

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · CONNECTICUT

Enrolling a Child in School in Connecticut: 2026 Guide

Enrollment goes to the town board of education; there is no county school system. An SSN may not be required, a birth certificate is not mandatory, and the religious vaccine exemption was repealed.

SHORT ANSWER

Enrollment goes to the **board of education of the town or city where you live**; there is no such thing as a county school system here. The state education agency tells districts in writing that **enrollment may not be denied because a parent refuses to give a Social Security number**, that citizenship or immigration documents may not be required, and that alternatives to a birth certificate must be accepted. In Hartford there is one more wrinkle: **the city also runs a regional school choice lottery**, so your child is assigned to a school by address, but the sought-after magnet places go through a lottery.

What the state tells schools

- **A school district may not deny a student's enrollment because a parent refuses to provide a Social Security number.** If a district asks for one anyway, it must state that disclosure is **voluntary**, give the legal basis for the request and explain how the number will be used.
- **Documents proving citizenship or immigration status may not be required**, and the state says a district should not state on its website or anywhere else that this information is required for enrollment. The basis is Plyler v. Doe. The state education commissioner reissued this guidance to all superintendents on **March 10, 2022**.
- **Every child aged 5 up to 21** (22 in special education) who has not graduated has the right to attend school where they live. The state writes plainly that it is unacceptable to tell a young person under 21 that they are ineligible **because they lack credits or because they do not speak English**.
- **Children experiencing homelessness must be enrolled immediately**, even without immunization records or proof of residence. Each district publishes its own liaison.

Which documents are accepted?

WHAT IS ASKED FOR	WHAT THE STATE TELLS SCHOOLS TO ACCEPT
☐ Residency	A current lease, mortgage document, property tax record, rent receipt or homeowner's insurance; a current electricity, gas, water, cable, home or mobile phone bill or insurance correspondence; a public assistance document or other official correspondence showing the address; a current state driver's license, vehicle registration or auto insurance

WHAT IS ASKED FOR	WHAT THE STATE TELLS SCHOOLS TO ACCEPT
☐ If you live with someone else	An Affidavit of Residence signed before a notary or a Commissioner of the Superior Court may be used. It has to be signed before a notary, so arrange it in advance
☐ Age	A birth certificate is not mandatory. Accepted: a photocopy of the birth certificate, previous school records, a state identity card, a driver's license or a passport , a sworn or unsworn parental statement of age, a doctor's certificate, even immunization records. The state's own sentence: a student's enrollment should not be blocked because the family cannot produce a birth certificate
☐ Immunizations	Measles, mumps and rubella; polio; diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis; hepatitis B (preschool through grade 12); Hib under age 5; hepatitis A in preschool and kindergarten. Varicella and meningococcal requirements also apply by grade; check the state health department page for the current grade-by-grade schedule
☐ Health assessment	Hartford's own rule: if your student is new to the district, you must provide the school with a physical examination and immunization record before school starts

WHAT CANNOT BE ASKED

If you are asked for a Social Security number, know that giving it is **voluntary** and that enrollment cannot be denied on that ground; cite the state's guidance. **You do not have to give your immigration status or your documents to anyone for a school enrollment**, and the state says districts should not advertise that information as an enrollment requirement. Having no birth certificate is not a barrier either: the state notes in its own guidance that a child born abroad may have no birth certificate, and lists a passport among the accepted documents.

The religious vaccine exemption was repealed

This is a difference a family arriving from Türkiye should know. **Public Act 21-6**, effective April 28, 2021, repealed the non-medical (religious) exemption. No religious exemption submitted after that date is valid. There is a narrow grandfather provision: the student must have been enrolled in grades K-12 **on or before April 28, 2021 and** have filed a valid religious exemption **on or before April 27, 2021**, both together. **The medical exemption remains** and is granted on a form developed by the state health commissioner. The repeal was upheld in court.

Hartford: where enrollment happens

Enrollment is run by the **Hartford Public Schools Office of Enrollment and School Choice**, and its public office is the **Welcome Center, 280 Trumbull Street, 9th Floor, Hartford CT 06103**, telephone **860-695-8000**. Mail and deliveries go to the district's main address, 330 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford CT 06114. Enrollment can also be done online at hartfordschools.org/enroll. **Check the floor and the opening hours by telephone before you go.**

The lottery: two separate processes

- 1 In-district placement.** Hartford students are placed in Hartford neighborhood schools and parents may state preferences. Students entering transition grades, that is **grades 6 and 9, do not have to apply:** they are assigned to their next school by their home address.
- 2 The regional school choice lottery.** About 45 interdistrict magnet schools in the Greater Hartford region, the **Hartford Region Open Choice** program (a Hartford child attending a suburban school, or the reverse) and the technical high schools are allocated by lottery.

So the lottery is **an opportunity, not a gate:** your child is placed somewhere even without entering it. But the sought-after magnet places come out of the lottery and the application windows open early, historically around February for the following school year. A family arriving mid-year enrolls at the Welcome Center and the child is placed; **a family that arrives in the fall and wants a magnet or Open Choice seat is already looking at the following September.** Confirm the exact dates on the district's own choice page.

English support, and a caution about Turkish

The district runs a **Department of Services for Multilingual Learners, World and Dual Language Programs;** Hartford uses the term multilingual learner. The dual language programs named are Dwight-Bellizzi Dual Language Academy and Dr. Michael D. Fox School, kindergarten through grade 2, in **English and Spanish.** The district says its families come from about 70 towns and speak about 90 languages.

But we do not say there is Turkish support, because the district does not say so. Turkish does not appear among the district's dual language programs or among the languages for which it awards a seal of biliteracy. The only place Turkish appears is the automatic translation widget in the header of the district website, and that is a machine translation tool: not an interpreter, not a dual language program, not a translated enrollment service. There is a state-level reason: the bilingual education requirement is triggered by a given number of students speaking the same language at the same school, so a small language group receives **English as a second language (ESL)** support rather than a dual language program. Ask for an interpreter at enrollment and ask in writing which languages it is provided in.

BRING THESE ON ENROLLMENT DAY

- Two proofs of address; a lease and a utility bill are a good pair.
- A document showing the child's age: **a passport is enough, a birth certificate is not required.**
- Immunization records and, if you are new to the district in Hartford, a physical examination report.
- If you live with someone else, an **Affidavit of Residence signed before a notary in advance.**
- In Hartford, put two dates in your calendar the day you move in: the Welcome Center appointment for enrollment, and **next year's school choice lottery window.** A family that misses the second loses a year.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CONNECTICUT

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