

# A Guide to Homeschooling and PATCH Information

## Getting started and state laws

Thinking about homeschooling? The first place to start is with prayer. Listen to what the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, is telling you to do. Pray often for His guidance. Seek out scripture to help you understand if this is something He wants for your children and your family. A few scriptures to help you get started looking at are Deuteronomy 6:4-10, 11:18-19, Psalms 78:1-7, Proverbs 22:6, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Matthew 6:19- 21, Ephesians 6:4.

His Word tells us that children are a blessing and that they are a treasure. That is why seeking what is best for their education is so important and not to be taken lightly. Take the time needed in prayer and to research if this is what is best for your child(ren). Seeking Christ and His will for our children is always best.

Once you know without a doubt this is what God is calling your family to, the next step is to notify the Director of Pupil Personnel (if you live in KY) or Principle (if you live in IL or TN) for your county or city school district in writing. (Sample letters at the bottom) The Directors of Pupil Personnel are the ones who keep up with daily attendance at a public school, and who report truant parents. You will **mail the letter certified mail with a return receipt**. You will get a green card back from the school district and you will **keep this in your records forever**. This is proof that the school received your letter and that you are legally homeschooling.

Regardless of what state you live in you will always mail the letters certified mail with a return receipt requested and keep the return card as proof you are legally homeschooling.

Each state has different laws and requirements. **Check each year** with the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org) website **to see if the state laws have changed for the upcoming year**. It's not often that they change, but unless you stay up to date on what is going on at the state capital, then you won't know when a change has occurred. Below is an overview of the laws for our tri-state area. For more details please visit the website mentioned above.

## Homeschool Laws By State

Information for these topics and more can be found for all States at <https://hslida.org/legal>.

- How to Comply with Your State's Homeschool Laws
- Compulsory School Age
- How to Withdraw Your Child from a Public School
- Special Education Provisions
- Importance of Record Keeping

Kentucky has what is called the Best Practices Document. The last revision was made to this document in 2000. This was drawn up by both state homeschool groups and state pupil personnel directors. I encourage all residents in Kentucky to read this at least once to get a better understanding of what is required in Kentucky. The Best Practices Document will be listed at the end of this guide.

## **So what is a school day?**

School takes place all the time in the home. In addition to regular textbook/class time, the following can be counted too. Helping with measurements in the kitchen, using metric tools outside with dad in auto repair, identifying things in God's creation on a walk etc. Consider how much time is wasted in public/private schools by students standing in line, walking from one class to another, or waiting on other students to get instructions from a teacher. These will not be present in your homeschool. Your school day does not have to be structured the same way as a public/private school day. Do what works best for your student(s) and your family.

Some curriculum companies have only 160 lessons for children to do. Since Kentucky for example requires 170 days then you can use the following as school days. A school day can be counted when you take an educational field trip to a museum, nature preserve, performances at the Market House Museum and Carson Center (see below how to get tickets) or even the library to research books. Maybe you are studying rivers, then why not go to Cairo, IL to see where the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers come together. Maybe you are studying the 1800's, then a trip to the LBL Homeplace would be good.

You are not confined either to taking breaks every 9 weeks. You may find your child starting to forget things if you wait the full 3 months in the summer before starting back. You, the teacher, may need a break every 6 weeks instead of 9. Maybe you or your child has a goal to graduate early and going year round is what you choose to do. Even if you work full time or on swing shift you can still homeschool. Will it be easy? No, but it can be done. You might need to do school only in the evenings or weekends. That is okay. You may teach when it will be best for you and your child(ren).

## **Now I've decided to homeschool what's next?**

Parents As Teachers In Christian Homes (PATCH) strongly encourages you to join HSLDA. They are lawyers that will go to court on your behalf if need be to protect your rights and freedom to homeschool. PATCH gets a discount with HSLDA. The discount number can be found in the PATCH membership welcome email each year when you pay your dues. Make sure to check your spam email. Sometimes it will go to spam and not your inbox.

HSLDA lobbies and fights at local, state and federal levels for our right to continue homeschooling. They have legal teams in every state to make sure our freedoms stay in place to homeschool. Sometimes issues can be resolved by a simple letter from HSLDA to your Board of Education. Other times it will require a court case. If this happens they will represent you. It is well worth the investment!

## **Time to pick a curriculum!**

Without knowing it, you have been homeschooling your children since the day they were born. You taught them how to eat, walk, talk, even the ABC's. Yes this is homeschooling. Because you have already spent so much time with your child you are going to know better than anyone what will work best for their learning needs. God gave your children to you to raise according to his word. So of course you will know your child better than anyone. But what works for one child may not work for the next.

It's okay to be flexible. If you see that halfway through the year the curriculum you purchased just is not working and meeting your child's needs or learning style then it's okay to switch to another. You can always sell what didn't work.

But how do you know what curriculum to purchase and where from? One of the best places to start is [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com) They sell just about everything on the market. What I like best is that they have not just one but up to 5 or more sample pages for you to really get an idea of what you are purchasing. And in general the prices are much cheaper than buying directly from the companies.

