

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · BROOKLINE

Brookline School Enrollment Guide 2026 (The 45-Day Two-Document Rule)

Neighborhood schools and no lottery. The online appointment, eight K-8 schools, buffer zones, two proofs of occupancy dated within 45 days, and the fee assistance rule that excludes visa families.

SHORT ANSWER

Brookline has **neighborhood schools and no lottery**: a child is assigned by home address to one of eight K-8 schools, then to Brookline High School. Registration runs through one office and is by **online appointment only**: the Office of Registration and Enrollment, 333 Washington St., 4th Floor, (617) 264-6492. The document list is among the strictest in this series: parent photo ID, one proof of residency and **two proofs of occupancy dated within 45 days**. No Social Security number appears on any list, and the district says in writing that immigration status is not relevant to residency.

Where and how you register

- 1 **Fill in the online application.** Registration starts with the "Registration Gateway" in Aspen, and **you book the appointment in the last step of the application**. Appointments open about a month ahead and the meeting is held virtually.
- 2 **A parent or legal guardian attends.** The student does not have to. If you have no computer, a device is provided at Town Hall during working hours.
- 3 **Prepare the documents.** You have to show the **originals** at the appointment, and non-English documents need a certified translation by an agency or an authorized translator: **a parent's own translation is not accepted**.
- 4 **Check your address.** The district's School Locator tool works the school out from your address; in a buffer zone, two schools are listed.
- 5 **If language screening is needed it happens before the assignment.** If a language other than English is spoken at home, the child takes the English proficiency screening required by state rule; it usually happens one to two weeks after registration at one of the schools and the result arrives by email within three business days.

The office: Office of Registration and Enrollment, Public Schools of Brookline, 333 Washington Street, 4th Floor, Brookline MA 02445 (inside Town Hall); phone (617) 264-6492, fax 617-730-2601, enroll@psbma.org; Monday to Thursday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **The difference from Cambridge:** there you can walk into the registration center with a paper packet and rank the schools yourself; in Brookline there is no walk-in route and your address decides the school.

Document checklist

DOCUMENT	DETAIL
☐ Parent photo ID	A U.S. license or ID, a passport , a military ID or another government photo ID. The document has to be in English
☐ One proof of residency	The most recent mortgage payment, a property tax bill, a HUD-1 closing statement or a deed; or a lease in effect. If you cannot show a document in your own name, a Residency Certification Form is used
☐ Two proofs of occupancy	An electricity, gas, fuel, cable or internet bill, a landline phone bill , a statement or work order for any of those, or a homeowner or renter insurance policy. Each must be dated no more than 45 days before the appointment and show the service at that address in the parent's name
☐ The child's birth record	A birth certificate or birth record; the district also accepts alternatives (see below)
☐ Health	Immunization records and the most recent physical exam
☐ School records	A report card or progress report for grades 1 to 8, a transcript for 9 to 12. Any custody documents, court orders, an IEP or a 504 plan

FOUR DETAILS THAT SAVE WEEKS

- **A purchase and sale agreement is not accepted.** If you are buying, the closing has to be complete. A signed lease, on the other hand, is enough to start the online application, and you can book the appointment up to two weeks before the lease begins.
- **Only a landline phone bill counts.** A mobile phone bill, a bank statement and the water bill are not accepted. In Brookline the water bill arrives quarterly anyway and in most rentals it belongs to the landlord, so build your plan around the electricity, gas, cable or internet bill.
- **If the bills are not in your name:** where the utilities are included in the rent, shared, you live with family, you are a subtenant, you rent a room, you are in employer housing or you are a tenant at will, the property owner fills in a Residency Certification Form or you file an occupancy dispute form; the principal and the central office review that file. Brookline Housing Authority tenants have a residency agreement route, and homeless families (McKinney-Vento) do not have to provide proof of residency, contact 617-308-6400.
- **Residency can be checked later:** the district says it may verify residency at any time, with the risk of an investigation, a home visit, immediate removal from the rolls, a per-day charge for an out-of-district student and legal action. A temporary residence of four weeks or less, and a residence set up only to attend these schools, do not count.

SSN and immigration status: the district's own sentence

Nowhere in the document lists we read, or in six separate question-and-answer documents, does a Social Security number appear. The district's own question-and-answer also says this: **"Immigration or citizenship status is not relevant to establishing residency in the district and it is unnecessary to ask about it in this context."** That is one of the clearest institutional statements we have seen in this series. We could not see

whether the online application has an optional SSN field, because the form requires a login. You can also rely on state law and the 1982 decision in Plyler v. Doe.

