



NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Exempt (Home) School Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (2024/25 School Year)

INCLUDES:

- A. Laws and Rules
- B. Mandatory School Attendance Age
- C. Getting Started
- D. Forms
- E. Birth Certificate
- F. Miscellaneous
- G. Reporting Changes Subsequent to the Initial Filing

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Information Current as of June 3, 2024

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**EXEMPT (HOME) SCHOOL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(2024/25 School Year)**

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**EXEMPT (HOME) SCHOOL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
(2024/25 School Year)**

Current as of June 3, 2024

A. LAWS AND RULES

A1. What is the law regarding "home schooling" in Nebraska?

Parents, legal guardians, or educational decisionmakers may educate their child at home by electing not to meet State approval or accreditation requirements (Section 79-1601 R.R.S.). In Nebraska, "home schools" are referred to as exempt schools and are considered non-approved and non-accredited private schools. Exempt schools can also be outside the child's home and have students from more than one family.

By filing for and receiving exempt status, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker are electing not to have their child attend a school that meets State approval or accreditation requirements while also complying with the mandatory school attendance law (Section 79-201 R.R.S.).

A2. What is Rule 13?

Due to the recent passage of LB1027, 2024, Rule 13 is currently be revised. There are many of the Rule 13 provisions that are no longer applicable due to these changes. Please refer to [LB1027](#) for more information.

B. MANDATORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE

B1. What is the mandatory school attendance age in Nebraska?

The mandatory school attendance law (Section 79-201 R.R.S.) states that a child is of mandatory attendance age if the child will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year has not reached 18 years of age.

For the 2024/25 school year:

- If the student was born in the calendar year 2019 or later, he/she is **below** the required age to file for exempt status.
- If the student was born prior to September 1, 2006, he/she is **over** the required age to file for exempt status.

B2. At what age am I required to file for exempt status for my child?

The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is required to file for exempt status with the NDE for a child who is age 7 up to age 18. **However, if the child will turn 6 before January 1, 2025 (born in the year 2018), in order to avoid violating the mandatory attendance (truancy) law if your child is not enrolled in an approved or accredited school, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must either:**

- Sign an affidavit stating they intend for the child to participate in an Exempt School and intend to file for exempt status with the Commissioner of Education on or before the child's 7th birthday (a.k.a. delaying entry until age 7). This affidavit is to be filed by the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker with the school district in which the child resides (resident public school district). *Contact the resident public school district to request the affidavit form (NDE does not provide or collect this affidavit form).*

-OR-

- File for exempt status with NDE for the 2024/25 school year regarding that child. If parents choose this option, they must comply fully with the requirements as outlined in statute or rule and begin educating the child(ren) accordingly.

Note: Even if the student is old enough to enroll in school (school-age), an exemption election is required only if the student is of mandatory school attendance age.

B3. My child is 5 years old. Will I need to file for him/her?

The answer to this question is dependent on the child's date of birth.

If the child will turn 6 before January 1, 2025 (born in the year 2018), in order to avoid violating the mandatory attendance (truancy) law if your child is not enrolled in an approved or accredited school, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must either:

- ❑ Sign an affidavit stating they intend for the child to participate in an Exempt School and intend to file for exempt status with the Commissioner of Education on or before the child's 7th birthday (a.k.a. delaying entry until age 7). This affidavit is to be filed by the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker with the school district in which the child resides (resident public school district). *Contact the resident public school district to request the affidavit form (NDE does not provide or collect this affidavit form).*

-OR-

- ❑ File for exempt status with NDE for the 2024/25 school year regarding that child. If the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker choose this option, they must comply fully with the requirements as outlined in statute or rule and begin educating the child(ren) accordingly.

Note: Even if the student is old enough to enroll in school (school-age), an exemption election is required only if the student is of mandatory school attendance age.

B4. My child is 6 years old. Will I need to file for him/her?

It will depend on whether you are 'homeschooling' the child for the 2024/25 school year or delaying entry until the child turns age 7 (refer to Rule 13, Section 001.03)*.

