

Nonpublic Schools Not Seeking State Approval

Guidelines and Instructions (document to be updated in Summer of 2022)

These guidelines provide valuable information to families and schools about nonpublic schools not seeking state approval. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) provides a similar guideline for approved [Home Study Programs](#).

If families have any questions about implementing a nonpublic school not seeking state approval, they may contact the LDE's toll free number at 1.877.453.2721 or email nonpublicschools@la.gov.

General Overview:

Families wishing to independently educate their children have the option of attending a nonpublic school not seeking state approval or an approved Home Study Program. It is important to note that attending a nonpublic school not seeking state approval does not serve as confirmation that students are meeting compulsory attendance laws. Parents and guardians are to maintain student attendance records.

Additionally, please note that students enrolled in a Nonpublic School Not Seeking State Approval:

- a) are **not** considered enrolled in a BESE-Approved Home Study Program or BESE-Approved Nonpublic School;
- b) are **not** eligible for Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) scholarships; and,
- c) are **not** required to take state testing. However, testing is available upon request through the local school system for only the 4th and 8th grade LEAP. Contact the school system in January for applicable testing dates and fees.

How to Submit Enrollment Information for a Nonpublic School Not Seeking State Approval:

Schools or families wishing to attend a nonpublic school not seeking state approval must annually submit enrollment information for their school by using the [online registration form](#). Submitting annual enrollment is registering with the LDE. Persons entering their email address on the form will receive a registration verification letter via email immediately upon completion of registration. Registration is valid for one year from the date of the letter. Only persons with hardship situations such as not having internet access, may mail in the letter of intent to register their school.

Parents must notify the LDE annually by the thirtieth day after the school session begins. Please see the Compulsory Attendance section below for more information on attendance requirements.

Information provided to the LDE when submitting attendance information for a nonpublic school not seeking state approval includes:

- **NAME OF SCHOOL:** Indicate the name given your school. Do not enter the name of the school that your child is currently attending.
- **ADDRESS OF SCHOOL:** Indicate the address of your school. This is your address, or the address of your facility, not the address of your curriculum source or school that your student previously attended.
- **SCHOOL LEADERS NAME:** Indicate your name or name of the person responsible for your school.
- **TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT:** Indicate your total student enrollment. It is not necessary to submit additions and deletions to your enrollment during the year. This is a one-time enrollment count.
- **ASSURANCE STATEMENT:** School leader must agree to assurance statement and submission data by checking box attesting that the information provided on the form is true and correct. The school is to maintain student daily attendance logs in your files to comply with student enrollment notification requirements as indicated in R.S. 17:232 C.

The application can be found here: https://webapps.doe.louisiana.gov/publicapps/Reg_NP_NSSA_App/

All school districts are provided with a list of their district's nonpublic schools not seeking state approval on a quarterly basis and email nonpublicschools@la.gov if they require additional information.

Student Withdrawal from Public School

A public school cannot refuse to let a parent or guardian withdraw their child from school. A student who is withdrawn from public school during the school year, or who attended public school the year before enrolling in a private school, must provide an Enrollment Notification Letter to the public school they last attended within 10 days of enrollment. This notification may include a request for the student's transcript.

Parents may officially withdraw their student from their current school prior to receiving the "Attendance Submission Verification Letter." Parents have 10 days to provide the school with a copy of the "Attendance Submission Verification letter" to complete the withdrawal process.

Compliance Information

Please find further information on Compulsory Attendance Laws, Required Documentation for Obtaining a Driver's License or Learner's Permit, Immunization law, and the process for withdrawing students from school, below:

Topic	Topic Description:
<p>Compulsory Attendance Law</p>	<p>Every parent, guardian or other person having custody or control of a child between the ages of five and eighteen has the primary responsibility of ensuring that the child regularly attend school. Louisiana law provides for parent, state, and school district responsibilities’ regarding compulsory attendance laws:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.S. 17:221. A.1-4. School attendance, compulsory ages, and duty of parents • R.S.17:230. Powers and duties of visiting teachers, or supervisors of child welfare and attendance • R.S. 17:232.C. and D. Attendance records, principals' and teachers' duty to furnish; penalty for violation; pupil absence upon own authority prohibited; notice
<p>Required Documentation for Obtaining a Driver’s License or Learner’s Permit</p>	<p>Pursuant to LA R.S.32:431.1, Louisiana students enrolled in a nonpublic school not seeking state approval must certify that they meet required school attendance for the purposes of obtaining a driver’s license or a learner’s permit.</p> <p>To certify the required attendance, please keep a copy of the registration verification letter sent upon the successful submission of enrollment information for a nonpublic school (not seeking state approval). If the nonpublic school (not seeking state approval) submitted attendance information online, then the registration letter will be sent to the email address provided. In addition to this letter, completion of “Certification of School Attendance Form” must be completed and signed by parent (ATTACHMENT A on page 8).</p> <p>Families of students enrolled in a nonpublic school not seeking state approval should provide a copy of this letter and confirmation of enrollment in the nonpublic school not seeking state approval as documentation of school attendance to the Department of Motor Vehicles for the purpose of obtaining a driver’s license or learner’s permit.</p>