Another great company to work with is [www.rainbowresource.com](http://www.rainbowresource.com) The website, I feel isn't as complete as the catalog. They will send you a catalog for free. It's huge and will not fit in a standard mailbox easily (1000's of pages). They also offer a PDF of the catalog. They sell even more products than Christian Book. They have very detailed descriptions on every product in the catalog. With honest opinions from people that have either used the products or read over them.

Another excellent website for curriculum comparison and reviews is [www.cathyduffyreviews.com](http://www.cathyduffyreviews.com). These are very detailed reviews. She offers suggestions based on your students' learning style. You can do an advanced search by subject, grade, author/publisher, point of view, or methodology, and it is easy to navigate.

Public schools get bulk discounts so why can't homeschools? That is the idea behind [www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org](http://www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org) It's a free membership that offers different monthly and yearly deals from different educational companies at discounted rates. Sometimes they even offer free products. They also have some products that you can earn "points" toward future purchases. I feel they offer many good supplemental computer programs.

The above three are the best places to start. Below are other companies that may not be listed in the above companies.

Veritas Press [www.veritaspress.com](http://www.veritaspress.com) My Father's World [www.mfwbooks.com](http://www.mfwbooks.com) Abeka [www.abeka.com](http://www.abeka.com) Sonlight [www.sonlight.com](http://www.sonlight.com) Memoria Press [www.memoriapress.com](http://www.memoriapress.com) Answers in Genesis [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org) Teach Them Diligently [www.teachthemdiligently.net](http://www.teachthemdiligently.net) Winter Promise [www.winterpromise.com](http://www.winterpromise.com) Timberdoodle [www.timberdoodle.com](http://www.timberdoodle.com) Ace Ministries [www.aceministries.com](http://www.aceministries.com) American Heritage [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org) Wall Builders [www.wallbuilders.com](http://www.wallbuilders.com) Calvert School [www.calvertschool.org](http://www.calvertschool.org) Apologia [www.apologia.com](http://www.apologia.com) Critical Thinking [www.criticalthinking.com](http://www.criticalthinking.com) Alpha Omega [www.aop.com](http://www.aop.com) Bob Jones [www.bjupresshomeschool.com](http://www.bjupresshomeschool.com) EasyPeasy [www.easypeasy.com](http://www.easypeasy.com) (This is free and covers pre-k through 12 grade)

Homeschooling can be as expensive or cheap as you want it to be. And each grade level may cost more or less than the year before. Every homeschool family uses different products to teach their children. We aren't like public schools where the children are given a "cookie cutter" education. We have the freedom to pick what we know will work best for our child and the needs they have for learning.

You will find that most companies will offer discounts during the "homeschool convention season". In general starting in March companies will start offering the biggest discounts of the year. Most of them in March and April will offer 20% -15% off plus free shipping. The biggest discounts can be found in person at the conventions. More about conventions in the next section. Sometimes calling each company directly instead of ordering online will also get you some larger discounts.

## Staying informed and encouraged

**Magazines** are a wonderful way to stay encouraged in this new journey called homeschooling.

Homeschooling Today [www.homeschoolingtoday.com](http://www.homeschoolingtoday.com) In digital form is a free subscription. Print form runs \$19.99 for 1 year and \$35.99 for two years. You get 4 copies a year. A wonderful Christian magazine with articles to encourage your homeschool journey, science experiments, article on culture, articles on famous people. All of the articles can be used to offset your curriculum. Truly worth the investment.

Above Rubies [www.aboverubies.org](http://www.aboverubies.org) is geared toward larger families, but even if you have one child you will be so encouraged by this ministry. They give tips and ideas on how to make each day be a day for the glory of God. This is free and they only ship when enough donations have been received to cover printing and shipping cost. So it doesn't come every month. But what a blessing it is when it arrives.

For \$15 you can subscribe to The Practical Homeschool Magazine for 1 year or \$25 for two years. <http://practicalhomeschooling.com/> This is from homeschool mom and author Mary Pride. Over 25 years of knowledge goes into each issue.

**Facebook pages** are a great way to stay up on all things homeschool. We recommend joining CHEK (Christian Home Educators of KY) and Kentucky Homeschooling as well as Kentuckiana Special Needs HS'ing. All three of these are monitored by the State of Kentucky's HSLDA Lawyer.

**Conventions** are another way to stay encouraged, up to date on laws and see and look at curriculum for the coming year. As well as sit in on sessions that cover everything from how to be an involved dad, to saving money on the food bill, to encouraging the children and each other. You can also sit in on sessions from the writers of most all curriculums on the market. And some sessions are just for the kids. Your family will leave feeling like you just left a spiritual retreat instead of a convention! It is truly a place for renewal in all areas of your life.

If you do decide to attend a convention here are a few tips to make it more enjoyable. First skip taking a tote to put all the papers and catalogs in. You will kill your back or your husbands if you stick to just a tote. Instead invest in or borrow a collapsible rolling box. They can be purchased from any office supply store for about \$20-\$30. This will be your best friend. You can put all the freebies, catalogs, handouts and purchases inside. Close the lid and you have a makeshift seat for those crowded sessions that are out of chairs. And yes it can hold someone over 200 lbs. It has been tested many times over. And lastly put your child who is too big for a stroller on it with a pillow against the handlebar. They can sleep comfortably in a reclined position and move from session to session without being disturbed. Again this has been tested and it works. No one cries this way.