If the child is age 6 now or will turn age 6 before January 1, 2025, but has not reached 7 years of age, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must either:

- ❑ Sign an affidavit stating they intend for the child to participate in an Exempt School and intend to file for exempt status with the Commissioner of Education on or before the child's 7th birthday (a.k.a. delaying entry until age 7). This affidavit is to be filed by the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker with the school district in which the child resides (resident public school district). *Contact the resident public school district to request the affidavit form (NDE does not provide or collect this affidavit form).*

-OR-

- ❑ File for exempt status with NDE for the 2024/25 school year regarding that child. If the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker choose this option, they must comply fully with the requirements as outlined in statute or rule and begin educating the child(ren) accordingly.

In the case of a child who is age 6 and will turn age 7 anytime during the 2024/25 school year, and the parents or guardians opted to delay entry until age 7, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must file for exempt status with NDE prior to the child's 7th birthday. They may, however, file for exemption prior to the beginning of the 2024/25 school year [note - we recommend filing by July 15]. *Exception: If the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker had filed for this child for the 2023/24 school year, they should renew the exemption by July 15, 2024.*

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

B5. My child is currently age 16. Will I need to file for him/her?

Yes. School attendance is required up to age 18, therefore, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker will need to file for exempt status annually until he/she turns age 18. Otherwise, refer to Section 010 of Rule 13* for further information about the withdrawal of a child from the exempt school in either of the following two scenarios: (1) if the child has reached age 16 and has not reached age 18, or (2) has not reached age 18 and has completed the program of instruction offered by the exempt (home) school.

B6. My child is currently 17 years old. Do I need to file for him/her?

See answer to Question B5.

For the 2024/25 school year:

- If the student was born prior to September 1, 2006, he/she is **over** the required age to file for exempt status.

B7. My child is currently 18 years old. Do I need to file for him/her?

No, mandatory school law requires attendance up to age 18.

For the 2024/25 school year:

- If the student was born prior to September 1, 2006, he/she is **over** the required age to file for exempt status.

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

C. GETTING STARTED

C1. How do I get started, what do I do first?

The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must file for exempt status (under Rule 13)* with the Department of Education (NDE). By filing for exempt status, a parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is electing to have their child attend a school that does not meet the requirements for approval and accreditation in the state but remain in compliance with the mandatory school attendance law. The parent is also promising to comply with the state requirements for exempt schools, and that the information provided is true and accurate.

C2. How do I file for an exemption?

The preferred and quickest method of filing is to submit online through the **Nebraska Exempt School Program** at <https://exemptschool.education.ne.gov>. Instructions for submitting online are included on this website as well.

If you cannot submit online, the forms and related information can be printed from the Exempt School Program website at www.education.ne.gov/fos/exempt-schools/, under the “Forms for the 2024/25 School Year” banner: or by contacting the Exempt School Program Office to request a packet be mailed.

C3. Does the State provide materials or direct what I need to teach?

No. The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is responsible for finding a curriculum that fits the needs of the exempt school student. Curriculum materials, books, and outlines are not available from the Nebraska Department of Education. The program of instruction must lead to the basic skills in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and health.

Per LB1027, 2024, curriculum information is no longer required to be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education.

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

C4. Where do I get textbooks, materials and resources and what does it cost?

For information about organizations which may help the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker obtain curriculum information and provide support for exempt school families, visit the Exempt School Program website, under the “Resources” link, at www.education.ne.gov/fos/exempt-schools/resources/. These are private organizations and are not affiliated with NDE.

Curriculum costs will vary depending on your choice to purchase an entire program from a private company or create your own curriculum. NDE does not endorse or recommend particular curriculums or programs for exempt schools. The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker (school operator) assumes all costs.

While curriculum materials, books, guidelines or technical assistance are not available from the Nebraska Department of Education, exempt schools are welcome to visit the Nebraska Open Educational Resources website; Nebraska's statewide platform for open educational resources where educators collaborate to discover, create and share openly licensed content. To learn more, or to access the Hub, visit <https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/nebraska>.

