

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · WASHINGTON STATE

Washington State School Enrollment Guide 2026

Public school enrollment, documents, the immunization rule, English language support and the rights of immigrant families.

SHORT ANSWER

No, an SSN is not required to enroll. According to OSPI, the state education agency, public schools may not turn a child away for being undocumented, may not require a parent or student to disclose or document immigration status, and may not require Social Security numbers from all students. You enroll in the district where you live; there is no single statewide portal. Compulsory attendance runs from age 8 to 18. Foreign immunization records are accepted, even in another language, when medically verified.

Step by step

- 1 Find your school district.** A child attends the public school in the district where they live (RCW 28A.225.010). Each district takes enrollment through its own system and sets its own documents. In Seattle Public Schools enrollment is online.
- 2 Prepare the documents.** See the checklist below. An SSN is not on it.
- 3 Check the age cutoff.** Seattle Public Schools asks that a child turn 5 by August 31 for kindergarten. Each district publishes its own cutoff, so confirm on your district page.
- 4 Fill in the language survey.** Enrollment asks which language is spoken at home (Home Language Survey). If a language other than English is spoken at home, the child takes the WIDA screener within 10 days of starting school and may qualify for English language support. The family can accept or decline the service.
- 5 If you have no fixed address,** enrollment still goes ahead. Homeless families and those staying temporarily with others enroll without proof of address (the federal McKinney-Vento rule), and children in foster care and homeless children enroll immediately, even without immunization records.

Document checklist (typical)

DOCUMENT	NOTE
☐ Parent photo ID or passport	Original

DOCUMENT	NOTE
☐ Two proofs of address	Dated within the past 8 weeks: a utility bill, mortgage statement, insurance document, or the first and signature pages of a lease. Envelopes and junk mail do not count
☐ Immunization record (Certificate of Immunization Status)	Foreign records are accepted, even in another language, when verified by a doctor, clinic, health ministry or other official source
☐ Proof of age	For kindergarten, first grade or special education preschool: a birth certificate, hospital record or passport
☐ Earlier school records	A report card or transcript if you have one; bring an English translation
☐ Social Security card	Not required

How does the immunization rule work?

For every newly enrolled child, a Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) or a Certificate of Exemption (COE) is due on or before the first day of school. A child missing doses can start on **conditional status**: if the doses due that day are done, the remaining doses must be completed within 30 calendar days of the first day, or attendance is stopped. Records must be medically verified: name, date of birth, vaccines, the day, month and year of each dose, and the provider. A personal or philosophical exemption cannot be used for the MMR vaccine. If attendance is stopped for missing documents, you can request a hearing within 10 school days.

Your rights as an immigrant family

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- A school may not turn a child away for being undocumented.
- A school may not ask a parent or student to disclose or document immigration or citizenship status, and may not treat a student differently when establishing where you live.
- A district may not require an SSN from all students. If a district asks for one, it must say the disclosure is voluntary, give the legal basis and explain the use; OSPI itself recommends not asking.
- Under the Attorney General's guidance, schools may not on their own contact immigration authorities to share student information, and must have a policy for what happens if an enforcement team arrives on campus.
- Under Plyler v. Doe (1982), every child living in the United States may attend public school regardless of immigration status.

If a staff member insists, point to OSPI's page on immigrant students' rights and write to the district office: ospi.k12.wa.us

TWO PRACTICAL STEPS

- Bring an English translation of your Turkish immunization card and school records.
- The day you move in, put two proofs of address (a bill, the lease) in a folder; enrollment wants both dated within the last 8 weeks.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN WASHINGTON

Have a question about your immigration status?

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