All conventions offer early bird registration. Make your hotel reservations early. Think about if you wish to stay really close to the convention center or if your family is okay with a small drive to stay in cheaper and sometimes nicer hotels. Factor in parking or ask a veteran how to park without paying. It may include a long walk, but doable.

As the convention gets closer, look at the sessions being offered and map out a game plan of what will be the not to miss speakers for you. Divide and conquer by letting your husband look the list over too. You can cover more sessions by splitting up and share the handouts once you get back home. You can also share the kids in the same manner. Trading off after a few sessions. The conventions listed below also have vendors who record and sell all the sessions offered on CD or MP3 format for a small fee.

By far the largest and best convention is Great Homeschool Conventions - Cincinnati, OH [www.greathomeschoolconventions.com](http://www.greathomeschoolconventions.com) The exhibit hall is so large that we have nothing in the tri state area to even compare it too. It's held each year at the Duke Energy Center and 1000's of homeschool families fill the building. Children are very welcome to attend. The building is three stories tall and covers several blocks. But don't let that scare you. At times they have close to 30-50 sessions an hour to choose from. So you aren't just right on top of one another. I know some of you have husbands that may not want to go to a convention. But several dads in our group have been and say it is a must attend for them. They also offer several smaller scale conventions throughout the country, including St. Louis.

Another good convention to attend that is closer to home is The Teach Them Diligently Convention. [www.teachthemdiligently.net](http://www.teachthemdiligently.net) It is held at the Opryland Hotel and is one of the most Christ centered conventions you will attend. They also have a vendor hall offering most all curriculums. Every single ballroom and meeting room is used just about for this homeschool convention. Other conventions are offered in St. Louis & Springfield, MO as well as Nashville and Louisville.

## **Staying up to date on PATCH events, field trips, dances and sports**

PATCH uses two forms to get information out. The website [www.patchky.org](http://www.patchky.org) and Google Groups. In general everything goes onto the Google group before the website. But the site is updated as often as needed.

To get on the Google group (Google PATCH) messages you must first be a PATCH member by paying your dues of \$25 between July 1st and September 15th each year. After September 15th dues increase to \$50 per family. You may join online by going to [www.patchky.org](http://www.patchky.org).

Membership forms and payment is made through the website using paypal as the payment method. You will receive a welcome confirmation email. Please check your spam files and read the subject lines before deleting emails. If you don't get one after checking your spam files then please contact the webmaster for PATCH. The email address you put on your membership form is the one PATCH will use to send you information.

Your welcome email will contain your password for the PATCH members only area on the PATCH website. It will also contain a PDF file for you to print your PATCH membership card. Please write this password down as you will need it all year.

Another Yahoo group that has information posted often is [3riversnetwork@yahoo.com](mailto:3riversnetwork@yahoo.com) This is for any homeschool family in TN, IL, KY, MO area. Go to Yahoo groups and type in 3riversnetwork and send a request to join.

## **Volunteering and Request for PATCH Funds**

PATCH is not able to offer various opportunities to our children if we don't all step up and help in different ways. Volunteering can be as hard or as easy as you want it to be. We always need our members to help clean up after an event. And if you are already planning on taking your own family on a field trip then why not invite the group to come. It may even result in a discount.

Some events require calling a company and setting up a date and time for a tour. Others you can find out about just by reading the paper about things that will be happening in your area.

Once you have an idea of what it is you want to do simply put an email out over the Google group stating the date, time and address. Some companies require a head count before you arrive. Therefore you will need to have any interested families email you how many of them will be attending.

Other events don't require a head count. You simply put an event on the Google group and those that want to attend just simply show up. A good example would be the education day at Ft. Massac Encampment and play dates at Noble Park.

Sometimes events and sports require money. The dues you pay help to fund a portion of these. If you would like to organize an activity or event, contact the PATCH Treasurer through the PATCH website to request funds. Make sure to list not only the amount, but the event you are needing funds for and the anticipated date. The Treasurer will present the request to the PATCH board. If further information is needed the board will contact you.

Opportunities are all around for your family to get involved in some way to better the PATCH community of families. Together we can encourage, educate and show Christ's love for others through volunteering. And this is another way to help keep our children socialized. And put aside the myth that homeschoolers never get out and go anywhere. And the myth that our children are never around other children.

## **Carson Center and Market House Tickets**

We are fortunate that the Carson Center and Market House Theater continue to allow homeschool families to attend the same performances that they allow public and private schools to attend.

### **CARSON CENTER**

1. **All tickets will be purchased by each family directly from the Carson Center.**
2. Class Acts Reservations need to be made during the months of **August and September**

**(Carson Center's preferred method)** Or no later than 6 weeks before a performance you want to attend. Contact Andrea James at (270)443-9932 ext.212 to make reservations. Show information can be found at <http://thecarsoncenter.org/educational-programs>

3. A confirmation email will be sent to you upon receipt and processing of your reservation. If you do not receive an email within 24-48 hours, please contact the Reservations Coordinator. Invoices and a confirmation will be emailed to you 6 weeks in advance of each performance. Payment must be received by the due date listed on the Invoice (3 weeks before the show). Please finalize all numbers when payment is made.

