

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · TAMPA

Tampa School Enrollment Guide 2026 (Hillsborough County Public Schools)

Enrollment steps from Pre-K to high school, documents, free VPK, and what newcomer families should know.

SHORT ANSWER

New Hillsborough County Public Schools students enroll online; students already in the district register at their neighborhood school. District office: 901 E. Kennedy Blvd, Tampa, (813) 272-4000. In general, Florida asks for a birth certificate or other proof of the child's date of birth, a Florida immunization certification or exemption, a physical exam, and proof of residence; confirm the exact list on the HCPS enrollment checklist. Under Florida law an SSN is not a condition of enrollment. Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) is free for every eligible child through the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County.

Step by step

- 1 Learn the enrollment requirements and gather your documents; the HCPS enrollment checklist is published at hillsboroughschools.org.
- 2 If your child is new to the district, complete the online registration (hillsboroughschools.org). Students already attending HCPS register directly at their neighborhood school.
- 3 Upload your documents through the system or submit them the way the school asks.
- 4 If you have questions, call the HCPS district office: 901 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33602, (813) 272-4000.

Document checklist

DOCUMENT	NOTES
☐ Birth certificate or other valid proof of date of birth	Your child's Turkish passport can show the date of birth
☐ Florida Certification of Immunization or exemption (Form DH 680)	Available from the Florida health department or your doctor
☐ Current physical exam	For students never before enrolled in a Florida school, completed within the past year
☐ Proof of residence	For example a utility bill in your name or a lease; confirm which documents HCPS accepts on its checklist

DOCUMENT	NOTES
☐ Transfer records (if applicable)	A report card or transcript, if transferring from another district

This list reflects Florida's general requirements; the current HCPS checklist may differ in some details, so check the list at [hillsboroughschools.org](https://www.hillsboroughschools.org) before you enroll.

Under Fla. Stat. 1008.386, school districts request a Social Security number at enrollment, but a student is not required to provide one as a condition of enrollment or graduation. The school cannot refuse enrollment because you do not give an SSN; the district uses a state-assigned Florida student identification number, not the SSN, as the student ID.

English learners and a multilingual district

HCPS is a large, multilingual district: roughly 26,600 English Language Learner (ELL) students representing 238 countries and 197 languages and dialects. The most common languages are Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian and Creole. If the Home Language Survey completed at registration shows a language other than English is spoken at home, the student is screened for English proficiency and can be referred to ESOL support. For newcomer-family services and how they are delivered, ask HCPS at (813) 272-4000.

Free preschool: VPK

You apply for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) through the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC), not the school district. VPK is free for children who live in Florida and turn 4 on or before September 1 of that year. Applications open on January 1 each year through the Family Portal at elchc.org; families without internet access can contact ELCHC directly. Processing of a VPK certificate can take up to 10 calendar days. ELCHC phone: (813) 515-2340.

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- An SSN is not a condition of enrollment or graduation (Fla. Stat. 1008.386). The U.S. Constitution, under the Supreme Court's *Plyler v. Doe* decision, also requires public schools to admit children regardless of immigration status.
- If you are missing proof of address or another document, call HCPS before you enroll: (813) 272-4000.
- District office: Hillsborough County Public Schools, 901 E. Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33602.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN TAMPA

Have a question about your immigration status?

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

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