Approved or accredited schools are under no obligation to provide assistance to exempt schools. If they choose to do so, it is entirely up to the local school board or governing body. Exempt schools are not eligible to participate in the Rule 4, Textbook Loan Program.

C5. How can I find support groups or information on the Web?

The organizations listed on the “Resources” page of the Exempt School Program website have information for the newcomer and those with past experience. These Nebraska organizations may be able to provide you with contacts for support groups in your area. For information on the web, try searching for “home school curriculum,” “schooling at home,” and/or “online curriculum.” There are countless resources out there for parents to research to determine what best fits their child’s needs.

C6. Is there a fee?

There is no fee to file for the exemption with NDE. The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker assumes all curriculum and associated operational costs.

C7. Is there any funding available for exempt schools?

There is no funding available through NDE.

C8. My child will be enrolled in an online “accredited” private school/program. Do I still need to file for exempt status?

Yes, if the student is of mandatory school attendance age. While these out-of-state, online programs may be accredited in their state of origin or by a private accrediting entity, they are not approved or accredited by NDE and therefore, parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker are required to file for exempt status in accordance with law. This includes (but is not limited to) Time for Learning, Acellus, Abeka, Penn Foster, American School, James Madison (Ashworth) High School, and Keystone High School.

(These are simply examples of programs, NDE cannot endorse or recommend any curriculum.)

- The **only two exceptions** are if your child is enrolled full-time with the University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) or the Omaha Virtual School (OVS) through Omaha Public Schools. These are Nebraska accredited schools and filing for exempt status for attendance at either of these schools does not apply.

Note the following in regard to utilizing an online school or program:

1. The filing parent(s) or guardian(s) must still comply with the requirements in state statute or rule and see to it that the child is provided at least 1,032 hours of instruction (elementary grades) or 1,080 hours of instruction (secondary grades), as applicable, each school year.
2. Nebraska state laws and regulations concerning mandatory education age and discontinuing education still apply (see Questions B1, D30 & D31).
3. A “diploma” or other certificate of completion from an online school for a child of mandatory attendance age is not itself sufficient to simply cease schooling without complying with Rule 13, Section 010*. See also Questions D30 and D31. A parent or guardian that does not comply with those requirements runs the risk of being found to have violated truancy laws.
4. A “diploma” or other certificate of completion from such an online school is not considered a diploma representing completion of high school from an approved or accredited Nebraska school.
5. The Nebraska Department of Education has no regulatory authority over or responsibility for the education or services provided by these online schools. However, we recommend you thoroughly research the curriculum and program before purchasing.

Per LB1027, 2024, curriculum information is no longer required to be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education.

C9. What are the requirements for school year start date, times of school day, and days the school must be in session?

There are no legal or regulatory requirements other than that you must provide 1,032 hours of instruction (elementary grades) or 1,080 hours of instruction (secondary grades) for the school year. The particulars of your school “calendar” in providing those hours is up to you. See also Question D17.

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

D. FORMS

D1. What is the deadline?

The deadline is July 15 of each year the school will be in operation, whether using the online system or mailing or dropping off paper documents to NDE. For purposes of the rule, the record-keeping year is July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 (refer to Rule 13, Section 002.07) *.

Refer to Rule 13, Section 003.02A1* if the parents or legal guardians and child(ren) were not residents of a Nebraska school district as of July 15; and Rule 13, Section 003.02A2*, if the parents or legal guardians of any child about to be or presently enrolled in an approved or accredited Nebraska school elect after July 15 to have such child enroll and attend exempt school.

D2. Where do I send my forms and birth certificate(s)?

If you are using the online system, all supporting documents must be submitted online through that system only (<https://exemptschool.education.ne.gov/>).