4. Additions to the reservation cannot be made once the invoice has been paid. Vouchers are emailed with the Teacher Packet upon receipt of payment. The Voucher is your receipt and is not necessary for entry into the theatre. All sales are final. No refunds are available. Exchanges are permitted according to availability but must be made 3 weeks before the reserved performance. Schools may not be seated at a performance unless they have paid their invoice in full.

5. Cancellation of any reservation must be submitted in writing NO LATER than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled show (email to [ajames@thecarsoncenter.org](mailto:ajames@thecarsoncenter.org) is acceptable). The cancellation must be signed by the Teacher/Contact. If a reservation is made and not appropriately canceled, the school remains responsible for full payment of the invoice.

6. They do not cancel shows due to inclement weather. If your school closes the day of a show due to inclement weather and you are therefore, prevented from attending, the Teacher/Contact responsible for the reservation is asked to call 270.443.9932 and cancel by 8:00 a.m. on the day of the scheduled performance to inform us that your school is not in session and will not be attending. A credit will then be issued for a future show according to availability. We do not issue refunds. Your credit will be good through the following performance season if you are unable to attend a current season show.

7. In case of a sold-out show, we will be happy to place you on our reservation waiting list. 10-20% of reserved seating is cancelled by groups unable to attend and those seats are then sold to groups on the waiting list.

8. Complimentary study guides and prep materials as well as links to the producing theater companies for each Class Acts performance are available on our website [www.thecarsoncenter.org](http://www.thecarsoncenter.org) under EDUCATION. Study guides are designed to provide quick and easy activities that may be used to prepare students for the experience and/or help them evaluate the show afterward. Theater Etiquette guidelines are posted as well.

9. Workshops and Masterclasses with theatre professionals are offered for students throughout the season. Please contact the Education Director- [mkatz@thecarsoncenter.org](mailto:mkatz@thecarsoncenter.org)



to make reservations for workshops and masterclasses or with any questions about the Class Acts program

10. If the above procedures are followed, then homeschool families will be seated in the same section. If you fail to tell Andrea James when you call that you are a homeschool family then you will be seated randomly.

11. They will dismiss us before the public and private schools. If we see that they forgot, then we can go on and leave to beat the large crowds. Safety is important. We don't need to be trying to leave when the mass of public and private schools are getting on the buses. This is why we are dismissed first or we dismiss ourselves.

### **Market House Theater**

Usually they offer 2-3 shows during the school year for school groups. Please visit <http://markethousetheatre.org/> to find shows. Most of the time the shows for schools are the weeks in between the longer running adult shows. Check the calendar for performances, then contact the theater to make reservations.

## **LOCATION FOR YOUR HOMESCHOOL CLASSES**

At this point you are committed to homeschooling your children. You have signed up for a homeschool lawyer, joined a homeschool group and signed up for shows at the Carson Center or Market House Theater. But where should class take place? Obviously we may not have an actual school building with the student chairs. Instead we have the freedom to have school each day in our home. It can be at the dining table, on the couch or even on the floor. You may have a child bothered by bright lighting, then by all means go to a darker room. You can have school on the bed or in a designated school room. If you have a wiggle worm that needs to hang upside down then let them. You no longer have to force your child to stay within the "norm" of what a public or private school offers.

If it's a beautiful day outside then by all means take advantage of it and have school on the porch steps. And follow it up with a walk discussing things they see and hear while they are outside. What about when one of the children in your home gets sick and you have to run to the doctor? Does this mean school stops for all the children in the home? Maybe, but you can take school work with you and do it while waiting to be called back. Will they like doing school while waiting? Probably not, but at least you won't be too far behind.

What about on trips? Should school be put on hold? That will be up to you. Remember you do have a full year to get your required amount of days in. If you want the children to do lessons while riding in the car or plane, then you may do so. If you want to have school in the evenings once your day is complete you may.

I'm sure we all know someone who has pulled a child out of school to go on a big family

vacation. They work out the arrangements with the public or private schools for the children to be absent. And in almost all cases the teachers will ask for the children to write an essay/report about the trip. As homeschoolers we could do this too. Make a scrapbook or keep a daily journal of things they did that day. School can happen anywhere we go.

## **SAMPLE LETTERS** (copy and paste as needed)

### **KENTUCKY LETTER OF INTENT / WITHDRAW**

Mr. and Mrs. Your Name

Street Number & Name  
City, State, Zip

Month Day, Year

Name of Pupil Personnel Director  
Director of Pupil Personnel  
School Name  
School Street Address  
City State, Zip

Dear Mr or Mrs Name of Director:

This letter is to inform you that we will be homeschooling our children during the 20\_\_-20\_\_ academic school year. Below is a list of our school age children and the information about our school.

Name	Age
1. Child's Name	age
2. Child's Name	age

School will take place in our home. Our school name is \_\_\_\_\_.

The school administration, on behalf of the students enrolled therein, expressly prohibit the release of any and all information contained in this notice, including directory information as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (a)(5)(A), without the prior written consent of parents of the students or of students who have reached the age of majority. See 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (a)(5)(B).

