

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ATHENS

Enrolling in School in Athens, 2026 Guide (Clarke County School District)

One district for the whole county, two proofs of address dated within 30 days, the Social Security card question, and Turkish missing from the district's language line.

SHORT ANSWER

There is one district for the whole county: the **Clarke County School District**. Registration is online, you book an appointment if you need help with it, and your child is assigned to a school by your address. Georgia's rule is clear: **a child cannot be refused enrollment because the family has no Social Security number**. But the district's published list names the card, so ask for the written objection in writing.

One district, one address

- **The district:** one district covers the whole county, matching the structure of the unified government. Not Atlanta Public Schools and not Fulton County Schools, but the **Clarke County School District**.
- **Size:** more than 12,500 students and 21 schools. The high schools are Clarke Central and Cedar Shoals, and the Athens Community Career Academy covers career and technical pathways.
- **Where to go:** the Student Registration Center, **595 Prince Avenue, Athens GA 30601**, weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., **706-546-7721**, registration@clarke.k12.ga.us.
- **The address picks the school:** the district assigns students by the residential attendance zone of the parent or legal guardian and publishes a street-by-street index.
- **Kindergarten:** a child already enrolled in the district's pre-K does not re-register and is assigned automatically. For kindergarten the child must turn 5 on or before **September 1** of that school year.
- **The non-discrimination statement** covers age, sex, race, color, religion, **national origin**, marital status and disability. New-student registration usually opens in early February of the preceding year; we could not confirm the opening date for 2026-27.

Step by step

- 1 **Find your school by address.** Look your street up in the district's attendance zone index. You do not choose the school.
- 2 **Complete the online application.** Registration is online for all new students and for students returning to the district from elsewhere.
- 3 **Book an appointment for help. An appointment is required** for in-person help with the online application, and that help is given at the district office at 595 Prince Avenue.

- 4 **Get the documents ready.** The list is below. Both proofs of address must be **dated within the last 30 days**, so plan the registration date around that.

The document list

DOCUMENT	DETAIL
☐ Two proofs of residency	Each dated within 30 days of registration. The obvious pair is a signed lease plus the monthly water bill
☐ Parent or guardian ID or valid passport	The list says ID or valid passport, so it is an either/or. We could not confirm whether a Turkish passport is accepted in practice; ask the registration office
☐ Student's birth certificate or passport	Also an either/or, so the child's passport on its own appears to satisfy the identity requirement. Nothing says whether a Turkish birth certificate needs a translation, so have one ready anyway
☐ Student's Social Security card	The list names it, but read the warning below : the statewide rule does not allow a child to be refused for want of a number
☐ Immunization Form 3231	A Georgia Department of Public Health form, completed by your doctor or a clinic
☐ Custody document	Required if the registering adult is not the child's birth parent

A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD IS NOT A LAWFUL REQUIREMENT

Georgia's statewide rule is that a child cannot be refused enrollment because the family has no Social Security number. The practice used across the state is that a parent who prefers not to give the number signs a written **objection** instead. But the Clarke County School District **publishes no such form or option** on its own pages, and we cannot say that the district waives the number. So do three things: go in knowing the statewide rule, **ask the registration office in writing for the written objection form** (706-546-7721, registration@clarke.k12.ga.us), and keep the reply. Note too that we could see this six-item list only through a search extract, because the district's pages do not render to an automated reader: verify the items with the registration office.

Two proofs of address: the real obstacle for a newcomer

This is the hardest item on the list. **Two** documents dated within 30 days are required, and a family that arrived in town less than a month ago may not have both. Do three things. First, **get the water account into your own name on the day you move in**: the Water Business Office is at 124 East Hancock Avenue, 706-613-3500, no SSN appears on the application list, and a connection needs up to three business days of lead time. Second, keep your signed lease; the same document is used at DDS and for water service. Third, if you do not have two documents, call the registration office in advance and ask which alternative it accepts. An electric bill works too, but in Athens the company depends on the address, Georgia Power, Jackson EMC or Walton EMC, and the unified government does not know which serves you, so you have to find the company out first.

Immunization and screening forms

- **Form 3231 (immunization):** the same statewide form. A religious exemption uses the notarized **Form 2208**, and a medical exemption is given on the form itself.
- **Form 3300 (screening):** the state requires this for eye, ear, dental and nutrition screening, and schools may allow **up to 90 days** for these documents. Form 3300 does not appear on the Clarke County list we were able to read, which may simply be a gap in the extract: prepare both forms and ask the registration office.
- **Where to have them completed:** Athens has a genuinely free clinic, Mercy Health Center (700 Oglethorpe Avenue Suite C7, 706-425-9445), but it sees patients 18 and over only. For children there are centers that charge by income: Athens Neighborhood Health Center (675 College Avenue, 706-546-5526 and 402 McKinley Drive, 706-543-1145) and MedLink Athens (2000 Prince Avenue, 706-352-9705). **Those two are not free;** they work on a sliding fee scale, and MedLink says on its own page that it is not a free clinic, with a minimum fee of \$40 for a medical office visit.
- **The district's school-based clinics do not cover you:** the district runs four school-based health centers and in its own words they are open **to students and staff**, not to parents or siblings.

Turkish is not offered, so prepare for it yourself

- **The district's multilingual line is 833-599-2058** and the languages it names are Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, Hindi, Karen, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi and Vietnamese. **Turkish is not on that list.** Do not assume the district will provide a Turkish interpreter.
- **What to do instead:** take a Turkish-speaking relative or an interpreter to the enrollment appointment, and ask the registration office in advance what it can arrange.
- **The language screen is inside the registration form:** the district runs a three-question home language survey embedded in the form for every student. If the answers show a language other than English in the home, the child is screened with the state-adopted WIDA test and placed in ESOL if eligible. We could not read these details on the district's own pages, so ask during registration.
- **Spanish is in practice the second working language:** the district's news is published in English and Spanish side by side. We could not confirm whether the district has a newcomer center, a parent liaison or an interpreter request procedure.
- **One note for adults:** the public library runs an English Conversation Circle, and its own page names Turkey among the countries participants come from. It is a conversation circle rather than a graded course, and we could not confirm that it is still running in late 2026; ask about the current session on 706-613-3650.

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- Under the 1982 Plyler v. Doe decision every child living in the United States may attend public school regardless of their own or their family's immigration status.
- If you are asked for an SSN, ask for the written objection in writing and keep the reply. If enrollment is blocked, write to the district office and keep the answer too.
- Have the English translations of a Turkish birth certificate, school records and the immunization card done in advance, and bring the child's passport.
- Enrolling your child in school is not the same as applying for a public benefit. Before applying for SNAP, Medicaid, PeachCare, Pathways or energy assistance, speak with an immigration attorney: the new public charge rule has been in force since September 18, 2026.
- Working here and enrolling your children in school within 10 days makes you a resident for the purposes of Georgia law, and from then you have 30 days to get a Georgia license.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN ATHENS

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Athens and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

Office: 321 N Central Expy, Ste 206, McKinney, TX 75070

Attorney responsible for this guide: Asim Clinch, Esq., Clinch Law Firm P.C. Attorney Asim Clinch is a member of the Missouri Bar (No. 76084) and practices U.S. federal immigration law.

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