

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco School Enrollment Guide 2026 (SFUSD)

Enrollment steps from Pre-K to high school, documents, the parent residency rule, TK and kindergarten age rules, vaccines and rights for immigrant families.

SHORT ANSWER

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) guarantees free public school to any child whose family lives in San Francisco, and its own site says no family will be denied because of immigration status. You apply through sfusd.edu. The catch: the parent or legal guardian must live in San Francisco when applying and for the entire period of enrollment. California does not require a Social Security number to enroll. For Transitional Kindergarten (TK), a child must turn 4 on or before September 1, 2026; for kindergarten, the child must turn 5. California accepts only a doctor's medical exemption for school vaccines.

Step by step

- 1 **Read SFUSD's enrollment requirements.** sfusd.edu, [enrollment requirements](#). Prepare according to the current document list on the application page.
- 2 **Gather your documents.** A photo ID for the parent or guardian, the child's birth certificate or hospital record, and proof of your San Francisco address (a utility bill, insurance or similar).
- 3 **Submit the SFUSD application.** The application runs through an online system. Residency documents are reviewed by the Education Placement Center.
- 4 **Have immunization records ready at enrollment.** They are needed at the enrollment stage, not to submit the application.
- 5 **Check the age rule for TK or kindergarten.** A child who turns 4 on or before September 1, 2026 may enroll in TK; a child who turns 5 may enroll in kindergarten.
- 6 **If you move within the city,** submit a change-of-address form to the Education Placement Center within 14 days.

The parent residency rule

SFUSD requires the parent or legal guardian, not just the child, to live in San Francisco: at the time of application and throughout the whole period of enrollment. A parent living in San Francisco may apply for the next school year even if the child has not moved yet. If parents are separated, the child must live with the San Francisco parent at least 50% of the school year. Living in the city temporarily just to attend an SFUSD

school does not count, and neither does owning San Francisco property without living there. This documentation requirement does not apply to homeless students.

Document checklist

DOCUMENT	NOTES
☐ Parent or guardian photo ID	If the parent's name is not on the birth certificate, guardianship paperwork may also be needed.
☐ Child's birth certificate or hospital record	Proof of age. Check the current list on the SFUSD page for accepted documents such as a Turkish passport or birth certificate.
☐ Proof of address	A utility bill (PG&E, water, cable, garbage), auto insurance, or renter's or homeowner's insurance, for example. A school cannot require a driver's license or voter registration as the only proof of residency.
☐ Court orders	Custody or educational rights orders, if any.
☐ Immunization record	Requested at enrollment; California's standard childhood vaccine schedule applies, and only a doctor's medical exemption is accepted.
☐ Social Security card	Not required. If you do not have an SSN or choose not to give it, your child is still enrolled.

The document list changes from time to time. See the latest on the [SFUSD page](#).

Age rules

LEVEL	RULE
Transitional Kindergarten (TK), 2026-27	Turn 4 on or before September 1, 2026 (birthdate September 2, 2021 to September 1, 2022); a state law with no local exceptions. TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program.
Kindergarten	Turn 5 on or before September 1, 2026

Vaccines

California ended the personal-belief exemption for school vaccines in 2016 (SB 277); only a licensed physician's medical exemption is accepted now, a stricter rule than Texas's conscientious-objector exemption. Have your child's Turkish vaccine record translated into English and reviewed by a U.S. doctor to avoid delays at enrollment.

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- SFUSD states on its own site that any child whose family lives in San Francisco is guaranteed a free public education, and that no family is denied school because of immigration status.
- Every child living in the U.S. may attend public school regardless of immigration status (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982).
- According to the California Attorney General's guidance, a Social Security number is never needed for school enrollment.
- A school may not effectively block an undocumented parent from enrolling a child by demanding documents like a driver's license or voter registration as proof of address (California Education Code section 48204.1).

Where to get help

OFFICE	CONTACT
SFUSD enrollment requirements and application	sfusd.edu/schools/enroll/apply/requirements
SFUSD Education Placement Center	Residency documents and change-of-address forms · current contact details at sfusd.edu
SF311 (city information line, phone help in 160+ languages)	311 (inside the city) or 415-701-2311



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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