

RHODE ISLAND

Non-Public School Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the best RIDE contact for non-public school support?
Please email NonPublicSchools@ride.ri.gov for support with non-public school issues.
2. Where can I find the non-public approval application?
Applications are available on-line through the [eRIDE](#) system. If you currently have an eRIDE account, you may enter your user login and password, click the Non-Public Approval icon, and enter your data.
3. What if I don't have, or don't remember, my login and password?
Login help is available through the RIDE helpdesk at HelpDesk@ride.ri.gov.
4. What is the deadline for applying for RIDE approval for the upcoming school year?
The deadline for applying for RIDE approval for the upcoming school year is the last working day of June of the same year.
5. How often do non-public schools need to apply for RIDE approval?
Annual RIDE approval is required for all non-public schools.
6. Does RIDE approve Pre-K (age 4) programs?
RIDE does not approve Pre-K programs. If the Pre-K is part of an elementary school, however, no further licensing is required unless the school also offers a preschool (age 3). Preschools need to be licensed regardless of any higher grades that are offered by the school. As an example, a K – Grade 3 school that has a Pre-K (age 4) does not require further licensing, but a preschool (age 3) – Grade 3 does require licensing.
7. What agency licenses preschools (age 3) and Pre-K programs that are not part of an elementary school?
The Child Care Licensing Unit at the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (<http://www.dhs.ri.gov/Programs/CCAPLicensing.php>) holds the current licensing charter in Rhode Island. As a division of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, the Office of Child Care supports the workforce in providing families with equitable access to high-quality, safe, affordable child care.
8. What are the requirements for a student's time in school for the academic year?
The length of the school year for students in non-public schools must be substantially equivalent to that required in the public schools and equal 180 days per year exclusive of holidays (RIGL 16-2-2 and 16-9-2).
9. What are the requirements of a student's instructional time per day?
A kindergarten day shall not be less than 2-1/2 hours (150 minutes). The instructional time requirement for both elementary and secondary levels is 5-1/2 hours (330 minutes). For elementary students, length of the school day excludes lunch, pre and post school teacher time, recess and any

other time that is not actual instructional time. Length of a secondary school day excludes lunch, study halls, homeroom, common planning time, student passing time, pre- and post-school teacher time, and any other time that is not actual instructional time.

10. What are the requirements for qualifications of non-public school school staff?

The faculty and staff shall be large enough to carry out the program of the school. All personnel shall be of high character and integrity and shall have the knowledge, training, and experience adequate for the positions they hold. Non-public school teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree, a criminal records check, and demonstrated competency in the content area of grade levels they teach. Teachers are expected to continue to enroll in courses and/or to participate in seminars and other programs, which will further develop their professional competencies.

The school health program as defined by state statute and regulation shall be staffed by personnel whose qualifications are substantially equivalent to their counterparts in public schools. (RIGL 16-21-SCHO Part II, Section 3.1)

11. What is the regulatory guidance regarding curriculum, especially the core academic subjects?

Each school shall have a clearly stated educational policy, cooperatively developed and written by the faculty and administration. The statement shall set forth the objectives of the school and the philosophy underlying the methods used to attain these objectives.

State statutes set forth certain specific curriculum requirements for all public and non-public schools. Each school with students in grades 1-12 must provide all children in attendance with instruction in reading, writing, geography, mathematics, history, including the history of Rhode Island, American government and civics, and physical education and health; each shall be taught in the English language. Kindergarten students must be provided instruction in mathematics, writing, reading, history/social studies, and physical education and health. (RIGL §16-19-2). Instruction in the statutorily required content areas should be taught in a manner that provides breadth and depth that is substantially equivalent to that of the public schools.

12. Are there any resources and or materials available to the non-public schools to help implement a high quality curriculum?

The textbook loan program allows for all students in non-public schools to request and borrow, from the student's district of residence, any math, science, ELA, social studies, and/or language arts textbooks that are on the state approved textbook list. Please visit the [RIDE Textbook Search web page](#) for more information.

13. What are the requirements for fire drill reporting and evacuation of students in an emergency?

In accordance with state law (§16-21-4, §16-21-5), all schools (public and nonpublic) in Rhode Island are required to perform 15 emergency drills that include fire, lockdown, and evacuation drills. At least one drill shall be conducted each month, and at least one out of every four must be obstructed drills. As part of the required 15 emergency drills, each school must conduct two evacuation drills and two lockdown drills. One lockdown drill shall occur in September and one in January. *Please note that RIDE no longer accepts hard copies of fire-drill reports. All emergency-drill information must be entered in eRIDE following completion of each drill.*

In residence facilities in private schools there shall be at least four (4) drills or rapid dismissals during the academic year for each school building or residence facility, at least two (2) of which shall be held between the months of September through December inclusive. The remaining two (2) drills shall be held between the months of January through June inclusive. Any college, university, or post-secondary institution, which holds summer session, shall hold a drill or rapid dismissal during the first full week of the summer session. At least one drill or rapid dismissal shall be obstructed so that at least one or more exits or stairways in the school building or dormitory are blocked off or not used. For purposes of this section “residence facility” shall mean dormitory, fraternity, sorority, or any other type of residence hall, whether on campus or off campus, owned or leased by a college, university, post-secondary institution, public schools, or private school with accommodations for twenty (20) or more students.

14. Are RI non-public schools required to complete Annual School Health Reports?

RI non-public schools that serve Kindergarten-only students or Kindergarten and higher grade students are required to complete Annual School Health Reports and endorse the Annual School Health Report assurance on the non-public approval application. The [Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs, Section 2.5](#), require all districts and non-public authorities to submit a report pertaining to the school/district health program to the Commissioner of Education and the Director of Health on an annual basis. The Annual School Health Report (ASHR) provides a standardized template to fulfill this reporting requirement and allows the State Departments of Education and Health to monitor school and district compliance with school health-related statutes, regulations and protocols that ensure the health and safety of students and staff at all of Rhode Island’s schools. The ASHR is available on [eRIDE](#) for ease of electronic submission. The report is pre-populated with information from one year to the next to support local efforts to complete the report on time.

For questions about the Annual School Health Report, please refer to [Annual School Health Report Tutorial](#) and [Guidance/Q&A](#) document.

15. Are RI non-public schools required to complete School Safety Plans?

Yes, all RI non-public schools are required to complete School Safety Plans. School Safety Plans are a line item in the Annual School Health Report. Schools may find it helpful to refer to the [Model School Safety Plan](#) on the RIDE website when developing or updating their plans. The [Model School Safety Plan](#) provides a blueprint which incorporates best practices and state requirements into a guide that you can adopt or modify to meet your school’s individual needs.

16. I already have a School Safety Plan. Do I need to create a new one?

New “best practices” for handling emergency situations become available on an ongoing basis, and new emergency situations emerge over time. Therefore, your plan should always be a “working / living document,” and after initial completion, should be updated and practiced at a minimum on an annual basis. Please cross check with current legislative requirements to ensure that your plan is compliant under RI Gen Laws § [16-21-23](#), and [16-21-24](#).