

Detailed Requirements for Florida Boarding Schools

A "boarding school" is a school that is registered with the Department of Education as a school that provides a residential service for students and that is either:

- Accredited for academic programs by the Florida Council of Independent Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, or an accrediting association that is a member of the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools, and that is accredited for residential programs by the Council on Accreditation, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, or the Coalition for Residential Education; or
- Accredited by one of the organizations specified above as a boarding school that includes both an academic and residential component in its accreditation. (Section 409.175(2)(b), Florida Statutes)

A boarding school currently in existence or a boarding school opening and seeking accreditation has 3 years after the date of registration as a boarding school to complete the accreditation requirements. (Section 409.175(17)(a), Florida Statutes)

The Department of Education shall remove from the boarding school registration and website any boarding school that has not completed the accreditation requirements or has not provided a letter to the Department of Children and Families verifying that boarding school's application for accreditation within 270 days after registration. The verification letter must be provided the accrediting agency. (Section 409.175(17)(b), Florida Statutes)

A boarding school must provide proof of accreditation or documentation of the accreditation process upon request by the Department of Children and Families. The boarding school must provide an annual report to the Department of Children and Families regarding its accreditation status. The first report is due 1 year after the date the boarding school registered with the Department of Education. A boarding school that has been properly accredited is not subject to the annual Department of Children and Families reporting requirements. (Section 409.175(17)(c), Florida Statutes)

A boarding school shall require employees and contracted personnel with direct student contact upon employment to undergo level 2 background screening pursuant to Chapter 435, Florida Statutes. The term "direct student contact" means unsupervised access to a student for whom the boarding school is responsible. The Department of Children and Families may grant exemptions from disqualification from working with children as provided in Section 435.07, Florida Statutes. (Section 409.175(17)(e), Florida Statutes)

A boarding school shall follow established school schedules and provide holiday breaks and summer recesses provided by other public and private school programs. The students in residence must customarily return to their family homes or legal guardians during school breaks and, except for students who are citizens of foreign countries, must not be in residence year-round. The parents of a child attending a boarding school shall retain custody of and planning and financial responsibility for their child. (Section 409.175(17)(f), Florida Statutes)

A boarding school that cannot produce the required documentation, is not properly registered with the Department of Education, or has not obtained the required accreditation shall be considered to be providing residential group care without a license. The Department of Children and Families may impose administrative sanctions or seek civil remedies as provided under Section 409.175(11)(a), Florida Statutes. (Section 409.175(17)(d), Florida Statutes)

If you have already registered as a private school by submitting a current Private School Annual Survey, and wish to register as a Private Boarding School, you may access the Private Boarding School Registration Form when you are logged in using your school code and password.