiahomeschool.net



Welcome To Independent Homeschooling!

If you are just getting started, your first step is to choose a legal alternative to public school. The CHN publication *Just The Facts* will take you through your options step-by-step. If you have not read that publication yet, go back and start there. Download it from the CHN website www.californiahomeschool.net.

If you have already established a Home-Based Private School and are looking for further help, this guide will give you tips on what to do next, and resources to help you get started. You will be the administrator of your school, responsible for record keeping, curriculum, and all aspects of your children's education. California Education Code sections 48220-48232 allow any individual or corporation to establish a private school.

We learn from reading the Education Code below that:

1. Your school must be full-time. There is no requirement for days of the week, hours of the day, or minutes of instruction.
2. Your school must be taught by "persons capable of teaching". There is no requirement that the teachers hold a state teaching credential.
3. Your school must be taught in the English language.
4. Certain records must be kept including an attendance record, a health record as specified in Health and Education Safety Code §120338, and an affidavit and student record as specified in Education Code §33190. Details on how to file the annual affidavit can be found on CHN's website www.californiahomeschool.net or in CHN's publication *Just the Facts*.
5. Your school must maintain a course of study and offer instruction in the several branches of study required to be taught in public school.

California Education Code

§48220: The classes of children described in this article, shall be exempted by the proper school authorities from the requirements of attendance upon a public full-time day school.

§48222: Children who are being instructed in a private full-time day school by persons capable of teaching shall be exempted. Such school shall, except under the circumstances described in Section 30, be taught in the English language and shall offer instruction in the several branches of study required to be taught in the public schools of the state. The attendance of the pupils shall be kept by private school authorities in a register, and the record of attendance shall indicate clearly every absence of the pupil from school for a half day or more during each day that school is maintained during the year.

Exemptions under this section shall be valid only after verification by the attendance supervisor of the district, or other person designated by the board of education, that the private school has complied with the provisions of Section 33190 requiring the annual filing by the owner or other head of a private school of an affidavit or statement of prescribed information with the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The verification required by this section shall not be construed as an evaluation, recognition, approval, or endorsement of any private school or course.



Record Keeping Review

Private schools are not required to submit records to any school authority or to the state, but they are required to keep certain records. The records a private school must keep on file include:

- **Attendance Record**

You are required to keep attendance in a register and indicate absences of a half day or more. Since it is unlikely your child will be absent from your home-based school, many schools keep a blank calendar/register for this record and mark it if needed.

- **Faculty Qualifications and Addresses**

A document stating name and address of your teachers (might be parents or grandparents) along with a record of the educational qualifications of each instructor will meet this requirement. You may list your education, books you have read, parenting courses you have taken, conferences you have attended, and teaching experience you may have with scouts, sports, or other youth groups.

- **Copy of the Completed Private School Affidavit (PSA)**

The PSA must be filed in October each year and a copy kept in your records. Details on how to file are in the CHN publication *Just The Facts* at www.californiahomeschool.net. The PSA is a statistical tool, not a license to operate a school. Even though your school may begin operation in August or September, the PSA is still filed in October. If your school is established later in the year, you may file then.

- **Course of Study**

Every private school must have a Course of Study on file. See p. 4.

- **Student Record or Cumulative File for each student**

Every school must maintain a cumulative file for each student. If your children were enrolled in school previously, you will need to withdraw them from their old school and request their records - see CHN publication *Just The Facts* at www.californiahomeschool.net for instructions. The cumulative file should include:

- Legal name of student; date of birth, place of birth and verification of birth date; sex of pupil. A copy of the birth certificate should contain all of that information.
- Name and address of parent of minor pupil.
- Entering and leaving date of each school year and date of high school graduation or equivalent; Subjects taken during each year and marks, grades, or credits if given. This information may be kept on a report card, portfolio, transcript, or the course of study. See p. 8.
- Health and Immunization Records. Home-based private schools are exempt from immunization requirements, but records are still required. All students should have a *California Immunization Record* form pm 286 on file. Students entering first grade should have a *Report Of Health Examination For School Entry* form PM171a or b (waiver) on file. For more information about immunizations, or to download the immunization record and health forms for your file, visit CHN's records page www.californiahomeschool.net/how-to-homeschool/keeping-private-school-records/.