Name of Parents/Teachers:

Husband and Wife's first names and Last Name  
Your Street address  
City State, Zip

Sincerely,

Husband's and Wife's first and last name signed in ink in your own signatures  
**ILLINOIS LETTER OF WITHDRAWAL**

Month Day, Year

Printed names of parents  
Address  
City State, ZIP

Dear Name of Principal:

Please be advised that I will be pulling our child(ren) from your school as of \_\_\_\_\_,  
when they will privately be schooled.

If you have any further questions please send them to me in writing. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Parent or Guardian signature and date

Parent or Guardian signature and date

## **TENNESSEE LETTER OF WITHDRAWAL**

Due to the different options to homeschool different types of Letter of Withdrawal will need to be sent, depending on the option you choose. Please go to <https://hslida.org/content/> to find the

letter you need to send for the option you choose.

# KENTUCKY BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENT

## BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENT

Prepared by

Christian Home Educators of Kentucky

Kentucky Home Education Association

and

Kentucky Directors of Pupil Personnel

August 21, 1997

Revised November 14, 2000

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### 14 I. Background Information

#### A. Task Force

On March 14, 1997 twelve home school representatives from Christian Home Educators of Kentucky (CHEK) and the Kentucky Home Education Association (KHEA) and twelve officers and board of directors of the Kentucky Directors of Pupil Personnel Association met to share their views on the status of home schools in Kentucky. From that meeting a task force was formed to address the issues that were raised at that meeting.

The task force was comprised of:

- Joe Adams - Christian Home Educators of Kentucky
- Cheri Fouts - Kentucky Home Education Association
- Louie Hammons - Director of Pupil Personnel (Garrard County)
- Sherwood Kirk - Director of Pupil Personnel (Ohio County)
- David Lanier - Kentucky Home Education Association
- Marilann Melton - Director of Pupil Personnel (Warren County)
- Roger VonStrophe - Director of Pupil Personnel (Newport)
- Don Woolett - Christian Home Educators of Kentucky

David Thurmond, Director of the Division of Planning, who is the nonpublic school liaison for the Kentucky Department of Education, served as a consultant to the task force.

The task force met on a monthly basis for the next three months. This document is a product of their efforts.

On November 14, 2000 a task force was called to review and revise this document. The only revisions updated the section on Home School Resources and added a new section on the Recognition of Credits.

The members of this task force are as follows:

- Joe Adams - Christian Home Educators of Kentucky
- Cindy Green - Kentucky Home Education Association
- Louie Hammons - Director of Pupil Personnel (Garrard County)
- Mike Hughes – Kentucky Home Education Association
- Mary Anna Rogers – Kentucky Home Education Association
- Haskell Sheeks – President, Directors of Pupil Personnel Association and Director of Pupil Personnel (Ballard County)
- Roger VonStrophe - Director of Pupil Personnel (Newport)
- Robert Simpson, who serves as the liaison between the Kentucky Department of Education and non-public schools.

#### B. Rights of Parents/Guardians to Home School Their Children

Kentucky compulsory attendance laws require that every child between the ages of 6 and 16 be enrolled in school. This requirement may be met by attending public school, private school (including home school), parochial school, or church regular day school. The parent or person in charge of the student is clearly charged with the responsibility to see that the child attends school.

In the case of homes schooling, the parent is required to notify the local superintendent of schools by letter that the child is being home schooled. The letter must include the names, ages, and place of residence of each pupil in attendance at the school. The parent must notify the local superintendent of schools within the first two weeks of each school year of their intent to home school their child(ren).

#### C. Kentucky Department of Education - Home School Requirements

The following are the minimal requirements for the operation of a home school in Kentucky:

1. Education is a fundamental right. *Rose V. Council for Better Education, Inc. Ky.*, 790 S.W. 2d 186 (1989). Compulsory attendance laws (KRS 159.010) require that every child between the ages of 6 and 16 be enrolled in school. KRS 159.030 exempts a child from attending public school who is enrolled and regularly attending a private, parochial or church regular day school. Home schools are considered to be private schools in Kentucky, and the laws relating to private schools apply equally to home schools. Therefore, when you decide to educate your children at home, you must first establish a bonafide school for your children to attend. Furthermore, you are required to notify the local superintendent of schools by letter that you have established a school, and to report the names, ages, and place of residence of each pupil in attendance at the school, together with any facts that the superintendent may require to facilitate carrying out the laws relating to compulsory attendance and employment of children. (KRS 159.160) It is recommended

that you keep a copy of any information that you provide to the local school district.

2. The private, home, and parochial schools shall teach those subjects that will educate children to be intelligent citizens. State law requires that instruction be offered in English and in the branches of study that are taught in the public schools. This is interpreted to include at least reading, writing, spelling, grammar, history, mathematics and civics. KRS 158.080, and Kentucky State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education v. Rudasill, Ky., 589 S.W. 2d 877 (1979).

3. Private, home and parochial schools shall provide instruction for a term at least as long as the term in effect for the public school in the district where the child resides. (KRS 158.080) The minimum school term is defined in KRS 158.070 which states: The minimum school term shall be 185 days, including no less than the equivalent of 175 six (6) hour instructional days. This would be 1050 instructional hours.

