

January 13, 2010

TO: Parents Interested in Home Schooling

FROM: Lynn Garric, Project Director, Safe Schools
Youth Development, Support and Leadership Department

RE: Legal Alternatives to the Comprehensive Public School Classroom

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This memo explains alternatives to the comprehensive public school classroom. The California compulsory education law requires all children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school, except 16- and 17-year-olds who have graduated from high school or have passed the *California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)*. Local school districts are responsible for ensuring that all children of compulsory school age in the district are either: (1) in attendance at a public school or (2) legally exempt from public school attendance requirements. There are three legal alternatives available in California to parents who wish to place their school-age children in a setting other than a public school classroom:

1. Independent study through the local public school system or charter school (*Education Code* section 51745 and following). Independent study, sometimes referred to as home study, is an alternative to classroom instruction conducted under the administration of a local public school district or a charter school. Independent study allows students to carry on their education outside the classroom based on written agreements with the school district or charter school. The agreements include requirements consistent with the school district's or charter school's course of study, and provide for general supervision of each student's independent study by a credentialed employee of the school district or charter school in which the child is enrolled. A child with exceptional needs may participate in independent study only if his or her individualized education program (IEP) provides for that participation (*Education Code* section 51745(c).) **A summary of public school independent study/home study programs in Sonoma County is enclosed for your information.**
2. Private full-time day school (*Education Code* sections 48220, 48222). Enrolling students in a private full-time day school is a legal exemption from compulsory attendance in the public school system. Private schools must instruct students in all the branches of study required in the public schools. The law does not require that private school instructors hold a teaching credential, but they must be "capable of teaching," meaning that teachers in private schools should meet standards like those required for public school teachers in similar positions, except for the credential requirement.

The law requires private schools to file an annual Private School Affidavit disclosing certain information to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (*Education Code* section 33190). That information is used for statistical purposes and for publishing a directory of private K-12 schools in the state. The affidavit is not a license to operate, nor is it considered an approval of the "school" or its courses (*Education Code* sections 33190, 48222).

3. Private Tutoring (*Education Code* sections 48200, 48220, 48224). Private tutoring is also a legal exemption from the compulsory school attendance law. The tutor (who may be any person including a parent) must have a valid California teaching credential for the grade level(s) being taught and must also provide instruction in all the branches of study required in the public school. The tutor must provide instruction at least three hours per day, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., at least 175 days per calendar year, in the English language. No Private School

Affidavit is required of a tutor. Unless a parent holds a teaching credential for the grade level(s) taught, his or her instruction does not qualify under the legal exemption for private tutors.

Additional information may be obtained at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ps> (the California Department of Education Private Schools website) or by calling the Elementary Education Office at the California Department of Education at (916) 319-0878.

Sonoma County Public Schools Independent Study/Home Study Programs

School District	Grade	Program Location	Contact Person	Street	City	State	Zip	Phone
Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified	9-12	Alternative Education Center	Erin Lane	1290 Southwest Boulevard	Rohnert Park	CA	94928	588-5700
Forestville Union	K-8	IN-ACTIVE FOR 2009 - 2010 SCHOOL YEAR - only for students of Forestville School and only for short term (2 weeks or less) Done through MJ Nelson at Forestville School	MJ Nelson	6321 Highway 116	Forestville	CA	95436	887-9767
Gravenstein Union	K-8	Gravenstein Union S.D.	Linda LaMarre	3840 Twig Ave.	Sebastopol	CA	95472	823-7008
Guerneville	K-8	Guerneville School	Sara Wilson	14630 Armstrong Woods Road	Guerneville	CA	95446	869-2864
Harmony Union	K-8	Harmony Elementary School	Anna Kealoha	1935 Bohemian Highway	Occidental	CA	95465	874-3280
	K-12	Pathways Charter School	Robert Tavonatti	607 Bobelaine Drive	Santa Rosa	CA	95405	573-6117
Healdsburg Unified	9-12	Healdsburg High School - www.hhscis.org	Bruce Levin	1024 Prince Street	Healdsburg	CA	95448	431-3100
Liberty	K-8	Liberty School	Chris Rafanelli	170 Liberty School Road	Petaluma	CA	94952	795-4380
	K-9	California Virtual Academy	James Konantz	2360 Shasta Way	Simi Valley	CA	93065	800-581-0202
Mark West Union	K-6	San Miguel School	Marty Adams	5350 Faught Rd.	Santa Rosa	CA	95403	524-2741
Monte Rio Union	K-8	Monte Rio Union School	Jennifer Schwinn	20700 Foothill Drive	Monte Rio	CA	95462	865-2266
Oak Grove Union	K-8	District Office	Cari Cardle	5285 Hall Road	Santa Rosa	CA	95401	527-8486
Petaluma City	K-6	Valley Oaks Elementary School	David Putney	540 Vallejo Street	Petaluma	CA	94952	778-4794
	7-12	Valley Oaks High School	David Putney	540 Vallejo Street	Petaluma	CA	94952	778-4794
Piner-Olivet Union	K-12	Piner School	Nancy Morton	2590 Piner Road	Santa Rosa	CA	95401	522-3033 x17
Rincon Valley Union	K-6	District Office	Janice Thompson	1000 Yulupa Avenue	Santa Rosa	CA	95405	542-7375 x4116