<p>Immunization Law</p>	<p>La. R.S. 17:170.4(A)(1)(b) states a student who is eleven years old and entering a grade other than the sixth grade and a student who is sixteen years old and entering a grade other than the eleventh grade shall provide satisfactory evidence of current immunization against meningococcal disease in accordance with a directive provided by the state Department of Education and the Department of Health that shall be based on the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as a condition of entry for public and nonpublic schools.</p> <p>Exemptions include: parent/guardian waivers for religious or personal reasons, or a written statement from a physician stating contraindicated medical reasons, including shortage of supply of vaccine.</p> <p>Chief school administrators are responsible for checking and ensuring enforcement of this law.</p>
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Compulsory Attendance

Louisiana state law (R.S. 17:221) requires every parent or other person in Louisiana having control or charge of any child from that child's fifth birthday until his/her eighteenth birthday to send such child to a public or private day school, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday. Any child below the age of five who is legally enrolled in school is also subject to this law. Parents and other responsible persons are required to send the child to a public or private day school, assure the attendance of such child in regularly assigned classes during the instructional hours of the school, and assure that the child is not habitually tardy from school.

R.S. 17:236 defines a school as an institution for the teaching of children, consisting of an adequate physical plant, instructional staff members, and students. Schools must operate a minimum session of not less than one hundred eighty days. For purposes of compulsory attendance in a non-public school, a child who participates in a home study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) shall be considered in attendance at a day school; a home study program shall be approved if it offers a sustained curriculum of a quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level.

The words “home school” are often used by parents to refer to their child’s participation in an approved home study program and/or enrollment in a non-public school not seeking state approval. These options are described below.

Participation in Approved Home Study Programs

R.S. 17:236.1 allows parents to seek approval from BESE (through the LDOE, its administering agency) to educate their child through a home study program. Parents are required to seek initial state approval for their

home study program within 15 days after it has commenced. This means that parents may begin educating their child in a home study program prior to receiving state approval; they must submit their request for approval to the state within the first 15 days of such program. As such, when a parent seeks to withdraw their child from a public school for the purpose of transferring to an approved home study program, it is possible that the parent may not have yet received state approval.

The LDOE is required to notify the local school superintendent in whose jurisdiction an approved home study program is being conducted. A parent is not required to show any documentation that he or she has already applied for a home study program in order to withdraw his or her child from a public school. In the interim, child welfare and attendance officers having questions about a home study program application should contact nonpublicschools@la.gov.

Enrollment in Non-public Schools Not Seeking State Approval

Per R.S. 17:236, if a non-public school receives no local, state, or federal funds or support, directly or indirectly, instructional staff members shall meet requirements as may be prescribed by the school or church. Any such school shall operate a minimum session of not less than one hundred eighty days and shall report to the LDOE its total attendance (enrollment) as of the thirtieth day of the school's term or session.

For this reason, when a parent withdraws his or her child from a public school for the purpose of transferring him/her to a non-public school that does not wish to seek state approval, there is no documentation from the LDOE or BESE. In the past, non-public schools not seeking state approval have been permitted to register with the LDOE, but were not required to do so. Registration does not certify anything with regard to the school's compliance with state laws (such as the definition of a school pursuant to R.S. 17:236) or the parent's compliance with compulsory attendance laws (R.S. 17:221).

In summary, there is no documentation that a parent or legal guardian must provide in order to withdraw a child from school. However, as required by law, the LDOE will notify the local superintendent when a home study application has been received and when any subsequent action is taken on the application. Any non-public school not seeking state approval has ten days to provide notice of enrollment to the school the student last attended.

Please note that R.S. 17:230 and Children's Code Article 733.1 authorize and direct visiting teachers, supervisors of child welfare and attendance, and peace/probation officers to investigate cases of nonenrollment and unexcused absences from school of all children within the compulsory school attendance age. Pursuant to R.S. 17:233, if a child is out of school and the parent or legal guardian has not yet applied or been approved for home study or sent notice of enrollment as a non-public school not seeking state approval, the visiting teachers and supervisors of child welfare and attendance may be mandated to contact the parent or legal guardian to inquire about the child's attendance in a school or a home study program. Any questions about a parent's compliance with compulsory attendance laws should be directed to one of these designated individuals.

Appendix A

CERTIFICATION OF REQUIRED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

For the purposes of obtaining a Driver's License or Learner's Permit

Pursuant to LA R.S. 32.432.1

Student's Full Legal Name (Last, First, Middle):	Sex: Male Female	DOB: (MM/DD/CCYY)
Student's Physical Address:		
Student's City, State, ZIP:		
The above named student has (please check the appropriate box):		
	1. Received a high school diploma or high school equivalency (HSE) credential.	
	2. Enrolled and is attending the school listed below.	
	3. Enrolled and is attending a course leading to a HSE credential.	
	4. Completed the required minimum units of credit for high school graduation and all other graduation requirements as mandated by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).	
	5. Received a special education certificate of achievement certifying that the student has completed high school.	
	6. Enrolled in and participating in a BESE-approved home school program or a registered nonpublic school.	

7. Requested and received a decision by the appropriate authority that the minor is unable to attend any school or program due to circumstances beyond the control of the minor and has not been determined to be a dropout or habitually absent or tardy as provided in LA R.S. 32:431.1.	
School Name:	School Phone Number:
School Physical Address:	
Verifying Official's Printed Name:	Verifying Official's Title:
Verifying Official's Signature:	Date: (MM/DD/CCYY)

This form serves as documentation of the aforementioned minor's compliance with LA R.S. 32:431.1 and is valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of issuance. Please submit completed forms to the Louisiana Department of Public Safety, Office of Motor Vehicles.