

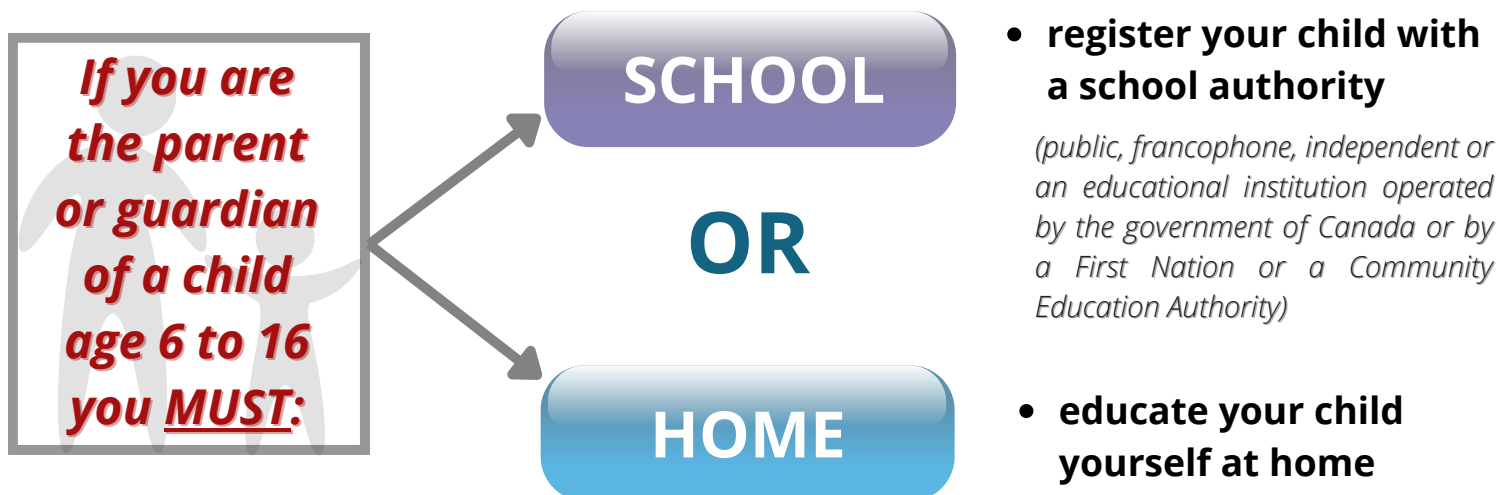
# FSL FAQs

POPARD Family - School Liaison Newsletter



## FAQ: WHAT OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL DO I HAVE IN BC?

*How do I make decisions about which choice would be best for my child:  
Public? Independent? Homeschool? Online?*



**No matter which option you choose, you must register your child with British Columbia education authority by September 30 each year, beginning at age 6. This is true even if you are educating your child at home.**

## PUBLIC & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLING

Most parents choose this option of schooling - 570,000 students in British Columbia are enrolled in public schools and 89,000 in independent schools.

Public schools and other authorities provide an organized set of learning experiences. They are subject to auditing by the Ministry of Education and can be penalized if they do not meet their obligations to provide an organized, sequential educational programme, which meets Ministry standards, to all the children who are enrolled at their facilities.

As well, all public authorities and most independent authorities provide supplemental support services to students who might require them. These services are provided by special education staff, such as learning assistance teachers and teaching assistants and support staff, such as school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, and counsellors who have taken professional graduate training and who may also be regulated by a College that protects the public and is responsible to the Ministry of Health.

## ONLINE LEARNING

Online learning is a venue through which instruction is provided by a school authority. Students who are enrolled in an educational program provided by one authority may also enroll in an online program offered by another authority (if available). Online learning allows students to connect with a BC Certified Teacher and work with their teacher to reach goals in their learning plan.

One of the assumptions of effective online instruction is that it must be strongly supported by a parent or other adult to facilitate the instruction delivered by the virtual instructor. Students may get additional support through in-person learning and interactions with other students.

The Ministry of Education is exploring the creation of provincial online schools that will be available to any student anywhere in the province.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/classroom-alternatives/online-learning>

## HOME SCHOOLING

More than 4,500 children are home-schooled in British Columbia.

Children who are home-schooled do not have to follow the BC curriculum; they are not inspected or supervised by Ministry staff. At the same time, there is a definition of an educational programme that applies to home-schooling and for which parents can be held accountable:

An educational program . . . means an organized set of learning activities that, in the opinion of . . . the parent, in the case of learning activities provided to a child registered under section 13, is designed to enable learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy (School Act, C-13).

Section 13(3) of the School Act requires school authorities to provide access to educational services where the home-schooled child is registered. Depending upon the school authority where the child is registered, that might, for example, include support from a school psychologist or a speech-language pathologist. As well, upon registration, materials are available to loan to a parent who is home-schooling their child.

[Homeschooling - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/classroom-alternatives/online-learning)

It is important to know that home-schooled children are not eligible to receive a Dogwood graduation certificate based upon home-schooling alone. It is possible, however, for a child who has been registered as a home-schooled child to join the school system for grades 10 to 12 in order to complete the credits required to obtain a Dogwood certificate.

[Homeschooling-procedures-and-guidelines.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Because it might be difficult to replicate some school-based experiences or learning at home, home-schooled children may still attend individual classes at schools, by arrangement with schools that have these available, and may also enroll in online courses offered by public or independent schools.

[Homeschooling Policy - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

## WHAT CHOICES ARE BEST FOR MY CHILD?

A comparison of school options is available through the Ministry of Education website:

[Classroom alternatives - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

The British Columbia School Trustees Association has published a comprehensive guide to school law, including the School Act, which summarizes your obligations as a parent if you have a child ages 5 to 16, with regards to the education of your child:

[Guide to School Legislation in British Columbia - BCSTA](#)

**IF YOU HAVE  
QUESTIONS OR  
WOULD LIKE FURTHER  
INFORMATION,  
CONTACT POPARD'S  
FAMILY-SCHOOL  
LIAISON.**

**EMAIL:  
FSL@AUTISMOUTREACH.CA**

**PHONE:  
604-952-4994**

Children benefit from a stimulating environment that includes opportunities to learn by sound, by vision, by touch, by exploration, by planned and unplanned verbal and nonverbal interactions with peers and adults, by playing with others, etc. They learn both academic skills and social skills by experiencing success and failure and joy and frustration in the company of diverse others.

These experiences are common in in-person learning in public and independent schools.

With regards to virtual learning, the COVID pandemic has sparked more research on its efficacy, and it is clear to many parents that the nature of online learning is distinct from that of in-person learning.

The choice of homeschooling often reflects family values or personal history with the public school system or independent schools. Which schooling you choose for your child might also rest on your circumstances, as well as on your perspective of your child's needs and interests.

No decision made by parents or guardians is irreversible. Students occasionally transition from homeschooling to attending public schooling and vice-versa. Families are encouraged to consult with their local school authority, other parents who have made similar decisions, and community professionals to assist in making placement decisions about schooling.