

# SoS NEWS



## WELCOME TO THE FIRST CoS UK NEWSLETTER

### THE SoS NEWS

As the numbers of schools involved with the Schools of Sanctuary stream has expanded, we felt it was time to create a regular round-up of information, ideas and inspiration from across the CoS UK network to support schools. Please share this with your school communities and networks. We'll be producing newsletters on a bi-monthly basis, and welcome suggestions for topics & stories. Click to subscribe to our [SoS newsletter](#) and stay up to date with news, views and events, take part in competitions and discover all kinds of useful resources to use in school. You can also sign up to the wider [CoS UK newsletter here](#) to follow events and activities across the sanctuary movement.



### NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

In each newsletter we will feature some of the amazing work being done in one of our incredible schools. This time it is the turn of [Avenue Junior School in Norwich](#). We picked this school to highlight in this edition because they have done so many great things to raise awareness of the issues of refugees and asylum seekers including

- Naming each class after a displaced person and learning about them...I really love this idea!
- Working with BBC voices to make a short documentary about their school's journey to become a School of Sanctuary and
- Producing a great video after working on a poem by the great Benjamin Zephaniah "[We Refugees](#)"

**If you would like your school to be showcased in our newsletter please get in touch and let us know what you have been up to. Send us some photos or links to any web pages and share your good work with everyone involved with Schools of Sanctuary [ruth@uk.cityofsanctuary.org](mailto:ruth@uk.cityofsanctuary.org)**

**Want to see more of the amazing work being done in other schools - check out our case studies available [here](#)**

## ANTI-RACISM PLEDGE FOR SCHOOLS

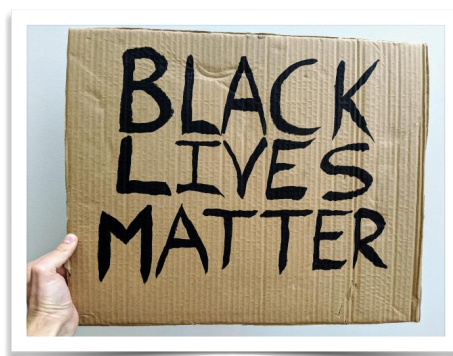
Shout out to [Norwich Schools of Sanctuary](#) who launched an [open letter](#) to gain support for their anti-racism pledge for schools in their area. As educators it is our responsibility to make a conscious effort to critique and decolonise our own teaching and curriculum, but this is not enough. We need to reflect harder on how and what we teach and ensure we are helping to change the educational culture for future generations.

**Maybe your local area can follow their lead?**

## **BLM AND RACIAL LITERACY**

Events of this summer exposed the reality of racism in the UK and around the world. Every institution in our society is impacted by racism and as such our education system is not exempt. As Schools of Sanctuary we have a responsibility to be actively anti-racist, address racial literacy and ensure all our students, staff, parents and governors are safe, valued and able to reach their full potential.

Check out some really useful resources [here](#)



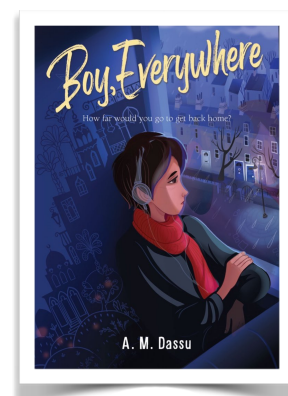
**City of Sanctuary stands  
in solidarity with  
Black Lives Matter.**

## **BOOK CORNER**

**A review of "Boy, Everywhere", by A M Dassu.**

**By Ruth Sinhal**

I first met A.M Dassu when she visited my class during Refugee Week 2016 to run a writers workshop and share her novel with us. I am honoured to say we were among the first to meet Sami. Fast forward nearly 5 years and her debut novel is now published! **And as the reviews below show, "Boy, Everywhere" should be in schools everywhere!**



Sami is such a relatable character, the voice is so perfect, and seeing their journey from his perspective really brings to life anything a child reading might have heard about refugees. I had my heart in my throat for so much of the story, but I also smiled. A brilliantly crafted debut. [Caroline Fielding](#)  
It's like she was amongst us. It's like she's been living here. She knows how people think and react.

[Mohammad Ghabash](#)

Thank you for writing this... 'Boy, Everywhere' challenges stereotypes and shows the reality of Syrians before the war. I loved the characters, they were very realistic and so convincing, the friendships so real.