If you are filing by paper, ***make a copy of the documents for your records first***, then mail the original documents to the following address:

Exempt School Program Office
Nebraska Department of Education
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987

If you live in the Lincoln area and choose to bring the documents to NDE, they can be dropped off at the agency's reception desk. The Nebraska Department of Education offices are located at 500 S. 84th Street. The Receptionist is available Monday-Friday from 8:00-5:00.

Be sure to make copies of the documents before you drop them off – the NDE receptionist cannot make copies for you.

D3. Can I file for exempt status by email or by fax?

No. The electronic method of filing is to submit online through the Nebraska Exempt School Program at <https://exemptschool.education.ne.gov/>. If you are filing by paper, mail the documents to the address noted above (make a copy of the documents for your records first).

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

D4. What will I receive after I file for exempt status?

All families upon filing for exempt status will receive a letter signed by the Commissioner of Education “acknowledging” their choice to file for exempt status (exempt schools are acknowledged only, they are not approved or disapproved). A letter is issued upon submission of the online submission or once the paper submission is logged.

- Online submission - Once the information is submitted, the Parent Representative will receive an automated email with an attachment letter listing the names of the children for which they filed. The Nebraska Department of Education will contact you if (a) corrections are needed to any of the information you have submitted, or (b) additional information required by law is needed.
- Paper submission – Once the information is received and logged, and if the Parent Representative has listed an email address, they will receive an automated email with an attachment letter listing the names of the children for which they filed. If no email address is provided for the Parent Representative, a letter is sent by regular mail. The Nebraska Department of Education will contact you if (a) corrections are needed to any of the information you have submitted, or (b) additional information required by law is needed.

D5. How soon do I receive the letter after I file?

A letter is issued upon submission of the online submission or once paper submission is logged. Please retain this document for your records and any future needs you will have to produce a document regarding this school that is exempt from approval and accreditation requirements in Nebraska. The Nebraska Department of Education will contact you if (a) corrections are needed to any of the information you have submitted, or (b) additional information required by law is needed.

D6. How often am I required to file for exempt status?

Annually, by July 15 of each year the school will be in operation.

D7. Do I notify my school district that I’m home schooling?

You can notify the school if you wish; however, NDE will provide the official notification to your resident public school district. The resident school district will have access to a report showing all families in their district who have filed with NDE regardless of status.

If this is mid-year filing (i.e. after most approved/accredited schools begin their fall semester), see Question D29.

If you participate in the Enrollment Option Program (opted to enroll in a school district that you do not reside in), show the option district the acknowledgement letter; NDE notifies only the district of residence. *The option should be cancelled by the parent.*

D8. What happens if I choose to home school and do not file for exempt status?

Failure to comply with the filing requirements means no exemption from mandatory attendance laws has been effectuated and could subject the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker to prosecution under statutes relating to mandatory attendance; in other words, the student is considered truant (see Sections 79-201 through 79-210 R.R.S. and Rule 13, Section 006) *.

D9. Who completes the Statement of Election and Assurances?

One parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker must complete a Statement of Election and Assurances (refer to Rule 13, Section 003.01) *. Do **not** use “fill & sign” applications such as Adobe to replace the actual signature.

Per LB1027, 2024 only one parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is required to complete the filing for the exempt school.

If the filer is the legal guardian or educational decisionmaker a copy of the documentation lawfully appointing the filer as a legal guardian* or educational decisionmaker* must be submitted with the completed form.

* Legal documentation provided (court order) must include **all** pages of the order that pertain to the custody of the student, including the cover page, judge’s signature page, and any related attachments.

D10. What happens if the parents have joint legal custody, but the child(ren) lives with the filing parent?

Per LB1027, 2024 only one parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is required to complete the filing for the exempt school.

D11. What do I list for the “Name of the Exempt School?”

This is the name you choose to call your exempt school. It is unique to your individual exempt school. This is **not** the name of your local school district. For example, some families use their last name and add the words “Home School” (e.g. Smith Home School).

D12. Who is (or who should I put down as) the Parent Representative?

