JP MARKETING

WORKBOOK + ASSETS

Google Ads Exact-Match Search Campaign Starter Kit

Settings, keywords, ads, and assets for private schools

Free resource from JP Marketing · jpmarketing.co · Updated November 2026

What this kit is

This is a done-for-you starter setup for a **Google Ads Search campaign** for private schools, using **exact match keywords only.**

Exact match means you pick the exact searches you want. You don't let Google wander off and spend your money on random stuff. It's the safest way to start.

> **Truth about "exact" match (2026):** Exact match isn't 100% exact anymore. Google also shows your ad for "close variants" with the same meaning (like misspellings, plurals, or reworded searches). That's why you still need **negative keywords** and a **weekly search terms check**. Also, Google's newer **AI Max** setting makes keywords act more like broad match. If you want true exact-match control, keep AI Max (and its search term matching) turned off. One more thing: exact match keywords **can't** show ads *inside* Google's AI Overviews. They can still show above and below them.

Words to know

Word	What it means
Exact match	Your ad shows for that search or very close versions of it. Written with [brackets].
Negative keyword	A word that STOPS your ad from showing, like 'jobs' or 'free.'
CPC	Cost per click: what you pay when someone clicks your ad.
CTR	Click-through rate: out of 100 people who see the ad, how many click.
Conversion	A good action, like a call or a booked appointment.
Ad group	A group of keywords and ads about one service.
Assets	Extras on your ad like extra links, phone number, and photos.
Search terms report	A list of the real searches that made your ad show.

Step 1: Campaign settings (do these exactly)

Setting	Pick this	Why
Campaign goal	Leads (or create without a goal)	Keeps setup simple
Campaign type	Search	Text ads on Google search only
Networks	UNCHECK Search Partners and Display	Keeps your money on Google search
AI Max	OFF	Keeps exact match acting like exact match
Broad match setting	OFF	Same reason
Locations	Your real service area (cities or a radius)	No wasted clicks
Location option	Presence: people IN or regularly in your area	Not 'interest in' your area
Language	English (add Spanish if you serve Spanish speakers and have Spanish ads)	
Bidding (start)	Maximize clicks with a max CPC limit, OR Manual CPC	Learn real costs first
Bidding (after ~30 conversions)	Maximize conversions or Target CPA	Let Google optimize with real data
Ad schedule	When someone can answer the phone	Calls you miss are wasted money
Auto-apply recommendations	Turn them OFF (Recommendations > Auto-apply)	Stops Google from adding broad keywords

Tip: Google Ads changes its menus often. If you can't find a setting, search the Google Ads Help Center for its name.

Step 2: Campaign structure

Keep it simple: **one campaign, a few tight ad groups.** Each ad group = one service.

Ad group	Number of keywords
Private School General	4
Christian School	4
High School	3
Elementary & K	3

Step 3: Exact match keywords

Square brackets = exact match. Change the city names to yours.

Ad group: Private School General

```
[private school franklin tn]
[private schools in franklin tn]
[private school brentwood tn]
[private schools williamson county]
```

Ad group: Christian School

```
[christian school franklin tn]
[christian school brentwood tn]
[christian academy franklin tn]
[private christian school near franklin]
```

Ad group: High School

```
[private high school franklin tn]
[college prep school franklin tn]
[private high school brentwood]
```

Ad group: Elementary & K

```
[private elementary school franklin tn]
[private kindergarten franklin tn]
[private pre k franklin tn]
```

Tip: Look up real search numbers and costs in Google Keyword Planner (free inside Google Ads). Remove keywords with zero searches. Add the versions people actually type.

Step 4: Negative keywords

Add these to a **shared negative keyword list** (Tools > Shared library > Negative keyword lists) and apply it to the campaign. Change any that don't fit your business.

```
jobs, teacher jobs, salary, public, charter, homeschool, online school,
free, ged, college, university, community college, rankings us news, reddit,
uniform store, calendar, lunch menu, staff login, powerschool, alumni login,
football score, tickets
```

Step 5: Your responsive search ad

Make **1 to 2 responsive search ads per ad group**. Google mixes and matches your headlines and descriptions.

Headlines (use 10 to 15 per ad):

#	Headline (30 characters max)	Chars
1	Private School in Franklin	26
2	Pre-K Through 12th Grade	24
3	Book a Campus Tour	18
4	Open House Jan 26	17
5	Small Classes, Big Results	26
6	Christian, College-Prep	23
7	Apply for Next Fall	19
8	Financial Aid Available	23
9	Bus Routes to Brentwood	23
10	Caring, Certified Teachers	26
11	AP & Dual Enrollment	20
12	Athletics & Fine Arts	21
13	Visit Our Campus	16
14	See Why Families Choose Us	26
15	Admissions Open Now	19

Descriptions (use 4 per ad):

#	Description (90 characters max)	Chars
1	Pre-K to 12th grade private Christian school in Franklin. Small classes, strong academics.	90
2	Book a campus tour or RSVP for our open house. Meet teachers and see classes in action.	87
3	College prep with AP, dual enrollment, athletics, and arts. Financial aid available.	84
4	Bus routes from Brentwood and Spring Hill. Applications for next fall are open now.	83

Display path: yoursite.com / private / franklin

> **Tip:** Pin your best headline (like the service + city one) to position 1 if you want it to always show. Don't pin too many, or Google can't test.