These Records Are Not Required (if parents establish a private school for their own children)

- Fingerprinting. *Education Code §44237.*
- TB testing. *Health and Safety Code §121525.*
- Fire and safety inspection. *Health and Safety Code §13143.*



Choosing A Course Of Study And Curriculum

A Course of Study is your academic plan for the year and it can be as specific or general as you want. It may be revised at any time. Private schools must offer students the opportunity for instruction in the branches of study required in public schools and listed in Education Code §51210. This portion of the Education Code may serve as your Course of Study, or you may choose from other options online such as:

- Search “homeschool course of study”
- *What Your _____ Grader Needs to Know Series*
- *Making the Grade: Everything Your _____ Grader Needs to Know Series*
- World Book www.worldbook.com/typical-course-of-study.aspx
- State of California Content Standards www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/
- Common Core Curriculum Standards www.corestandards.org/

Curriculum Sources

Homeschool Catalogs: Order a free copy of the huge Rainbow Resource catalog at www.rainbowresource.com and then search online for “best homeschool catalogs” and order others that you think will help you. Be prepared to be amazed at all the suggestions!

Books: There are many online resources for buying or renting new and used textbooks, some of the most popular are AbeBooks, Alibris, Campus Books, Chegg along with Amazon and Ebay. Homeschoolers have set up many Used Curriculum Swaps that can be found through Google or Facebook and at homeschool conferences. And of course your library will have literature, biographies, original source materials and often textbooks. Ask your local or online support groups for recommendations and reviews.

Local Classes: Some homeschoolers enroll in classes and activities offered by their local community. Enrolling your child in classes outside of your home allows for practice in group discussions, cooperative work and peer socialization. Your local support group will be the best source of information for community classes which are often offered through homeschool co-ops and learning centers; tutors and after school tutoring centers; museums; city parks and recreation departments; and community colleges. If you can’t find a class, consider getting together with other homeschool parents and teaching it yourselves.

Online Classes: Some popular websites are Khan Academy, HippoCampus, UCScout, EdX, OpenCulture, Acellus, OnlineG3, Time4Learning, and there are many more! Some are free, and some have a fee. Study one subject or sign up for a full curriculum package. Search “online homeschool classes” or “distance learning” for others.

Prepackaged Curriculum: Do you want a box of curriculum and lesson plans mailed to you, ready for a grade level? Search online for complete homeschool curriculum packages. Some popular options are Calvert Education, Oak Meadows and Global Village School, but there are many to choose from.

Correspondence Schools: A student may only be enrolled in one school at a time. But if you find a correspondence school whose curriculum you like, you may be able to make arrangements to participate. Correspondence schools usually offer a full packaged curriculum or online coursework.

Field trips: Museums, aquariums, zoos, farms, animal rescue centers, city cultural centers, nature centers, hiking trails, factory/business tours and more! There are so many choices that enrich the homeschool experience. Field trips are often organized by local park groups and are a great way to learn!

Subjects Offered

Education Code §51210 states the branches of study required to be offered in public schools. Private schools are also required to offer these subjects, but, just like in public schools, parents/students choose which subjects they will study. To assist you in organizing your curriculum, we have assembled the following worksheets based on the branches of study required to be offered in public schools.



A worksheet for choosing curriculum for 1st through 6th grade

| Subject Grades 1-6 | How I will approach this subject (ideas, books, textbooks, online resources, classes, activities) |
|---|---|
| English (literature, speaking, reading, listening, spelling, handwriting, composition) | |
| Mathematics (concepts, operational skills, problem solving) | |
| Social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, sociology, government, economics) | |
| Science (biological, physical ecological,, experimental) | |
| Visual and performing arts (dance,music, theatre, and visual arts) | |
| Health (personal and community health, nutrition) | |
| PE (200 minutes each 10 school days, exclusive of recesses and lunch period) | |

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A worksheet for choosing curriculum for 7th through 12th grade

| Subject Grades 7-12 | How I will approach this subject (ideas, books, textbooks, online resources, classes, activities) |
|--|--|
| English (literature, language, composition, reading, listening, speaking) | |
| Social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, US and world history, political science, psychology, sociology, gov/civics, economics, parenting skills) | |
| Foreign Language | |
| PE (Grades 1-8: see chart for elem school. Grades 9-12: 400 minutes each 10 schooldays, must include self defense/safety) | |
| Science (physical, biological ecological) | |
| Mathematics (must include Algebra I) | |
| Visual and Performing Arts (dance, music, theater, visual arts) | |
| Applied Art (consumer and homemaking education, industrial arts, general business education, general agriculture) | |
| Career Technical Education | |
| Automobile Driver Education | |

High School Graduation Requirements

Private schools set their own requirements for graduation, usually by creating a list of courses that must be completed to earn a high school diploma. And, yes, your private school may issue a high school diploma. You establish these requirements based on whatever your private school considers a necessary course of study for high school. Some resources you may want to consult are the graduation requirements of your local public school and area private schools, and requirements of colleges or programs your students want to enroll in after high school. Some private schools with college bound students look to the University of California’s a-g coursework or California State University’s expectations of high school students when setting their requirements. Community colleges do not have course requirements for admission.



