



# Missouri Homeschool Law

[Note: Found in "Pupils and Special Services" title of Chapter 167 RSMo and is not titled as Home School Law in the statutes. Updated August 2009]



**167.031.** 1. Every parent, guardian or other person in this state having charge, control or custody of a child not enrolled in a public, private, parochial, parish school or full-time equivalent attendance in a combination of such schools and between the ages of seven years and the compulsory attendance age for the district is responsible for enrolling the child in a program of academic instruction which complies with subsection 2 of this section. Any parent, guardian or other person who enrolls a child between the ages of five and seven years in a public school program of academic instruction shall cause such child to attend the academic program on a regular basis, according to this section. Nonattendance by such child shall cause such parent, guardian or other responsible person to be in violation of the provisions of section **167.061**, except as provided by this section. A parent, guardian or other person in this state having charge, control, or custody of a child between the ages of seven years of age and the compulsory attendance age for the district shall cause the child to attend regularly some public, private, parochial, parish, home school or a combination of such schools not less than the entire school term of the school which the child attends; except that:

- (1) A child who, to the satisfaction of the superintendent of public schools of the district in which he resides, or if there is no superintendent then the chief school officer, is determined to be mentally or physically incapacitated may be excused from attendance at school for the full time required, or any part thereof;
  - (2) A child between fourteen years of age and the compulsory attendance age for the district may be excused from attendance at school for the full time required, or any part thereof, by the superintendent of public schools of the district, or if there is none then by a court of competent jurisdiction, when legal employment has been obtained by the child and found to be desirable, and after the parents or guardian of the child have been advised of the pending action; or
  - (3) A child between five and seven years of age shall be excused from attendance at school if a parent, guardian or other person having charge, control or custody of the child makes a written request that the child be dropped from the school's rolls.
2. (1) As used in sections 167.031 to **167.071**, a "home school" is a school, whether incorporated or unincorporated, that:
- (a) Has as its primary purpose the provision of private or religious-based instruction;
  - (b) Enrolls pupils between the ages of seven years and the compulsory attendance age for the district, of which no more than four are unrelated by affinity or consanguinity in the third degree; and
  - (c) Does not charge or receive consideration in the form of tuition, fees, or other remuneration in a genuine and fair exchange for provision of instruction.
- (2) As evidence that a child is receiving regular instruction, the parent shall, except as otherwise provided in this subsection:
- (a) Maintain the following records:
    - a. A plan book, diary, or other written record indicating subjects taught and activities engaged in; and
    - b. A portfolio of samples of the child's academic work; and
    - c. A record of evaluations of the child's academic progress; or
    - d. Other written, or credible evidence equivalent to subparagraphs a., b. and c.; and
  - (b) Offer at least one thousand hours of instruction, at least six hundred hours of which will be in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies and science or academic courses that are related to the aforementioned subject areas and consonant with the pupil's age and ability. At least four hundred of the six hundred hours shall occur at the regular home school location.
- (3) The requirements of subdivision (2) of this subsection shall not apply to any pupil above the age of sixteen years.
3. Nothing in this section shall require a private, parochial, parish or home school to include in its curriculum any concept, topic, or practice in conflict with the school's religious doctrines or to exclude from its curriculum any concept, topic, or practice consistent with the school's religious doctrines. Any other provision of the law to the contrary notwithstanding, all departments or agencies of the state of Missouri shall be prohibited from dictating through rule, regulation or other device any statewide curriculum for private, parochial, parish or home schools.
4. A school year begins on the first day of July and ends on the thirtieth day of June following.
5. The production by a parent of a daily log showing that a home school has a course of instruction which satisfies the requirements of this section or, in the case of a pupil over the age of sixteen years who attended a metropolitan school district the previous year, a written statement that the pupil is attending home school in compliance with this section shall be a defense to any prosecution under this section and to any charge or action for educational neglect brought pursuant to chapter 210.
6. As used in sections 167.031 to **167.051**, the term "compulsory attendance age for the district" shall mean:
- (1) Seventeen years of age for any metropolitan school district for which the school board adopts a resolution to establish such compulsory attendance age; provided that such resolution shall take effect no earlier than the school year next following the school year during which the resolution is adopted; and
  - (2) Seventeen years of age or having successfully completed sixteen credits towards high school graduation in all other cases. The school board of a metropolitan school district for which the compulsory attendance age is seventeen years may adopt a resolution to lower the compulsory attendance age to sixteen years; provided that such resolution shall take effect no earlier than the school year next following the school year during which the resolution is adopted.
7. For purposes of subsection 2 of this section as applied in subsection 6 herein, a "completed credit towards high school graduation" shall be defined as one hundred hours or more of instruction in a course. Home school education enforcement and records pursuant to this section, and sections 210.167 and 211.031, shall be subject to review only by the local prosecuting attorney.