[Nadine Kaadan](#)

Sami's story is heartbreaking and will open people's eyes and hearts to the plight of refugees everywhere. In a world of 'othering' this book does the opposite - it shows clearly that 'they' are also 'us'. [Catherine Emmett](#)

Sami, an ordinary 13-year-old boy, who loves football, his PlayStation and his iPad, lives happily in Damascus. As the war in Syria creeps closer, Sami and his family have to leave their home, their friends and their beloved Tete (grandmother) - not just to move to another town but to start a long and perilous journey to the safety of the other side of the world - to England. The journey, and therefore the story, are not for the fainthearted - we vividly share Sami's upset, anger and fear throughout every page. The portrait drawn of the family in such a stressed and frightening situation has the reader on the edge of their seat and pulling at our hearts all the way through. Written with a deep understanding and meticulous research into similar journeys this is a book that will not leave you for a very long time.

**CHECK OUT MORE RECOMMENDED BOOKS [here](#)**

## **COMPETITION TIME :** **POETRY ON THE THEME OF** **“WELCOME”.**

**Here is your chance to show off the talent in your school!**

**We are launching a poetry competition.** Poems on the theme of **“Welcome”** should be emailed to **[ruth@uk.cityofsanctuary.org](mailto:ruth@uk.cityofsanctuary.org)**

There are four age categories :

- 7 years old and under
- 8 to 11 years old
- 12 to 15 years old
- 16 to 18 years old

Please ensure all entries are clearly labelled with your name, age and school. There will be one winner chosen from each age category.

**Closing date:**  
**November 20th 2020**

**Winners will have their poems printed in the next edition.**

**Maybe this famous poem will give some inspiration.**



## **USEFUL SCHOOL RESOURCES**

We have links to many wonderful resources on our website - in each newsletter we will highlight some most useful for schools.

In this edition we would like to signpost you to the wonderful **FREE RESOURCES** available from **My Bright Kite**.



They have lots of useful videos and teaching activities including their “Lessons of Hope”, Refugee Awareness Resource Pack which includes a Lesson Plan, Student Worksheet and Evaluation, Lessons of Hope Powerpoint and a link to a video interview with Gulwali Passarlay.

### **REFUGEES by Brian Bilston**

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

**(now read from bottom to top)**



## WORLD NEWS

### Moria Camp Destroyed by Fire.



The whole world is impacted by COVID-19, but people in Moria camp on Lesbos, already living in intolerable conditions, faced unbearable distress as the virus started to spread through the overcrowded camp. Without a public healthcare plan, without a COVID-19 unit, without basic sanitation, without proper food, people were desperate. The response from the Greek government was to lock up the camp and carry out some testing, confirming more positive cases but providing no secure isolation area to transfer people to. People in the camp, many living there for years had already reached their limits when fire broke out destroying the camp and leaving around 13,00 people in an intolerable situation. A new camp with a capacity of 3,000 has been built. Authorities say none of the camp's residents – except for 406 children – will be allowed to leave Lesbos. They were flown to the Greek mainland and several European countries have agreed to offer sanctuary to some.

Labour Peer Lord Alf Dubs has written to Home Secretary Priti Patel, urging her to rapidly organise the transfer of children to safety in the UK. Lord Dubs said "The issue of safe and legal route for child refugees has always had cross-party support and after this horrendous fire, the government cannot keep dodging the issue by insisting that children are safe in Europe and don't need sanctuary here. This tragedy shows beyond doubt that children are not safe, and the UK must step up and offer some sanctuary. Whether in a camp on the Greek island, or in northern France, children are at extreme risk and need our help now. Failing to act would be an outrage."

