

Protections for Immigrant Students in Washington Public Schools: What Families Need to Know



Right to Safety

Your Child Has the Right to Attend School

- All children living in the U.S. can attend public school regardless of immigration status.¹
- Washington schools cannot deny enrollment based on immigration or citizenship status.²
- Schools cannot treat families differently when verifying district residency.

Schools Will Not Ask for Immigration Documents

- Families are not required to provide immigration documents.
- Social Security numbers are not required, and refusing to provide one cannot impact enrollment.³
- Schools must offer alternative ways to verify a student's age.

Your Information Is Private

- Schools do not share student information with immigration authorities unless required by a valid court order.⁴
- Families are notified before information is shared in nearly all cases.⁵

Schools Are Safe Spaces

- Schools cannot participate in immigration enforcement against students, staff, or families.⁶

¹ [Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 \(1982\)](#).

² [RCW 49.60.010](#).

³ [Privacy Act of 1974, as amended 5 USC § 552a](#).

⁴ [RCW 28A.600.475](#).

⁵ [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).

⁶ See p.6-9 of the AGO's guidance, [Keep Washington Working Act: Guidance, Model Policies, and Best Practices for Public Schools](#) and [RCW 43.10.310](#).



- If immigration officers come to a school, staff must request a judicial warrant and families will be notified.



Right to Services

Free School Meals Are Available

- Immigration status does not affect eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.⁷
- Many Washington schools now offer meals at no cost to all students.

Health Services

- Undocumented children qualify for [Apple Health for Kids](#).
- Schools can help families access clinics serving all students regardless of status.
- Schools may host vaccination clinics that do not require insurance.

Special Education Services

- Students are eligible for special education regardless of immigration status.
- Schools must communicate with families in their preferred language about special education testing and services.⁸



Right to Supports

Attendance & Safety Concerns

- Absences due to immigration-related fear or safety concerns must be excused.⁹
- Schools may use trusted staff to connect with families and offer support.

Language Access

- Schools must provide interpreters and translated materials at no cost.¹⁰
- Requesting language support cannot be used to determine immigration status.

College & Financial Aid

- Undocumented students may apply for financial aid for college using the [Washington Application for State Financial Aid \(WASFA\)](#).

⁷ See OSPI News Release: [Complete the Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefit Application to Ensure Student Access to School Meals](#).

⁸ [WAC 392-172A-05010](#); [WAC 392-172A-05015](#).

⁹ [WAC 392-401-020\(j\)](#).

¹⁰ [RCW 28A.183.040](#).

- A parent's immigration status does not affect federal aid eligibility for the student.¹¹

¹¹ See U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid: [Eligibility for Non-U.S. Citizens](#).