

*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

**Private Schools for Students with Disabilities**

# 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 potential applicant is strongly advised to download and read the [*Regulations Governing Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities*](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1512/637947338782500000)*.*
2. The potential applicant shall contact the department to schedule a meeting with the Private Day Special Education Team for a preliminary consultation to determine if the proposed school can be considered a Private School for Students with Disabilities under this chapter (*8VAC20-671-120)*. (If you are the owner of a school currently licensed by the Virginia Department of Education to operate a private school for students with disabilities and are interested in opening an additional location, please contact your current monitoring specialist.)
3. After it has been determined the proposed school can be considered as a Private School for Students with Disabilities, the assigned monitoring specialist will email the potential applicant the Application to Operate a Private School for Students with Disabilities.
4. Once the applicant has identified a location for the potential school, the applicant shall contact the local planning and zoning department of the county to ensure the proposed building meets the applicable educational use group.
5. If the building meets the educational use group, the applicant will contact the monitoring specialist to schedule an on-site inspection, or review photographs and/or videos of the school building and grounds to determine if the location and building are safe and appropriate for a Private School for Students with Disabilities (*8VAC20-671-130).*
6. Once the applicant has determined the application is complete and contains all supporting documents, the application can be mailed to the Virginia Department of Education Attn: Private Schools, PO Box 2120 Richmond, Virginia 23218.
7. The assigned 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.
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. During this time period when it is determined the application is close to approval, the applicant will be scheduled for an interview with the team at the Virginia Department of Education (*8VAC20-671-120).*
10. Before a license is issued, the monitoring specialist 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 (*8VAC20-671-130).*
11. A conditional (six-month) License to Operate will be issued upon final approval of the application (*8VAC20-671-50).*

## First-Year Review Period

1. Applicants who are approved to open and operate a Private School for Students with Disabilities under this chapter (*8VAC20-671-50)* shall receive a conditional license for six months from the date the license is issued.
2. After the school has been in operation for a minimum of three months, the monitoring specialist will conduct an unannounced on-site review. At this time the new school is eligible for an annual (one-year) license if the school is demonstrating substantial compliance with the requirements of the *Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Schools for Students with Disabilities*.
3. Once the school has received an annual license, the school is then eligible for a triennial (three-year) license.

The Office of Special Education Family Support and Special Facilities provides support and assistance throughout the application process and ongoing. Please do not hesitate to contact a private school monitoring specialist from this office, via telephone, at (804) 750-8078, should you have any questions or need assistance.