4. The private and parochial schools shall record and maintain scholarship reports of each student's progress at the same interval as in the local public school, grading all subjects taught. (KRS 159.040)

5. Kentucky requires that an accurate record of pupil attendance be kept. (KRS 159.040) Attendance may be recorded in a notebook, or on a computer list or in a register provided by the Kentucky Department of Education to the local school district.

6. KRS 158.040 requires that all private schools be open to inspection by directors of pupil personnel or officials of the Department of Education.

#### D. The Role of the Director of Pupil Personnel

The director of pupil personnel has the responsibility to enforce the compulsory attendance and census laws in the attendance district he/she serves.

When a question arises as to whether a child is actually being schooled at home it is within the authority of the director of pupil personnel to ask for evidence that a bonafide school exists.

Evidence that a school actually exists might include:

1. Whether the parent/guardian has notified the local board of education by letter of intent to teach the child(ren) at home giving the names, ages, and address of each child.

2. Whether instruction is taking place over a term at least as long as the term in effect for the public school in the district where the child resides. (175 instructional days times 6 hours = 1050 instructional hours per school year)

3. Whether instruction covers at least reading, writing, spelling, grammar, history, mathematics, and civics.

4. Whether the teacher records and maintains scholarship reports of each student's progress at the same interval as in the local public school, grading all subjects taught.

5. Whether an accurate record of pupil attendance is being kept.

When there is reason for concern the director of pupil personnel should notify the private school of the parent's need to provide this information. If the records are incomplete, the director of pupil personnel has the option of making a visit to inspect the private school to determine whether instruction is taking place. In the case of a home school, if the parents refuse access to the home, the director of pupil personnel may arrange a meeting at the school district office or at a neutral site. Following assessment, if the director of pupil personnel concludes that minimum standards of instruction are not being met, he/she may take action under KRS 159.

KRS 159.130 defines the powers and duties of directors of pupil personnel: The director of pupil

personnel and his assistants shall be vested with the power of peace officers, provided however they shall not have the authority to serve warrants. They may investigate in their district any case of nonattendance at school of any child of compulsory school age or suspected of being of that age. They may under the direction of the superintendent of schools and the Kentucky Board of Education, institute proceedings against any person violating the laws of compulsory attendance and employment of children.

E. Commentary on the Law and Its Application from the Perspective of the Christian Home Educators of Kentucky and the Kentucky Home Education Association

This commentary will refer to the paragraph numbers of the

16 list of Home School Requirements (HSR), (section C, page 14.) It is suggested that you refer to it periodically while reading the commentary.

HSR notes that the six items listed are the minimal requirements for the lawful operation of a home school in Kentucky. Home schooling is an area whose upper limits are bounded only by an individual's initiative and creativity, so any home schooling family may exceed these minimal requirements many times over. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the bottom line required to operate a home school legally in Kentucky.

1. Kentucky compulsory attendance statutes require that children from the age of 6 to 16 must be enrolled in either a public or private school. Home schoolers are in no way exempt from that law. Some points to remember:

a) Current Kentucky law requires that any child who is six(6) years of age, or who may become six (6) years of age by October 1st, must be enrolled in a primary school program. A primary school program means that part of the elementary school program in which children are enrolled from the time they begin school until they are ready to enter the fourth grade. Formally this was called kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade. Most students are in the primary school program for four (4) years. A student must successfully complete the primary school program before entering the fourth grade.

Any child who is five (5) years of age, or who may become five (5) years of age by October 1st, may enter a primary school program. If you elect to suspend formal schooling with your child until the age of six, he or she will be a year behind his or her peers in terms of the conventional grading system. This is not a problem necessarily, simply something which you should consider while making your decision. If you wish to avoid this issue, then begin your child in the primary school program when he or she is five years old.

b) Kentucky law states that if a child is not enrolled in public school either the private school or parent of the child must inform the local school board of that child's whereabouts during the school year. Your notification letter to the local school board allows the superintendent to be in compliance with the portion of the compulsory attendance law that requires him to account for every child in his district.

c) When you write your local school board, you should state that your children will be attending a particular school, giving the name and address of the school. You must also include the name, age and home address of each child in your school. You need not include anything else in the letter whatsoever.

We do not recommend that you include test scores, letters of recommendations, or any other material since it implies that you are requesting permission from the school board to teach your children at home. You are not requesting permission, simply informing them of the situation.

d) The letter to the school board should be sent within ten days of the beginning of school and will need to be sent each year you home school. We agree that it is wise for you to keep a copy of the letter and any other correspondence affecting your children or the operation of your home school.

e) As a result of religious or philosophical convictions, some parents elect not to notify the local school district of their home schooling activities. It is not our purpose to comment one way or the other on these convictions; however, it is important to note that there are civil penalties which could include monetary fines and incarceration for persons convicted of non-compliance with compulsory education laws; anyone who elects to disregard the reporting requirements should be aware of the risks involved.

2. Kentucky law requires that you educate your children at least as long as the public schools in your district. At the present time that number is 175 instructional days, 6 hours per day (totaling 1,050 hours per calendar year) in most districts. You need not educate your children on the same days that the public schools in your area are in operation, and you may educate your children more days than the public schools require.

