



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Requesting School Transfers

This tip sheet explains how to ask for school transfers for students in New York City. Transfer options may be limited. Families will have more choices if they apply to schools through the regular application process. For more tips on school choice, check out [AFC's enrollment tip sheets and resources](#).

When can I ask for a transfer?

You can find the NYC Department of Education's (DOE's) transfer rules in [Chancellor's Regulation A-101](#). There are safety, medical, guidance, travel hardship, childcare hardship, and sibling transfers. Each type of transfer has its own rules. Learn more about the different types of transfers on the [DOE's website](#) and continue reading below.

What do I need to get a transfer?

SAFETY TRANSFERS are for students who have been assaulted or harassed at or near school or who will not be safe if they stay at their school. [Chancellor's Regulation A-449](#) describes the safety transfer process. Your child's school can request a safety transfer from a [Family Welcome Center](#), or you can go directly to a Family Welcome Center yourself.

To get a safety transfer, you must be able to point to a specific incident that shows why staying at the current school is unsafe for your child. Then, bring documents related to the incident to the school or Family Welcome Center. This paperwork could include hospital records, a police report, court papers, an occurrence report from the school, printouts of text messages, screenshots from social media, or a letter supporting the transfer. If you cannot meet the criteria for a safety transfer, your child may qualify for another transfer, like a guidance transfer.

MEDICAL TRANSFERS are for students who need a new school because of a medical condition. Parents can also ask for a medical transfer when they have a medical condition or disability that keeps them from accessing their child's school. Medical transfers require a letter from a healthcare provider, on their letterhead, which explains the medical condition and why a transfer is necessary. The DOE may call the provider to get more information.

GUIDANCE TRANSFERS are for students who are struggling academically or socially. Go to a Family Welcome Center to ask for a guidance transfer if you think a new school may help your child. Your child's school cannot make the request for you. The Superintendent will decide whether to approve the transfer.

TRAVEL HARDSHIP TRANSFERS are for high school students who live more than 75 minutes from school by public transportation. To ask for a transfer, bring proof of your address to the Family Welcome Center.

CHILDCARE HARDSHIP TRANSFERS are for students in grades K-5 whose school is too far from their parent’s job, babysitter, or daycare. You will need a note from your job or childcare provider that explains the hardship.

SIBLING TRANSFERS are for students in grades K-5 whose sibling goes to a different school.

How to request a transfer

- STEP 1:** Think about which type of transfer is best for your child. For example, a student may want to transfer for safety reasons, but a medical transfer may be easier to get if the student’s therapist supports it. For older students, also consider other types of high schools, like transfer schools and YABCs. These programs may be a better fit for your child than a traditional high school. Find more tips on programs for older students in [Know Your Options: Alternatives for Middle and High School Students](#), and find other helpful [tip sheets and resources](#) for older students on Advocates for Children’s website.
- STEP 2:** Talk to your child’s guidance counselor about the transfer and set up a meeting. Chancellor’s Regulation A-101 requires schools to meet with any family asking for a transfer. At the meeting, your child should say why they want a transfer. Make sure to get copies of all the paperwork you may need.
- STEP 3:** Depending on the type of transfer, the school must send any required paperwork to the Family Welcome Center. Staff there will decide to approve or deny the transfer.
- STEP 4:** Follow up with the Family Welcome Center. You can bring copies of the transfer paperwork to the Family Welcome Center yourself if the school is not helping you or you just want to follow up.

Who can grant a transfer?

The Office of Student Enrollment, not the school, decides whether students get a transfer. They base their decision on the student’s needs and space in other schools. For safety transfers where the student is the victim of a “violent criminal offense,” parents must be informed within 48 hours that their child has the right to transfer schools. For all other safety transfers, the Enrollment office has one week to grant or deny the transfer after receiving all the necessary paperwork.

IMPORTANT: Students do not get to pick which school they will transfer to, but they can tell the Family Welcome Center which schools they would like. If a transfer is approved, the Family Welcome Center will offer the student a new school. They can accept or reject it.

Still have more questions?

Call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline:

Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm • 1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

www.advocatesforchildren.org

This tip sheet is not legal advice. It summarizes existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of Advocates for Children. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.