The parent representative is the school agent or principal and is the person responsible for filing the exempt school paperwork. Only one parent representative per exempt school can be designated. Typically, this is either the mother or father of the child(ren). The parent representative must complete the Authorized Parent Representative Form and assume the responsibilities it entails, as outlined in statute or rule.

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

D13. Do I file separately for each child I want to home school?

Not if all the children are from the same family. You can include all your children on the same submission.

For Multi-Family schools (includes students from two or more families), the Parent Representative collects the Statement of Election and Assurance documents from a parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker of the students attending the school and submits along with the rest of the information (Authorized Parent Representative Form, Birth Certificate, and if applicable, court documents).

D14. What is an instructional monitor?

This is the individual(s) designated to do the teaching at the exempt school as outlined in statute or rule.

Per LB1027, 2024, monitor(s) are no longer required to be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education.

D15. What requirements or qualifications must the instructional monitor(s) have to teach my child?

There are no formal educational qualifications. The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker are satisfied that the individual(s) monitoring instruction are qualified to monitor instruction in the basic skills in the areas of language arts, math, science, social studies and health, and By signing the Statement of Election and Assurances, the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker is verifying they are satisfied that the individual monitoring is qualified to monitor instruction in the basic skills.

Per LB 1027, 2024, monitor(s) are no longer required to be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education.

D16. Can I teach children other than my own?

Yes. See question D15.

D17. What is the “dates of operation” (calendar) information?

This is the period of operation for the 2024/25 school year. The minimum hours of instruction are 1032 for elementary grades (K-8) and 1080 hours for secondary grades (9-12). The total instructional hours for the 2024/25 school year must occur during the reporting period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. These are the same hourly requirements required by law for approved and accredited schools.

- Online submission - Report the dates of operation in Step 5; refer to the “Nebraska Exempt School Program/Instructions for an Exemption Via Online Submission” document.
- Paper submission - Report the dates of operation on the “Authorized Parent Representative Form”.

D18. What are the requirements for attendance?

Minimum instruction is 1032 hours for elementary students and 1080 hours for secondary students, per school year as outlined in statute or rule.

If this is a mid-year filing, the hours of instruction may be prorated based upon the remaining balance of the school year and should reflect the actual instructional hours for the months your child will be home schooled. See Questions D26 & D27 for further information.

D19. What is dual enrollment?

This is a student who is attending more than one school at the same time. This would include a student attending the exempt school part-time while simultaneously attending a Nebraska public K-12 school or a Nebraska private approved or accredited K-12 school.

The student would **not** be considered dual enrolled if:

- The student is taking courses through a post-secondary school (e.g., community college), those courses are considered part of the exempt school's program of instruction/curriculum.
- The program of instruction/curriculum is received through an online school.

If you participate in the Enrollment Option Program (opted to enroll in a school district that you do not reside in), dual enrollment does **not** apply in this scenario as full-time enrollment at the option district is required. If the student will be homeschooled, rather than attend the option district, the option should be cancelled by the parent.

D20. What is a partial school year or mid-school year enrollment?

This is when the exempt school is in operation in Nebraska for only part of the 2024/25 school year. This could include the following scenarios: the family moves to Nebraska well after the beginning of the school year (July 1) and when the local approved/accredited schools are already in session, or when the parents choose to home school the child part way through the school year after the child had enrolled and attended an approved or accredited school for part of the school year.

See Questions D26-D29 for further information.

D21. What must be taught?

Your program of instruction must lead to (but is not limited to) the basic skills in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and health.

Per LB1027, 2024, curriculum information is no longer required to be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education.

D22. What kind of records do I need to keep?

While recordkeeping and retention are not addressed in Rule 13*, it is advisable that you keep records including, but not limited to, attendance data and a transcript of classes taken with grades received for each child. Homeschool organizations (see link in Question C4) may have advice regarding transcript development.

NDE does not collect grades or require progress reports; the exempt school parent representative is responsible for their own recordkeeping.

D23. Do I need to provide a copy of the immunization records to NDE?

No. If the Statement of Election is due to the requirements for approval and accreditation required by law and the rules and regulations interfering with the parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker's decisions in directing their child(ren)'s education; the exempt school will need to keep immunization records on file.