The UK government has consistently resisted calls for to take children seeking sanctuary from Greece but following the fire opposition parties are adding their voices to Lord Dubs' demands for action, with Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, and politicians from the SNP, Liberal Democrats and Greens calling for the UK to step up. Voting on amendments to The Immigration Bill will be taking place in the next few days and updates can be found [here](#)

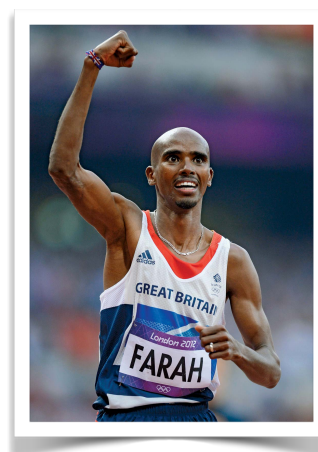
**Many charities are working tirelessly to help the people of Moria Camp - if you wish to help why not get in touch with your local CoS or other local refugee charities or make a donation to this campaign by [Help Refugees](#)  
And more ways to help can be found [here](#)**



## FAMOUS REFUGEES WHO HAVE SETTLED IN THE UK.

### Mo Farah – Olympic Champion

Mo Farah (Mohamed) came to Britain from Somalia aged eight, in 1991, to join his father, a UK citizen born in Britain. He was born in Somalia, but lived in neighbouring Djibouti. Though he didn't need to claim asylum, he came to escape war in the region. Somalia had a historic link with Britain as part of the British Empire from the late nineteenth century. Somalis worked as seamen (lascars) in British shipping, and small communities of seamen and merchants settled in port towns, like Cardiff, Liverpool and London in the early 1900's. Many Somalis fought in the First World War and were recruited by the Royal Navy in the Second World War, settling in Britain afterwards. Some Somalis moved to Sheffield to work in the steel industry.



**Mo Farah arrived here with three English phrases, - 'excuse me', 'Where is the toilet?' And 'c'mon then'. Other than football, he didn't do very well at school, and was still struggling with English, when at the age of 14 his exceptional athleticism was noticed and nurtured by Alan Watkinson, his PE teacher, and the rest, as they say, is history.**

### CPD OPPORTUNITIES

There are some exciting CPD opportunities available from various organisations:

**Future Learn** are offering training related to working with asylum seeker/refugee children and families.

**ASAP** is offering FREE eLearning modules:

**Introduction to Asylum Support** This is a self-study course that allows you the freedom to learn when and where you want. ASAP have a limited number of free places. You have access to the course 24/7. You can take the course at your own pace; it should take you approximately 1.5 hours. Your knowledge will be tested at the end of the course and you will receive a **certificate of completion**.

Or for more training and educational support have a look at the **City of Sanctuary** page.

### SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS



**Find Schools of Sanctuary on Facebook**

**Find City of Sanctuary on Facebook and Twitter**

Why not search these hashtags to discover what is going on and how to get involved in your local area or beyond.

**#refugeeswelcome**

**#FamiliesTogether**

**#saferoutes**

## AND FINALLY SOME REALLY USEFUL DEFINITIONS

### Refugee

The definition of a refugee according to The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is:

"A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

In the UK, a person becomes a refugee when government agrees that an individual meets the definition in the Refugee Convention they will 'recognise' that person as a refugee and issue them with refugee status documentation. Usually refugees in the UK are given 5 years' leave to remain as a refugee. They must then apply for further leave, although their status as a refugee is not limited to 5 years

### Asylum Seeker

Someone who has applied for asylum under the 1951 **UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** & is awaiting a decision on this outcome [including those who are at different appeal stages]. This usually takes at least six months, though it can take years for someone to convince the Home Office they need sanctuary. While an asylum seeker is waiting they are given accommodation on a 'no choice' basis in a shared house, and about £40 a week for food, clothes & other expenses.

Maybe set this as a lesson starter?

**That is just £5.70 a day - Could you wash, dress and feed yourself for £5.70 a day?**



### Sanctuary

**The definition of a sanctuary is a place of refuge or rest, a place where you can feel at peace.**

### Preferred Terminology

**Within CoS UK we mainly use the term "people seeking sanctuary" to refer to refugees or asylum seekers or others forced to migrate from any background. This is to combat the dehumanising rhetoric which can occur when referring to people by their immigration status.**

## THE TRUTH ABOUT REFUGEES

**At least 79.5 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them are nearly 26 million refugees, around half of whom are under the age of 18.**

**The UK is home to less than 1% of the worlds refugees, forcibly displaced across the world.**

**There were 32,423 asylum applications made in the UK in the year ending June 2020, similar to the previous year. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic saw the number of asylum applications made during April-June 2020 fall by 40% compared to 2019 suggesting that many people struggled to access the UK asylum system as a result of restrictions introduced due to Covid-19.**

**In year ending June 2020, the top five nationalities of people seeking asylum were Iran, Albania, Iraq, Eritrea and Pakistan.**