



Orientation to Washington Schools:

A Guide for Newcomer Families

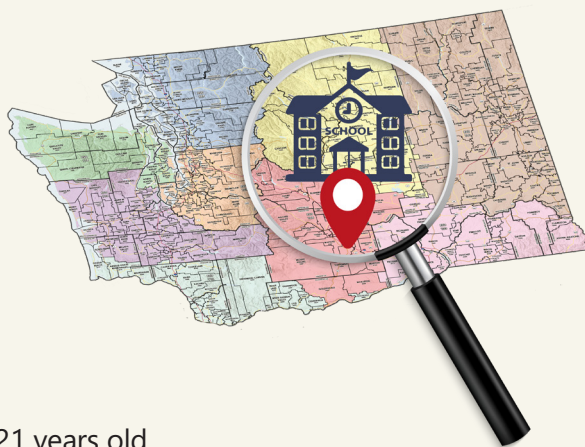
Know your school district and how to find its resources.

A school district is a local organization in charge of the public schools in a specific area, such as a city or group of towns. Washington state makes laws that all schools must follow, but each district has its own rules.

Your home address decides your school district and which school your child will attend. *To find your district, you can look at the map on the [OSPI website](#).*

In Washington, all children have the right to a free public education, regardless of their race, color, national origin, or immigration status.

- Children can start school at age 5.
- The first year of school is called kindergarten, followed by grades 1 through 12.
- By law, children ages 8 to 18 must attend school.
- Students may stay in school until they graduate or turn 21 years old.





How to Enroll

Most families sign up for school online. Visit the district's website to create an account.

Type your address into the website to find your child's school. You will answer questions about your address, home language, your child's health, and their past schooling.

If you need help signing up, bring your documents to your child's school or the district office.

Ask the person at the front desk for help. If you do not speak English, you have the right to a free interpreter. Say: "I speak Dari. I need an interpreter" or "I speak Ukrainian. I need an interpreter."

You are not required to share your immigration status or a Social Security number. If school staff say it is required, you can make a complaint to the school district.



Once your child is signed up, the school will let you know when classes start and what supplies your child needs.

During this process, you will need three documents:

1.

Proof of your address, such as a lease or a utility bill.



2.

Medical papers showing your child's vaccine records.



3.

Proof of your child's age—a birth certificate, a passport, or any official paper with their birth date.



In Washington, many students ride a yellow school bus. Learn about your school's transportation options.

If you live less than 1 mile from your child's school, you live in a "walk area" and your child cannot ride the bus.

If your child will ride the bus, the school will give you information about the bus number, pick-up and drop-off locations, and times. An adult must walk young children to and from the bus stop.

If you do not get information about transportation, go to the school's main office and say, "I need help with the school bus."



Transportation

Attendance



Your child must attend school every day.

In Washington, all children between ages 8 and 18 must attend school full-time. Schools accept certain reasons for missing school, such as being sick, a doctor's appointment, or family emergencies. If your child will be absent, call or message the school office as soon as possible.

If you have trouble getting your child to school, talk to the school staff. Schools in Washington are here to help your family.

Resources

- Seattle Public Schools: [Transportation](#)
- Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO): [Attendance and Truancy](#); [Complaints and Concerns About Discrimination](#); [Maps & Applications](#); [School Enrollment](#)
- Washington State Law (RCW 28A.225): [Compulsory School Attendance and Admission](#)

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