Step 6: Assets (they used to be called extensions)

Sitelinks:

Sitelink text	Description line
Book a Tour	See campus in person
Open House	RSVP today
Tuition & Aid	Plans and aid
Admissions	Steps and dates
Upper School	College prep 9-12
Athletics	Teams and facilities

Callouts: Pre-K to 12, Small Class Sizes, Financial Aid, Bus Service, AP & Dual Credit, Accredited, Before & After Care, Fine Arts

Structured snippet: Programs: Pre-K, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School, Athletics, Fine Arts

Call asset: Add your tracked phone number. Schedule it only for hours you answer.

Location asset: Link your Google Business Profile (if you have a storefront).

Image assets: Add 3 to 5 real photos (team, office, trucks, work).

Step 7: The landing page

Send each ad group to the **matching service page**, not your homepage. The page should have:

- [ ] Headline that matches the search (service + city)
- [ ] Phone number and button at the very top
- [ ] Reviews and trust facts right away
- [ ] Short form (name, phone, email, one question)
- [ ] Fast load on phones
- [ ] No menu clutter that distracts people (optional but helps)

Step 8: Conversion tracking (don't skip this!)

Track these as conversions:

- Inquiry form
- Tour booked
- Open house RSVP
- Application started
- Calls 60+ seconds

Connecting to GoHighLevel (or any CRM): Save the "gclid" (Google click ID) with each lead in a hidden form field. When a lead turns into a real family, upload it back to Google as an offline conversion. Then Google learns which clicks turn into money, not just which ones fill out forms.

Step 9: Budget

Start with $30 to $60 a day. Spend most from October to March. Use ad schedules around open houses.

Daily budget	What it's good for
Small	Test 1 to 2 top services
Medium	3 to 4 services, full service area

Daily budget	What it's good for
Bigger	All services + Spanish ads + more cities

Give it **at least 30 days** before you judge. Ads need time and data.

Step 10: Your weekly routine

When	What to do
Week 1 (every 2 days)	Check search terms. Add bad ones as negatives.
Weekly	Search terms report: add negatives, add good new exact keywords
Weekly	Listen to a few recorded calls (quality check)
Every 2 weeks	Pause keywords that spend a lot with no leads
Monthly	Test one new headline or description
Monthly	Compare cost per lead and cost per family

Rules for Private Schools

> **Policy:** Ads speak to parents. Only claim accreditation and results you can prove. Don't use student photos without consent.

- Student photo releases.
- Accurate accreditation and outcome claims.
- Protect student records and privacy.
- Follow nondiscrimination statements your accreditor requires.

Launch checklist

- [ ] Search only (no Display, no Search Partners)

- [ ] AI Max and broad match setting OFF
- [ ] Auto-apply recommendations OFF
- [ ] Location set to Presence
- [ ] Ad groups built with exact match keywords
- [ ] Shared negative list applied
- [ ] 2 ads per ad group with 10+ headlines
- [ ] Sitelinks, callouts, snippets, call asset added
- [ ] Each ad group sends people to the matching page
- [ ] Conversion tracking tested (do a test call and form)
- [ ] Ad schedule matches when you answer the phone
- [ ] Budget set

Sources for the 2026 exact match and AI Max facts: Google AI Max overview via Search Engine Journal and PPC Land on exact match and AI surfaces.

Your first 30 days, day by day

Days	What to do	What to look at
1 to 3	Launch. Make a test call and test form to check tracking.	Are ads showing? Is tracking working?
4 to 7	Check search terms every 2 days. Add negatives.	Junk searches, cost per click
8 to 14	Pause keywords with lots of spend and no leads.	Cost per lead by ad group
15 to 21	Move budget to the best ad group. Test 1 new headline.	Which ad group brings real families
22 to 30	Listen to calls. Compare leads to real jobs/families.	Cost per family, not just per lead

How to read the search terms report

1. In Google Ads, open your campaign, then Insights and reports > Search terms (menus can move).
2. Look at each search. Ask: would I want this person to call me?

3. If NO: check the box and click 'Add as negative keyword.'
4. If YES and it's not already a keyword: add it as a new [exact match] keyword.
5. Do this every 2 days in week 1, then once a week.

Want us to do this for you?

JP Marketing helps local businesses show up on Google, Google Maps, and AI search tools like ChatGPT. We build the websites, write the pages, run the ads, and set up the follow-up.

Book a free strategy call at jpmarketing.co. We'll look at your site and your Google profile, and show you the 3 fastest wins for your business.

Rules on Google, Meta, and AI tools change a lot. This guide was last updated November 2026. It is general marketing info, not legal advice.