

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts School Enrollment Guide 2026 (No SSN Needed)

Enrolling in a public school, the documents districts ask for, the immunization rule, English-learner support and the rights of immigrant families.

SHORT ANSWER

No SSN is required. Joint guidance from the state education agency (DESE), the Attorney General and the Executive Office of Education is explicit: **the district where you live must enroll your child regardless of immigration status**. A school may ask for the child's age, your address and immunization records. It may not ask for your immigration status or documents, and it may not refuse you because you lack a government photo ID. Enrollment happens city by city; there is no statewide system.

How to enroll, step by step

- 1 Find your district.** Massachusetts has 351 cities and towns (plus regional school districts), and each takes registrations through its own system, with its own document list and registration windows. Start with the school department page for where you live.
- 2 Prepare the usual document list.** Proof of the child's age (birth certificate, passport or I-94), two proofs of address, an immunization record and, in most places, a physical exam from within the last year. Neither an SSN nor an immigration document is on that list.
- 3 If a document is missing.** Districts are told to work with the family and not delay enrollment. Where there is no birth certificate, **a parent's signed statement** of the date of birth can be accepted. Students without a diploma should be enrolled through age 18 at least, and in appropriate cases through 21.
- 4 Check the age rule.** Under 603 CMR 8.02 a child starts school in the September of the calendar year in which they turn six. A school committee may set an earlier minimum age, so confirm kindergarten cut-off dates with your district.
- 5 Fill in the language survey.** Every district must give a new student a Home Language Survey. If it shows another language at home, the child is screened, and a student identified as an English learner is placed in Sheltered English Immersion, a dual-language program or a transitional program. The LOOK Act gives parents the right to choose among the programs the district offers and to ask for a transfer. State contact: el@doe.mass.edu.

Document checklist (typical)

DOCUMENT	NOTE
☐ Proof of the child's age	Birth certificate, passport or I-94. A parent's signed statement can be accepted if there is no birth certificate
☐ Two proofs of address	A lease, an electricity or gas bill. Keep both in a separate folder from the day you move in
☐ Immunization record	Bring an English translation of the card from Türkiye
☐ Physical exam report	Most districts want one from within the last year
☐ Previous school records	A report card or transcript if you have one, with an English translation
☐ SSN, passport information, visa information	Should not be asked for. The Attorney General says districts should not collect or keep documents containing them for enrollment

The immunization rule (2026-27)

The Department of Public Health (DPH) sets the list and the school enforces it (105 CMR 220.000). The table is from the document updated in January 2026; confirm the row for your child's grade with the school.

GRADE	VACCINES REQUIRED
Child care and preschool (age 2 and up, K0-K1)	Hib 1 to 4 doses (by product and age), DTaP 4, polio 3, hepatitis B 3, MMR 1 (on or after the first birthday), varicella 1
Kindergarten through grade 6	DTaP/Tdap 5 doses (4 if the fourth was given on or after the fourth birthday), polio 4 (3 if the third was on or after the fourth birthday and six months after the previous one), hepatitis B 3, MMR 2, varicella 2 (a reliable history of chickenpox or lab evidence is also accepted)
Grades 7 through 12	One Tdap dose plus a DTaP primary series history, polio 4, hepatitis B 3, MMR 2, varicella 2. Meningococcal (MenACWY or MenABCWY): one dose on or after the tenth birthday for grades 7 to 10; for grades 11 and 12 a second dose on or after the sixteenth birthday and at least eight weeks after the first (one dose is enough if given on or after the sixteenth birthday)

Lab evidence of immunity is accepted for hepatitis B, MMR and varicella. A medical exemption must be renewed every year. A religious exemption needs a statement from the parent or student that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs, renewed yearly. Children who are homeless or in foster care cannot be turned away at registration for missing records.

Your rights as an immigrant family

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- A school cannot turn a child away because the child is undocumented, or because you lack a government photo ID.
- A school cannot ask a parent or student to disclose or document immigration or citizenship status.
- If an immigration officer asks to question a student or take a student from school, the school needs either specific informed written parental consent or a valid judicial warrant. The federal FERPA law bars sharing student information without consent or a court order.
- Under the 1982 Plyler v. Doe decision, every child living in the United States may attend public school regardless of immigration status.

If a district insists, put your request to the district office in writing first, then call the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division at 617-963-2917.

THREE PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS

- Bring an English translation of the immunization card and school records you carried from Türkiye.
- On the day you move in, put two proofs of address into a separate folder.
- Fill in the language survey fully so the English support screening happens on time. It is a right, not a problem.

TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Have a question about your immigration status?



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