For immunization information, refer to Section 79-217 R.R.S., Section 001.05 of Rule 13*, or contact the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)/Immunization Program Section at 402/471-6423 or visit the HHS website at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Licensed-Child-Care-Immunization.aspx>.

D24. How do I find out in which school district I reside?

Contact the County Assessor's office in your county of residence. That office can tell you in which school district you reside. It is important that you list the correct resident school district to ensure that we notify the correct school district of your exempt status (refer to Rule 13, Section 005)*.

List the district of residence only. If you participate in the Enrollment Option Program (opted to enroll in a school district that you do not reside in), show the option district the acknowledgement letter; NDE notifies only the district of residence. *Note: The option should be cancelled by the parent.*

D25. I want to add a child to the exempt school roster, but have already filed and received the Acknowledgement Letter; what do I need to submit?

Prior to/ or promptly upon the student's enrollment, submit by mail or by email to nde.exemptschool@nebraska.gov, a Statement of Election and Assurances from one parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker, the enrollment dates, and the student's birth certificate, if it has not been submitted previously (refer to Rule 13, Section 003.02B) *. This process applies to both online and paper filers.

* Rule 13 is currently under revision. Provisions of Rule 13 not affected by the passage of LB 1027, 2024 are still effective.

D26. I want to withdraw my child from a Nebraska approved or accredited school to home school in the middle of the school year. Can a mid-school year filing be done?

Yes. As per Section 003.02A2 of Rule 13*, the Parent Representative shall **promptly** file the necessary documents.

The hours of instruction may be prorated based upon the remaining balance of the school year and should reflect the actual instructional hours for the months your child will be home schooled. The total (combining the public school hours, or hours completed in another state) must meet the minimum of 1,080 hours in secondary schools and 1,032 hours in elementary schools.

D27. How do I prorate the instructional hours left?

If this is a partial school year filing, provide a brief explanation; what was or will be the start date for the exempt school; etc. To determine the instructional time to be provided at the exempt school for the remainder of the school year, you will need to figure out an approximate number of instructional hours the child had up to the time you plan to begin homeschooling (if they attended a local public or private school, check with them if you are unsure of the hours).

D28. When can I begin “homeschooling?”

Instruction can begin after NDE has received your exempt school submission. An acknowledgement letter is issued upon submission of the online submission or once the paper submission is logged.

D29. For a mid-school year filing, when can I withdraw my child?

It is highly advisable to withdraw after NDE has received your exempt school submission. The parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker should communicate with local school officials prior to withdrawing any child. The resident school district will have access to a report showing all families in their district who have filed with NDE.

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D30. I am allowing my child to discontinue attending the exempt school once he/she turns age 16. Do I need to notify NDE?

Yes. A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least 16 but less than 18 may withdraw such a child before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements by filing the “Withdrawal of a Child(ren) From the Exempt School” form and file it with the Commissioner of Education promptly upon withdrawal (Section 79-202(6) R.R.S.). Contact the Exempt School Program Office to request a copy of the form.

D31. My child is not yet age 18, but has completed the program of instruction offered by the exempt school (or has graduated). Do I need to notify NDE?

Yes. If a child is below the age of 18 and has completed the program of instruction offered by the exempt school, the parents or legal guardians shall each sign a “Report of Completion of Program of Instruction” and file it with the Commissioner of Education promptly upon completion (refer to Rule 13, Form D and Section 010.02) *. Contact the Exempt School Program Office to request copies of the form.

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E. BIRTH CERTIFICATE

E1. Do I need to provide my child's birth certificate?

Yes. Section 43-2007 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska (part of the Missing Children Identification Act) requires that "Upon enrollment of a student who is receiving his or her education in an exempt school subject to 79-1601 to 79-1607, the parent or guardian of such student shall provide to the Commissioner of Education either (a) a certified copy of the student's birth certificate, or (b) other reliable proof of the student's identity and age accompanied by an affidavit (notarized statement) explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate."

