Upholding the Rights of Immigrant Students to Enroll in School

A Guide for Families and Students

All students should feel welcome and valued in our public schools.

The school district where you live is required by law to enroll your child in school regardless of immigration status.

Generally, your school district may ask you for information about your child's age and where you live as part of your school enrollment process. They may also ask for immunization records. But your school district may not:

- Deny your child's enrollment if you do not have a government-issued photo ID or other specific documents. The district must work with you to find an alternative way to show your child's age and where they live if you do not have access to specific documents.
- Require you to provide your immigration status or immigration records.
- Require you to follow city or town requirements outside the school system, such as completing a census, survey, or other forms.
- Impose other requirements that make it harder for you to enroll your child because of immigration status.

If you aren't able to provide a document requested by the school district, you can offer to provide other documents that show your child's age or where you live.

If you don't speak English, ask the district for translated documents and to provide an interpreter.

If your child is homeless, your child must be allowed to enroll in school immediately. If you are sharing housing with others due to economic hardship, you are considered homeless and the district must immediately enroll your child, with or without documents. This means, for example, that the school district cannot require certain documents such as a lease if you don't have one because you are sharing housing. The district should first enroll your child and then help you to find other ways to show that you live in the district.

If you believe your school district is preventing you from enrolling your child in school based on immigration status or for other discriminatory reasons, you may:

- Contact the Civil Rights Division of the Office of the Attorney General at 617-963-2917 or file a Civil Rights Complaint at https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-civil-rights-complaint
- File a complaint with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System at https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/intake/default.html

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Executive Office of Education
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of the Attorney General