

What are the Different Types of School?

There are three main [types of school](#) – state (funded by the Government and run by local authorities), academies (funded by government but not run by local authorities) and independent or private schools (funded by parents and run independently).

When you think about different types of school, two in particular spring to mind – state-funded schools and private ones. And, in general, every school is either state-funded or funded privately. However, things are a little more complicated than that!

How Many Types of School Are There?

In essence, there are three types of school – those funded by the Government and run by local authorities (state schools), those funded by government but not run by local authorities (academies and free schools) and those funded by parents and run independently (independent or private schools).

So, how do these schools differ? Let's look at each of the three types in turn.

What are Local Authority-Maintained State Schools?

Every child between the ages of 5 and 16 has a right to free education and a place at a state school. All state schools are funded by government.

Schools that are under the control of the local council are generally known as Maintained Schools ('maintained' by the local council). There are a number of different types but all maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum and are not allowed to select students on the basis of academic ability (unless they are state grammar schools).

What are the Different Types of Local Authority-Maintained State Schools?

There are many different types of maintained schools. Here's a list of the most common varieties:

- Community schools - Controlled by the local council
- Foundation schools – These have more freedom than community schools. The governing body employs the staff and is responsible for admissions. School buildings and land are owned either by the governing body or by a charitable foundation
- Voluntary Aided Schools - A trust (usually religious) has substantial influence over the running of the school and contributes to its building costs
- Voluntary Controlled Schools - Almost always church schools, with the lands and buildings often owned by a charitable foundation. However, they are entirely funded by the state
- Special Schools - These are for children with particular educational needs

Academies and free schools are also state schools, although they are not run by local authorities. Instead they govern themselves.

What are Academies?

Academies are very similar to state-schools, but there are also some notable differences. Like maintained schools, academies are not allowed to select students on the basis of ability, but unlike maintained schools they do not have to follow the National Curriculum.

Another feature of academies is their specialisation. Some may specialise in art and design, others in business or technology. But most supply an all-round education.

Academies usually have sponsors whose experience supports the schools in their chosen specialities. Many academies are now run by 'academy chains' - educational businesses operating as limited companies with charitable status.

Academies have complete control of their budgets and can hire and fire staff as they see fit. This flexibility enables academies to take advantage of opportunities for creative alliances with other schools and institutions to enrich the educational experience of their pupils.

Many academies were formed as brand new schools during the first wave of the academy programme, in the early 2000s. However, many existing schools have applied for academy status since then. These former maintained schools are known as converter academies.

What are Free Schools?

Free schools are similar to academies. They are usually not-for-profit organisations run by groups like charities, universities, faith groups, businesses, teachers or parents.

Free schools have a great deal of control over how they do things. They can decide on their own curriculum, set their own staff pay and conditions, change school term lengths and decide which hours make up the school day.

What are Independent and Private Schools?

Independent schools differ from state schools in that they receive no funding from the Government. Instead, most of their income comes from fees charged to the parents of children who attend. Some independent schools are also registered charities.

The cost of private education varies a lot. Some independent schools may charge as little as £3,000 per year while others cost in excess of £30,000. When extras such as boarding are included, private education can be beyond the reach of most families.

Independent schools have much more freedom than state schools. They are free to set their own curriculums and they also tend to specialise in one area. Some may focus on academic success and discipline, whereas others might be more technologically minded and less formal. Each independent school is different, so it's best to talk with one before sending your child there.

How do Independent and State Schools Compare?

In many ways, independent schools are better than their state-funded rivals. Class sizes tend to be smaller so children receive more one-on-one tuition. They also get better exam results on the whole.

Most independent schools are selective and have entrance exams. Some require potential pupils to take the Common Entrance exam at 11 or 13. Others normally require a test in English, Maths and sometimes other subjects, and will interview children and their parents.

What Others Types of School Are There?

There are many other types of school which can be state schools, academies or independent. How they are run and how they are funded vary considerably. Each one is different but, to give you an idea of some of the types of school available, here is a list of the more common varieties:

- Alternative Education – Education outside of school for children with particular needs. Usually, this is a temporary arrangement before reintegration to mainstream schooling
- City Technology Colleges - Owned and funded by private companies with additional money coming from the Government
- Faith schools – Usually voluntary aided schools but can also be free schools, academies or independent. Faith schools are associated with a particular religion and most prioritise pupils whose families actively practise that faith
- Grammar Schools - Can be run by the local council, a trust or a foundation. Grammar schools are sometimes referred to as selective schools
- Prep Schools (preparatory schools) - These are private schools which teach children up to the age of 13
- Public Schools – The oldest, most exclusive and most expensive private schools. Usually for children between the age of 13 and 18
- State Boarding Schools - Run by local authorities so they provide free education, but fees are charged for boarding costs
- Studio Schools – These are small free schools that use working in realistic situations to achieve qualifications
- University Technical Colleges - Free schools sponsored by universities, employers and further education colleges. They specialise in subjects like engineering and construction

Lots of different types of schools then. We've found out how they're all funded and how they are managed and this information should help you when considering which school your child should attend.