

RHODE ISLAND

Non-Public School Frequently Asked Questions

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Where do I go for help completing the non-public application?

Please refer to the Guidance document on the RIDE Non-Public webpage for answers to questions about completing the non-public approval application.

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 July 15.

5. Do preschools need to apply for RIDE approval?

RIDE approval is required for all non-public schools that serve children in grades K – 12. If your non-public school serves students in kindergarten or preschool and kindergarten **in addition to grade 1**, you may also seek approval for these classrooms in this application process for these programs.

*If your program serves students in preschool and kindergarten ONLY, **and does not extend to grade 1**, you may seek approval for your kindergarten ONLY in this application process. Please note: Your preschool must be approved through the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).*

6. 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 – 180 days per year exclusive of holidays. ([RI Board of Regents Regulation G-4-4](#) and [RIGL §16-19-2](#))

7. 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. ([RI Board of Regents Regulation G-4-4-11](#))

8. What are the requirements for qualifications of 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.

All teachers in non-public schools must 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.

9. 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 ([RIGL §16-19-2](#)) 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. 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.

10. 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 home district, 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.

11. 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.

In accordance with an amendment to state law ([§23-28.12-15](#)) and ([§23-28.12-36](#)), the failure to comply with the provisions of emergency-drill legislation has been changed from a misdemeanor to a violation, punishable by a fine that has increased from not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50) to not exceeding two-hundred dollars (\$200). The principal of each school is responsible for the successful implementation of the Rhode Island fire-safety statutes, including the timely and accurate reporting of emergency drills. This information is monitored by RIDE on a regular basis.

12. My non-public school boards students. What are the emergency drill regulations for my school ?

In accordance with state law ([§23-28.12-15](#)) and ([§23-28.12-36](#)), 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. 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. 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.

The amendment to state law ([§23-28.12-15](#)) and ([§23-28.12-36](#)) referred to in Question 11 applies to all non-public schools, including those with residence facilities.

13. Does RIDE accept hard copies of emergency drill reports?

All emergency-drill information must be entered in eRIDE following completion of each drill. RIDE does *not* accept hard copies of fire-drill reports.

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

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. In July of 2013, Governor Chafee signed RIGL [§16-21-24](#) into effect. 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. Are schools required to submit their School Safety Plan to RIDE?

Schools are not required to submit their School Safety Plans to RIDE. However, in accordance with state law [§16-21-25](#), School Safety Plans are required to be reviewed on an annual basis by the _____ and updated annually. These reviews and updates shall be completed by November 1 of any given year.

17. 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](#).