A birth certificate is not the only option. The district's documentation question-and-answer answers no to whether a birth certificate is mandatory: the registration only shows that the child meets the age rule and the parent-child relationship, so families may offer alternatives (a hospital or physician record showing the date of birth, a religious record, a family civil registry record, an adoption record, a U.S. visa). The district says document requests must not unlawfully bar or discourage a student without status or parents without status, and it notes that student records are protected by FERPA. The required documents page nonetheless lists the birth certificate first: bring the birth record you carry from Türkiye with a certified translation and ask about the alternatives on the spot.

Which school does the child attend?

- **Eight K-8 schools:** Baker, Driscoll, Hayes, Lawrence, Lincoln, Pierce, Ruffin Ridley and Runkle; one high school, Brookline High School. Assignment is based principally on the location of the home.
- **Buffer zones:** many streets sit in a buffer zone shared by two or more schools. In that case the registration office decides, weighing class size, siblings and the family's preference, but the preference is not binding. Siblings in a buffer zone attend the same school.
- **No lottery, and timing does not matter:** registering early or late within a registration period does not change the assignment. This is where you leave Cambridge behind: there you rank the schools, here your address decides. So in Brookline it is worth checking the school zone when you look at a home, but allow for the possibility that a buffer zone sends you to either school.
- **If you move mid-year:** the assignment is made once registration is complete, and the district keeps it as close as possible to the effective date of the lease or the closing. If language screening is needed, no assignment is made before the screening.
- **Kindergarten:** pre-registration runs from January to June of the year before, and the child must have turned 5 by August 31; the district says there is no exception. A child who completed kindergarten at another U.S. public school may go into first grade, but kindergarten abroad or at a private school does not count.
- **Other programs:** METCO for Boston students, the Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP) for preschool, separate steps for special education evaluation, and a home schooling page. High school registration runs directly through the school.

English support: screening does not block enrollment

- **Times vary by age:** 45 minutes for kindergarten through the first half of grade 2, 1.5 hours from the second half of grade 2 to grade 5, and 2 hours for grades 6 to 12. The result comes by email within three business days, followed by a meeting with the ELE team.
- **The district says it plainly:** a child is never denied admission or deprived of the neighborhood school because of the screening.
- **Scale:** the Office of English Language Education serves more than 750 students (780 in October 2023, 11.5 percent of the district, 44 languages; the largest groups are Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Hebrew and Spanish). There is an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC).

- **No Turkish support:** the K-8 native language support programs exist for Korean, Hebrew, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and Russian; Turkish is not among them. The registration checklist is translated into Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese, with no Turkish translation. So a Turkish-speaking child gets ordinary English language development support, not instruction support in the home language. One detail: an English learner attending one of those programs may choose a school outside their own zone.
- **Contact:** the ELE office at (617) 264-6412 (help if you cannot read the application in English) and (617) 264-6431 (registration and assessment). The town says translation and interpreting are free on request.

FAMILIES HERE ON A VISA CANNOT GET FEE ASSISTANCE

This rule hits our readers directly, so we are not softening it. The district gives financial assistance for athletics, instrument lessons, field trips and BEEP preschool fees (2026-27 applications have been open since May 1, 2026). But the district page says: **"Families in the United States on a valid visa are not eligible for financial assistance."** Nonimmigrant visa holders (the page names B, F, H and J) are pointed to an explanation of public charge and the I-864. So a family in the United States on an E-2, an H-1B or an L-1 cannot get this help; the accepted documents include an IRS tax transcript. Free and reduced lunch is a **separate application**, and students in that program qualify for fee assistance automatically; do not confuse the two. Contact financialassistance@psbma.org.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Three pieces of preparation save time in Brookline. First, the two 45-day proofs of occupancy: collect electricity, gas, cable, internet or landline phone bills, because a mobile phone bill, a bank statement and the water bill are not accepted. Second, translation: have the birth record, immunization card and report cards you bring from Türkiye translated by an agency or an authorized translator, because your own translation is not accepted. Third, sequence: if you are buying, you have to wait for the closing; if you are renting, a signed lease is enough and you can book the appointment two weeks before the lease begins. The good news: no SSN appears on any document list and the district says in writing that immigration status is not relevant to residency, and alternatives to a birth certificate are accepted. Ask for an interpreter when you book.

Registration dates and the document list can change. Confirm them on the [PSB required documents](#) page before you go. Information as of October 1, 2026.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN BROOKLINE

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Brookline 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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