Section 43-2007 R.R.S. also provides that failure to comply could cause the matter to be reported to the local law enforcement agency for investigation (refer to Rule 13, Section 009 * and Section 43-2007 R.R.S.).

E2. What does "certified" copy mean?

Nebraska Health & Human Services' (HHS) Regulations state that a "Certified copy shall mean a certificate certified by the Department (HHS) as provided by law." For further information, visit the HHS/Vital Records website at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/vital-records.aspx> or call 402/471-2871. "Certified" birth certificates typically have a stamped or raised seal and issued by a State's Vital Records Office.

- A Notary Public cannot certify a photocopy of a birth certificate.
- Hospital-issued birth documents are not birth certificates and do not comply with the definition of "certified" birth certificate.

E3. How do I obtain a "certified" birth certificate for my child?

For births occurring in Nebraska only, contact HHS (Vital Records) at 402/471-2871 or visit their website at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/vital-records.aspx>.

Links to other states' information can be found on the National Center for Health Statistics/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Where to Write for Vital Records" website at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm>.

E4. Will I receive the certified (original) birth certificate back?

Yes. If filing by paper and you provide the certified birth certificate, it is returned to you once we have verified the document and have scanned a copy for your record.

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E5. Is a copy of the certified birth certificate acceptable?

Yes. If you submit online, the birth certificate must be scanned in color for legibility and so that the stamped or raised seal shows up. If the stamped or raised seal is on the back of the certificate, scan that page as well. Please review the scanned/uploaded document to ensure it is of good quality and easy to read.

If you file by paper, you can provide a photocopy, if it is in color and the stamped or raised seal is visible. If the stamped or raised seal is on the back of the certificate, provide a copy of that page as well.

Note - The document being scanned or photocopied must have a stamped or raised seal by the issuing entity (i.e. Vital Records). We will request to view the original document if it does not appear to contain a stamped or raised seal or appears to be altered in any manner.

E6. Do I provide the birth certificate each school year?

The birth certificate is to be provided the first year upon enrollment in the exempt school. There is no need to re-submit the birth certificate annually with the completed exempt school forms. [The exception would be if the parents filed for exempt status in the past but have not filed during the past five school years - in this case, the birth certificate would no longer be on file with NDE.]

F. MISCELLANEOUS

F1. Is there a State diploma for exempt school students?

The State of Nebraska does not issue high school diplomas to exempt school students.

In some cases, the exempt school creates a diploma; NDE does not collect or certify those diplomas. It is recommended you keep a transcript of classes taken with grades received. It is up to the receiving entity on whether or not the diploma presented is acceptable. Homeschool organizations (see link in Question C4) may have advice regarding transcript & diploma development.

If families are educating students of high school age and elect to subsequently enroll them in an approved or accredited private or public school, they will need to refer to the local school board or private school policies on accepting credit for students from non-accredited/non-approved educational programs and graduation requirements.

Often, individuals who have been “home schooled” take the General Educational Development (GED) exam to earn a High School Equivalency credential. If passing scores on the GED Exam are achieved and the individual meets the eligibility criteria, a person can then request a high school diploma issued by the Nebraska Department of Education. For more information on the GED, please contact the Nebraska Department of Education GED Section at 402/471-4807 or visit their website at <https://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/>.

F2. Can I home school one of my children and send the other(s) to an approved or accredited public or private school?

Yes.

F3. Can a foster child or other ward of the state attend an exempt school?

If agreeable to the caseworker, provide a copy of the placement agreement, along with an annual letter from the caseworker authorizing the student’s attendance at an exempt school.

If you have any questions regarding DHHS regulations, contact your DHHS case manager.

F4. Do public school districts provide standardized testing for exempt school students?

Such testing is not required of exempt school students. The state laws concerning statewide assessment of students only apply to “school districts.” The state is prohibited by law from using any achievement testing of exempt school students for the purpose of measuring, comparing or evaluating the competency of exempt school students. Consider checking with your resident public school district or with private resources for home schooling to see if they have any testing materials that might be provided to assist with the assessment of home/exempt school students by the home/exempt school.