3. This section of the HSR is relatively self-explanatory. Kentucky law does not limit in any way the subjects or the point of view, which will be included in your home school. It does require, however, that you teach the basics in the English language.

4. HSR requires that private schools, including home schools, keep scholarship records of the students in that school. Furthermore, it requires that the scholarship reports be summarized or tabulated at the same interval as the grading period of the local public school district,

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normally every nine weeks. This particular provision of the law has caused a great deal of confusion among both public school officials and home school parents in the past. A few points of clarification:

a) This provision does not require that the home school parents submit these reports to their local school district, state department of education, or anyone else. It simply requires that they maintain the records in some sort of ongoing fashion.

b) HSR makes no statement concerning the form which these scholarship reports must take. The form may be a traditional report card, a portfolio of exemplary work, a narrative assessment or any one of many other forms of assessment. The point seems to be that there needs to be some reasonable record of academic accomplishment maintained by the parents in the home school.

c) We would recommend that whatever your preferred form of student assessment, the records be kept in a formal, organized manner for two reasons: first, this will be your child's permanent record of educational accomplishment. It is only right that the records be in a form that is concise and useful. Second, in the event your records should ever come under scrutiny by someone else, the quality of your school will be judged to some degree by the quality of your records. While it may be the case that records kept on the back of envelopes, calendar pages, or paper plates do meet the letter of the law, such a casual approach to record keeping would raise doubts in the minds of skeptics.

5. Keep an attendance book. It can be a book you obtain from writing the state, a grade book you purchase at a local office supply store, a computer log, or any other reasonable method for maintaining attendance. Be sure that you can account for at least the minimum required hours



(1,050 hours) per year in your records.

Many families combine the requirements of this provision and provision #4 above in one grade book which keeps both attendance and scholarship records.

6. HSR #6 is one of the most controversial portions of the home school law in Kentucky. It provides that private schools shall be open to inspection by directors of pupil personnel or officials of the Department of Education. It is believed that this was originally written without awareness of the existence of home schools, places that were both homes and schools. As a result, the provisions of this statute appears to conflict with the rights given by the U.S. Constitution to every American citizen against unreasonable search and seizure.

It is our understanding that "home inspections" by school personnel will stop at the threshold unless consent is given by the homeowner. In the absence of imminent threat (the house is on fire, for instance) entry into a private home can only occur with the presentation of a lawfully executed warrant. All homeschoolers should be aware of this fact.

On the other hand, if genuine concerns exist in the mind of school personnel as to the legitimacy of a particular home school, it may be in that family's interest to meet with the school official, preferably at a neutral site, in order to address any questions.

In conclusion, we recommend consideration of the following:

a) In the event you are informed of an impending visit, talk with the official and try to agree upon a suitable time and place outside your home to review your records.

b) In the event a home visit is unannounced or in cases where prior mutually agreeable arrangements cannot be made, we recommend that you seriously consider the ramifications of allowing government officials to enter your home without warrant. It is certainly your prerogative to invite anyone to see your home school: friends, family or local school officials. It is another thing for you to accede to their demand to review your material in your home.

c) Furthermore, we suggest that you conduct your home school in such an exemplary manner that no one in your community will be concerned about the quality of the job you are doing.

Considerations prior to embarking on a home school journey

In order to have the very best possible experience as a home schooling parent, we suggest that you take into consideration the following practical issues; responsible home education can be a daunting task and should not be entered into without due consideration. Although it affords ample opportunity for educational excellence and flexibility, it requires a high degree of commitment and

18 energy to be successful. Listed below are some factors that should be thoroughly considered prior to embarking on a home school journey.

Home schooling is very time-consuming. To do an adequate job the home school parent(s) must devote considerable time and energy to class preparation, instructional time, grading papers, etc. Many families have had to change their lifestyle significantly -- switching from a two-income to a one-income family, for instance -- in order to accommodate the demands of homeschooling. It is a decision that should not be made on impulse or without sufficient forethought.

Home schooling requires initiative. While excellent material is available to assist the home schooling parent, putting it together in a manageable form for a given family requires a great deal of work and creativity. Since each family is different it is clear that the final form home education takes will vary from family to family. To be a good home schooler requires a certain

independent spirit, willingness to try new things and a reasonable level of self-confidence. Home schools are not accredited by the State. Unless a home schooling family functions as a satellite classroom for an accredited school, the diploma awarded by a home school may not be recognized by other schools or agencies. Some home schooled children take the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) exam for the purpose of obtaining a standard credential. Other college-bound home school graduates take the SAT or ACT tests and usually have little problem with college admission.

For more information regarding home schooling in your area, contact Kentucky Home Education Association at P.O. Box 51951, Bowling Green, KY 42102-5891 or Christian Home Educators of Kentucky, 691 Howardstown Road, Hodgenville, KY 42748.

## II. Best Practice Approach to Home School Verification

In the interest of the education of all children in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and based upon the laws as they relate to compulsory attendance of school age children and their right to an education, whether in a public or private/home school, the following best practice approach is suggested as a way both public and private/home school personnel may approach the question of insuring that all children are enrolled in a bonafide school.