High School Graduation Requirement Worksheet

| | State of California* Public High School | University of California** | Cal State University*** | Your School |
|--|--|--|---|--------------------|
| <i>(a) History/Social Studies</i> | 2 years including US history and geography, world history, one semester American government, one semester economics | 1 year world history, cultures and historical geography 1 year U.S. history, or ½ year U.S. history and ½ year American government/civics | 1 year US history or ½ yr US hist plus ½ yr civics or Amer govt. 1 year social studies | |
| <i>(b) English</i> | 3 years | 4 years college prep | 4 years college prep English comp and literature | |
| <i>(c) Math</i> | 2 years including Algebra | 3 years College-prep math including elem. and adv. algebra and 2- and 3-dimensional geometry. | 3 years/4 recommended including algebra 1 and 2, geometry, high level math | |
| <i>(d) Science</i> | 2 years including biological and physical | 2 years lab sci including at least 2 of the three major disciplines | 1 year biological 1 year physical | |
| <i>(e) Language other than English</i> | 1 year language or visual or performing arts or career tech | 2 years of the same language | 2 years | |
| <i>(f) Visual and Performing Arts</i> | See (e) above | 1 year dance, music, theater or visual arts | 1 year dance, music, theater or visual arts | |
| <i>(g) Electives</i> | | 1 year chosen from the “a-f” courses beyond those used to satisfy the requirements above | 1 year chosen from the UC “a-f” courses beyond those used to satisfy the requirements above | |
| <i>PE</i> | 2 years | None | None | |

* <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgmin.asp> **<https://www.ucop.edu/agguide/a-g-requirements/> ***https://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/subjects.asp

Concurrent Enrollment in Community College for High School Students: Most community colleges will allow high school students to enroll, often tuition free. Rules vary from school to school, but many offer enrollment for one or two classes, or up to 11 credit hours. Your private school decides whether they want to count these classes as high school credit or offer dual high school/college credit. A one semester community college course is usually counted as a full year high school course.



Setting Up A Framework For Your School

Scheduling

Private schools are free to set their own schedules so as to best meet their children's needs. Some choose to homeschool year round and others follow their local public school schedule..

Methods and Styles

There are many different ways to homeschool. In considering these styles, you should consider how your child learns, what will work best with your family style and your comfort level as the parent/teacher.

- **Traditional School-At-Home:** Some families replicate a traditional school classroom at home using a typical school schedule, sometimes setting up a classroom in their home and utilizing traditional school resources such as textbooks.
- **Unschooling:** Although there are many definitions, trusting that your child will learn what they need based on their own interests is the basis of unschooling. An unschooling family might use experience based activities, field trips, print and online materials and even textbooks and classes to learn. Unschoolers trade the traditional student/teacher model for a more natural environment with the parent providing resources and activities based on the child's interest. Some families unschool all the way through high school graduation, and there are many private colleges that offer an unschool friendly environment. Unschooling students who plan on going to a traditional college may choose to enroll in more traditional classes or use more traditional textbooks to prepare.
- **Eclectic:** Some families, probably most, choose to mix both School-At-Home and Unschooling ideas to create an environment that works best for their family or for each individual child. They may do some textbook work in the morning, and spend their afternoons either following their children's interests on outings to museums, parks and classes. They may use math and history textbooks, but follow a child-led course in reading and science.

Assessment

Testing: Since you will be working one-on-one with your child or directly overseeing courses and activities your child participates in, you will have constant feedback on the progress your child is making. Therefore, many families find testing unnecessary. Private school students are not required to participate in testing. Parents who want testing can find a testing service online. Search for testing services at a2zhomeschooling.com for suggestions.