F5. I am going to home school for a while, and then plan on re-entering my child back into an approved or accredited public or private school. How will my child be placed?

Local school boards develop these policies. You will need to check with the appropriate school district on their grade placement and re-entry policies and procedures. See also Section 79-215 R.R.S. and Section 003 of NDE Rule 19 ("School Enrollment"). Rule 19 can be accessed from NDE's website at <https://www.education.ne.gov/nderule/school-enrollment/>.

F6. Can my child take some courses at the local public or private school while also being home schooled?

Contact the local public or private school regarding their policies and procedures. As provided in Section 79-2,136, R.R.S., each public school district is to allow “part time enrollment” of students that reside in the district but attend an exempt (home) school. (refer to Rule 13, Section 001.04) *.

F7. I am home schooling my child who is interested in playing high school sports. Where can I find out if this is possible, and obtain more information?

The Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) establishes bylaws for interscholastic competitive sports program participation for grades 9-12. For further information or clarification of these bylaws, please contact NSAA directly at 402/489-0386 or visit their website at www.nsaahome.org.

F8. Can an exempt school student participate in local public or private school activities such as music, drama, etc.?

Some high school competitive activities (in addition to athletics) may be covered by the NSAA bylaws referenced above. Otherwise, check with the school for their board policy on this matter.

F9. I have a child receiving services through an individualized education plan (IEP) and I am considering homeschooling my child. Where can I get more information?

Contact your resident public school to see what special education services your child may continue to be eligible to receive if you choose to homeschool.

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F10. I am home schooling my child who has special needs, where can I receive more information about how to access services for a student with special needs?

Contact your resident public school about what special education services your child might be eligible to receive and how such services could be provided if you choose to homeschool.

F11. My 16 or 17-year-old child, who is currently enrolled in an approved or accredited public or private school, wants to enroll in Adult Education Classes to prepare for the GED exams, do I need to submit an exemption filing?

No. The exemption filing is for the purposes of “homeschooling.” The student must be withdrawn from mandatory attendance in order to enroll in Adult Education classes. Contact the local district to request an interview for consideration of Withdrawal from Mandatory Attendance per Nebraska Revised Statute 79-202.

G. REPORTING CHANGES SUBSEQUENT TO THE INITIAL FILING

G1. What do I do when I submit and receive the Acknowledgement Letter, but then change my mind and enroll my child into an approved or accredited public or private school rather than home school?

Any change of enrollment must be promptly reported to NDE in writing by mail or by email to nde.exemptschool@nebraska.gov (refer to Rule 13, Section 003.02C) *. Include in the notice the student's enrollment status (i.e. student is attending a Nebraska approved or accredited school, family has moved out of state, etc.). This process applies to both online and paper filers.

G2. Who do I notify of any address change throughout the school year?

Any change of address must be promptly reported to NDE in writing by mail or by email to nde.exemptschool@nebraska.gov (Rule 13, Section 003.02E) *. Include in the notice the new resident school district (if it changes) so that the Department can notify your new resident school district of your exempt status (Rule 13, Section 005) *. Also include your new county of residence (if it changes). This process applies to both online and paper filers.

G3. How do I report a change in Parent Representative?

If the parent representative changes during the school year, the new designated parent representative must promptly submit an Authorized Parent Representative to NDE by mail or by email to nde.exemptschool@nebraska.gov (refer to Rule 13, Section 003.02D) *. This process applies to both online and paper filers.

G4. How do I add a student(s) after I have already filed for exempt status?

Prior to/ or promptly upon the student's enrollment, submit by mail or by email to nde.exemptschool@nebraska.gov, a Statement of Election and Assurances from one parent, legal guardian, or educational decisionmaker, the enrollment dates, and the student's birth certificate, if it has not been submitted previously (refer to Rule 13, Section 003.02B) *. This process applies to both online and paper filers.

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