A. Parents/Guardians of school age children, by law, must notify the public school district of the enrollment of their child(ren) in a private or parochial school within the first two weeks of each public school year. Home school representatives of Christian Home Educators of Kentucky and the Kentucky Home Education Association and the officers of the Kentucky Directors of Pupil Personnel Association agree that in the absence of any mitigating factors the school(s) which have properly notified public school districts should be presumed to be in compliance with the law and operating a bonafide school; thus, necessitating no further investigation.

B. It is the responsibility of the local director of pupil personnel or his/her designee to investigate any evidence which would suggest that a child(ren) is not enrolled in a bonafide school. The investigation is for the sole purpose of determining that a bonafide school does exist and in no way is intended to investigate and approve the education provided by the school. Any investigation could include, but is not limited to, phone calls, home visits (the privacy of the home must be recognized and no visit inside the home may be conducted without the consent of an adult resident or a duly issued warrant), review of academic and attendance documents, etc.

C. Circumstances/evidence which would cause a public school district to have concern about whether or not a bonafide school did exist, thus causing an investigation to occur, would include, but is not limited to:

1. Notification, after the public school year has begun and at any time other than a semester break, by parent/guardian of intent to withdraw their child(ren) from the public school for the purpose of home schooling; (This would not apply to students moving in from out-of-district.)
2. Notification by the parent/guardian of intent to home school their child(ren) when disciplinary action (i.e. truancy, expulsion, notification relative to driver's license, etc.) was being contemplated or had begun;
3. Request from an agency or individual to determine if the child(ren) are in school. Requests from an agency concerned with child welfare (i.e. juvenile court, Department of Social Service, etc.) should be investigated as a matter of course. Requests made by a private citizen should proceed only as it relates to probable cause and/or legal requirements;

4. Notification (as required by law) by the parent/guardian of their intent to home school their child(ren) was not received by the public school district within two weeks of the start of the public school year;

5. Evidence of a compelling nature which would suggest the inability of the parent or proposed teacher to operate/maintain a bonafide school.

Should there be any disagreement on the part of the directors of pupil personnel and parents/guardians, it is anticipated that common sense rules will be used to ascertain the information requested by either party. Everyone should have a clear understanding of what are the rights and obligations of the directors of pupil personnel and parents/guardians to insure that all school age children are enrolled in a bonafide school.

### III. Appendix

#### A. Home School Resources

See pages 8-10 and page 41 for homeschooling resources.

#### B. Sample Documents

See the section, Sample Forms and Documents, beginning on page 59, as well as page 57.

#### C. Special Topics

1. Loss of driver's license by student for dropping out of school or for academic deficiency.

Note: These requirements concerning driver's licenses were deemed unconstitutional by the KY Supreme Court on December 18, 2003 and may no longer be applicable. However, HB304 was introduced during the 2004 legislative session in an effort to reinstate this bill with modifications. For the latest information on the status of any "No Pass No Drive legislation" please check the KHEA website, [www.khea.info](http://www.khea.info).

Any applicant for a permit who is under the age of eighteen (18) who has not graduated from high school shall provide proof issue by his school within the preceding sixty (60) days that the applicant is currently enrolled or has been enrolled in the prior semester of school and is not or has not been found academically deficient. If a student is being schooled at home, a statement from his parent or guardian that he is being schooled at home and is not academically deficient shall be provided.

A student shall be deemed to have dropped out of school when he has nine (9) or more unexcused absences in the preceding semester. Any absences due to suspension shall be unexcused absences. A student shall be deemed to be academically deficient when he has not received passing grades in a least four (4) courses, or the equivalent of four (4) courses, in the preceding semester.

2. Recognition of home school credits

KRS 158.140 mandates the assignment of a pupil in the class or grade to which the pupil is best suited. This regulation prescribes procedures for recognition of credits or graduation from a public secondary school upon transfer from a nonaccredited secondary school and from a public secondary school upon transfer from a nonaccredited secondary school and for the awarding of credit upon transfer to a public secondary school without a proper transcript being reasonably available.

Section 1. For the purpose of this regulation, a "nonaccredited secondary school: is a school enrolling students for secondary school instruction when that school is not recognized by (1) of the fifty (50) state departments of education or one (1) of the seven (7) independent regional

accrediting associations. A “nonaccredited secondary school” in Kentucky shall be any private school not certified pursuant to KRS 156.160(3).

Section 2. (1) The local school district shall be responsible for the appropriate assignment of a student transferring from a nonaccredited secondary school to the class or grade best suited for the student. Previous credits earned by a student in a nonaccredited secondary school shall be awarded by the local school district by one (1) of the two (2) following methods:

Pass an examination of similar nature and content to the examination used for other students receiving credits for a particular course within the school district and graded on a comparable basis;

Or

Successful performance of the student in a higher 20 level course when the courses are sequential in nature such as English, Mathematics, History and Science. Successful performance shall consist of achieving at least a C grade in the course by the 12th week of school.

The courses successfully completed by examination or performance shall be counted toward minimum high school graduation requirements in the local school district.

Section 3. A student desiring recognition of previous credits toward graduation upon entering public school secondary school without a properly certified transcript and for whom a properly certified transcript cannot reasonably be obtained, shall be placed and awarded credit as outlined in Section 2 of this statute.