

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

P. O. Box 2120

Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Fax Number: (804) 371-8796

# **Process for Completing an Application to Operate a Private School for Students with Disabilities**

*Definition of a school for students with disabilities: A privately owned and operated preschool, school, or educational organization, no matter how titled, maintained or conducting classes for the purpose of offering instruction, for a consideration, profit or tuition, to persons determined to have autism, deaf-blindness, a developmental delay, a hearing impairment including deafness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, an orthopedic impairment, or other health impairment, an emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, a speech or language impairment, a traumatic brain injury, or a visual impairment including blindness (22.1-319 of the Code of Virginia).*

## Application Process

1. The applicant is strongly advised to download and read the [*Regulations Governing Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities*](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf)*.*
2. The applicant shall contact the department for preliminary consultation to determine if the proposed school can be considered a School for Students with Disabilities under this chapter.
3. The school shall contact the local planning and zoning department of the county to ensure the building would meet the applicable educational use group.
4. The department will conduct a review of the proposed location if the building meets the educational use group. The department will determine if the location and building is safe and appropriate for a school for students with disabilities.
5. If the location is approved, the applicant will download and complete the Application to Operate a Private School for Students with Disabilities. The applicant shall notify the department that an application to open and operate a private school for students with disabilities is being submitted.
6. Mail the completed application and supporting documents to the Virginia Department of Education Attn: Private Schools, PO Box 2120 Richmond, Virginia 23218.
7. A Private School Monitoring Specialist will review the application and respond within 60 calendar days from the date it was received to advise the applicant in writing of approval or deficiencies.
   1. During this 60-day time period the applicant will be scheduled for an in-person interview at the Virginia Department of Education in Richmond, Virginia.
8. If applicable, the applicant shall correct all deficiencies within 30 calendar days from the date of the written assessment of the application. *(An extension may be granted for a reasonable period of time.)*
9. Before a license is issued, the department shall conduct an on-site inspection, or review photographs and/or videos, of the school building and grounds to determine whether it is ready to accept students.
10. A conditional (six month) License to Operate will be issued.

## First Year Review Period

1. Applicants who are approved to open and operate a School for Students with Disabilities under this chapter shall receive a provisional license for six months from the date of the initial start of the school year.
2. Within three-four months of operation a monitoring specialist from the department will conduct an on-site review. At this time the new school is eligible for a one-year license.
3. Within the first year of operation, no changes or amendments can be made to the school license.
4. Personnel qualification spreadsheets shall be submitted to the department on a monthly basis for the first full year of operation or as advised by your licensing specialist.
5. After the first two review periods (six months and one year), the newly opened school is eligible for a three-year license.

*The Office of Specialized Educational Facilities and Family Engagement provides support and assistance throughout the application process and ongoing. Please do not hesitate to contact a Private School Specialist from this office, via telephone, at (804) 225-2402, should you have any questions or need assistance.*