Grading: Your school may decide whether your students will receive grades/marks or not, but records requirements include keeping a list of subjects completed. There are many ways you could do this, including:

- **Report Cards:** A report card usually includes school information; student information; dates of attendance; grade level (if you specify grade level); a list of class subjects such as English, math, science; and grades/marks given. It may also include notes from the teacher on things the child excelled in or struggled with during that school session.
- **Portfolios:** A portfolio usually consists of samples of work in the different areas of study pursued during that school session. Sometimes it will include a cover sheet that contains the school, student, school year, grade level, subjects and grades/marks given.
- **Calendars/Notebooks/Photo-journals:** Some families choose a more informal way of keeping their records such as detailing their activities on a calendar or in a notebook or keeping photo or video records. If you choose a more informal approach, you may find that setting some short and long term goals with your child and periodically checking your progress towards those goals is helpful. Or, since you are with your child and have the opportunity to talk about their wants, needs, achievements and struggles regularly, you may feel that is all the assessment you need.
- **High School Transcripts:** Create an official transcript when your teen graduates. They may need this if they go on to college, the military, or pursue certain jobs. A transcript is usually printed on school letterhead, and states that it is the official transcript. It includes school information, student information, dates of attendance and date of graduation. It also contains a list of subjects taken along with credits earned and grades received and GPA (if grades are given). If an official transcript is requested, put it in an envelope and seal it.
 - **High School Credits:** One way to keep track of requirements met is by setting up a credit system. The Carnegie Credit System is used by most high schools in the US. One Carnegie Credit would be given for every class completed. A class would consistently be 120 hours of time spent over the course of a 24 week school year. So if your student studied English for one hour per day Monday through Friday for 24 weeks of the school year, they would earn one credit. Or if your school followed a typical California 175 school day year, and your student studied English for 41 minutes per day Monday through Friday, they would earn one credit. A typical course of study would include up to 6 Carnegie Credits per year in 9th through 12th grade for a total of 24 credits earned. Most California public schools award ten local units for each Carnegie unit. These schools require between 220 and 260 local units for high school graduation.

Parent/Teacher Continuing Education

Just as all teachers look for ways to improve their skills and knowledge, homeschool parents often seek continuing education through their participation in local and online support groups; at conferences where they can select from a wide variety of sessions to help learn about academic subjects and more; and even at local community parenting seminars. Homeschoolers actively seek these opportunities because they learn new ideas that will help them.



CHN Is Here To Help

What to do if you are contacted about your choice to homeschool

Occasionally a family will be contacted by a school, a truancy officer or CPS asking about their child's enrollment in school. This is rare and is usually a result of unusual circumstances such as failure to notify the prior school, a contentious divorce custody situation, or a complaint or question from someone that must then be followed up on. Whether someone shows up at your door, or you get a letter or phone call, stay calm, deal with the immediate situation, and if you have questions, contact CHN by phone at 800-327-5339 or email the details to legal@californiahomeschool.net

Here are some suggestions for various scenarios:

- **You receive a letter:** Read it carefully. Is it simply informing you of something, or is there a threat? If you have questions, email CHN's legal committee volunteers any time day or night.. Do not ignore letters. They almost always require a response. Including a copy of the letter in your email to CHN is helpful.
- **You receive a phone call:** Ask what it is in regard to and if you are busy teaching or helping your children, take a message. Be professional and courteous, but firm, remembering that it is your home they are calling, and any call can be returned at your convenience. If you have questions about the call, contact CHN.
- **Someone is at your door:** Consider a family policy that you *never* open your door to uninvited guests. That is not a homeschooling rule; that's a "we no longer live in the safe olden days" rule. Some families have "we don't answer our door if we aren't expecting you" small laminated notes on their front doors. You might want to make one (it also discourages door-to-door solicitors!). It's not likely that the knock on the door will be homeschool related, but if it is, the person will leave a business card with a note on it.

No one is authorized to visit and evaluate your school.
Public school personnel have only *two* authorities with respect to private schools:

1. If you are contacted by an attendance officer, they may verify the enrollment of a particular student by inquiring about that student *by name*.
2. They may also verify that a private school has filed an affidavit as required by law, by contacting the California Department of Education. As a courtesy, you may show your PSA or offer your online link. You aren't required to, but it might help resolve the issue more quickly.

Download a copy of this publication for FREE!

Visit CHN's web site www.CaliforniaHomeschool.net and print out your free copy for reference.

Contact CHN

Use our [Contact Us](#) page if you have any questions or concerns about your homeschooling.

Your Membership in CHN Supports California Homeschooling

The California Homeschool Network was founded to aid you in having a successful homeschool experience. It is through our combined group efforts that we can help California's homeschoolers with our statewide support lists, annual Family Expo, legal support, legislative monitoring, camping trips, publications and outreach efforts. Please consider joining CHN and help us continue fulfilling our motto:

Strengthening the Voice of California Homeschoolers