**167.042.** For the purpose of minimizing unnecessary investigations due to reports of truancy, each parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child who causes his child to attend regularly a home school may provide to the recorder of deeds of the county where the child legally resides, or to the chief school officer of the public school district where the child legally resides, a signed, written declaration of enrollment stating their intent for the child to attend a home school within thirty days after the establishment of the home school and by September first annually thereafter. The name and age of each child attending the home school, the address and telephone number of the home school, the name of each person teaching in the home school, and the name, address and signature of each person making the declaration of enrollment shall be included in said notice. A declaration of enrollment to provide a home school shall not be cause to investigate violations of section **167.031**. The recorder of deeds may charge a service cost of not more than one dollar for each notice filed.

**167.051.** If a school board establishes part-time schools or classes for children under seventeen years of age, lawfully engaged in any regular employment, every parent, guardian or other person having charge, control or custody of such a child shall cause the child to attend the school not less than four hours a week between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and five o'clock in the evening during the school year of the part-time classes. 2. All children who are under eighteen years of age, who have not completed the elementary school course in the public schools of Missouri, or its equivalent, and who are not attending regularly any day school shall be required to attend regularly the part-time classes not less than four hours a week between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and five o'clock in the afternoon during the entire year of the part-time classes.

**167.052.** The provisions of sections **167.031** and **167.051** affecting a metropolitan school district shall be effective for the school year beginning 2007-08 and shall terminate after the school year ending 2011-12.

**167.061.** Any parent, guardian or other person having charge, control or custody of a child, who violates the provisions of section **167.031** is guilty of a class C misdemeanor. Upon conviction and pending any judicial appeal, the defendant shall be required to enroll the child in a public, private, parochial, parish or home school within three public school days, after which each successive school day shall constitute a separate violation of section **167.031**. The fine or imprisonment, or both, may be suspended and finally remitted by the court, with or without the payment of costs, at the discretion of the court, if the child is immediately placed and kept in regular attendance at a public, private, parochial, parish or home school and if the fact of regular attendance is proved subsequently to the satisfaction of the court. A certificate stating that the child is regularly attending a public, private, parochial or parish school and properly attested by the superintendent, principal or person in charge of the school is prima facie evidence of regular attendance by the child.

**167.071.1.** In school districts having seven or more directors the school board may appoint and remove at pleasure one or more school attendance officers and shall pay them from the public school funds.

2. Each attendance officer has the powers of a deputy sheriff in the performance of his duties. He shall investigate the claims of children for exemptions under section **167.031**, and report his findings to the person authorized by that section to grant the exemption sought. He shall refer all cases involving an alleged violation of section **167.031** involving a public school to the superintendent of the public school of the district where the child legally resides and all cases involving an alleged violation of section **167.031** involving a private, parochial, parish or home school to the prosecuting attorney of the county wherein the child legally resides. When reasonable doubt exists as to the age of any such child he may require a properly attested birth certificate or an affidavit stating the child's age, date of birth, physical characteristics and bearing the signature of the child. He may visit and enter any mine, office, factory, workshop, business house, place of amusement, or other place in which children are employed or engaged in any kind of service, or any place or building in which children loiter or idle during school hours; may require a properly attested certificate of the attendance of any child at school; may arrest, without warrant, any truant, or nonattendants or other juvenile disorderly persons, and place them in some school or take them to their homes, or take them to any place of detention provided for neglected children in the county or school district. He shall serve in the cases which he prosecutes without additional fee or compensation. Each attendance officer appointed by a school board shall carry into effect the regulations lawfully prescribed by the board by which he was appointed.

3. In any urban school district, any metropolitan school district and in school districts having seven or more directors and which are located in a first class county having a charter form of government, any duly commissioned city or county police officer shall be ex officio school attendance officers. Any police officer exercising duties of ex officio school attendance officer need not refer any child apprehended pursuant to the provisions of this section to juvenile court or a juvenile officer, but nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the police officer's regular powers and duties as a peace officer.

**210.167.** If an investigation conducted by the children's division under section **210.145** reveals that the only basis for action involves a question of an alleged violation of section **167.031**, then the local office of the division shall send the report to the school district in which the child resides. The school district shall immediately refer all private, parochial, parish or home school matters to the prosecuting attorney of the county wherein the child legally resides. The school district may refer public school violations of section **167.031** to the prosecuting attorney.

**211.031.4.** When an investigation by a juvenile officer pursuant to this section reveals that the only basis for action involves an alleged violation of section **167.031** involving a child who alleges to be home schooled, the juvenile officer shall contact a parent or parents of such child to verify that the child is being home schooled and not in violation of section **167.031** before making a report of such a violation. Any report of a violation of section **167.031** made by a juvenile officer regarding a child who is being home schooled shall be made to the prosecuting attorney of the county where the child legally resides.

(This law was enacted during the 1986 legislative session. The most recent revisions were made in August of 2009.)

**Note:** In 1990, the law was modified to require parents who wish to remove five and six-year-old children from a public school setting to do so in writing. Again, this is merely a notification, not a request of permission.



If you feel you may need legal representation, consider joining Home School Legal Defense Association for \$120/year per family (\$130/year per family beginning April 2, 2018). For further information visit the Home School Legal Defense website at [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org) or call 540-338-5600

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