FOR TEFA FAMILIES IN AN ONLINE PRIVATE SCHOOL

IS YOUR ONLINE SCHOOL WORKING? FIVE THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE THE SECOND INSTALLMENT.

Parents in the TEFA groups are all asking the same thing: how many hours a day are your kids on each subject, how often are they tested, and is this school a good fit? Here is how to answer that for your own kid.

GET THE FREE WEEKLY BRIEF → One free email a week: rule changes, vendor lists, and what other TEFA parents are asking. Unsubscribe anytime.

★ **READ TO THE END →** Page 2 ends with ***what the rules say if you need to switch schools mid-year***, and ***what happens to the remaining balance when you switch schools.***

FIVE CHECKS, ONE WEEK

1. **How many hours per each subject.** Write down what your kid actually did for five school days. Under 20 minutes on a core subject most days is worth raising with the school, at any grade.
2. **Who teaches them and how often.** A live teacher on a schedule, recorded lessons, or software. Check that what your kid actually does each day matches what the school described.
3. **What happens if your kid gets stuck.** Time it, from "I don't get this" to a human answer. Same day is good, and two days is a problem.
4. **How often they're tested, and what you see.** A weekly check and a gradebook you can open any time beats a quarterly report.
5. **Whether it fits a learning difference.** If your child has an IEP or a diagnosis, ask the school in writing what accommodations they provide.

WHAT A GOOD ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

ACCREDITED, CLEAR PATHWAY

The accreditor is named on the site and grades run through 12, so credits are easier to transfer and you won't have to switch schools later.

DEDICATED HUMAN GUIDANCE

Whether instruction is live, recorded, or software-led, a real teacher or guide monitors progress and answers questions within 24 hours.

TRANSPARENT TOTAL COST

Tuition and all fees are in writing up front, so you know whether TEFA funds cover all of it before you sign an enrollment agreement.

Before you decide, run the five checks for one week, write the answers down, and ask two other schools the same five questions. Page 2 has the message to send them.

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WHAT TO DO IF IT ISN'T WORKING

Ask two other schools the same five things in writing. Then the rules for changing schools, quoted.

1. THE MESSAGE TO SEND ANY ONLINE SCHOOL (COPY IT)

> "Hi. We're a TEFA family looking for schooling during spring, and we have five questions before we apply.
> 1. How many hours a day will my kid be spending on each subject, and how much of that will be live?
> 2. Who is going to teach, and what is their schedule?
> 3. How fast is your response if my kid ends up getting stuck on some homework or projects?
> 4. How often are students tested, and what can I see as a parent?
> 5. What is tuition by grade, including any fees, in writing?
> Thank you."

A school that answers all five in one reply is telling you something. The state's finder lists 81 online schools, and 8 publish tuition on their sites. We sent all 81 schools these questions on Sept 16. Answers go in the newsletter as they arrive.

2. IF YOU NEED TO SWITCH: WHAT THE RULES SAY

Question	What the rules say	Source
How is a private-school award paid?	25% around July 1, 25% around Oct 1, 50% around Feb 1, to the school after it confirms enrollment.	Odyssey help center
Can I move to a different approved school?	The award belongs to the child. The new school must be on the state's list and confirm enrollment. Unused tuition goes from the old school back to Odyssey and into the wallet, never to you. Contact support before you withdraw.	Odyssey help center
Can I switch to homeschool instead?	The homeschool setting pays $2,000 a year, not $10,474. Check the setting in the portal before you change anything.	State families page
What ends the account?	Enrolling in a public or charter school mid-year. Buy what you need before you switch.	Odyssey help center
Is testing required?	Yes for private-school students in grades 3 to 12, one approved assessment a year. Not for homeschool.	Odyssey help center

> **The one thing the wallet does when you switch:** it follows the setting, not you. Private to private, the remaining installments follow the child once the new school confirms. Private to homeschool, the award becomes $2,000 for the year, and one parent found $0 until support moved the account over. Private to public, the wallet closes. Decide the setting first, then the school.

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Sources: support.withodyssey.com (installment schedule, tuition confirmation, tuition refund policy, assessment requirement, mid-year public enrollment); educationfreedom.texas.gov/families ($10,474 private-school amount for 2026-27, $2,000 homeschool amount); finder.educationfreedom.texas.gov (81 online-tagged schools, Sept 16, 2026); 2,578 posts from the two largest Texas TEFA parent groups on Facebook, March 16 to Sept 19, 2026.

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