The Schools of Sanctuary Newsletter is released at the start of every term.

Sign up to receive inspiring examples of school practice and activities, upcoming events and CPD opportunities, updates on the latest developments in the refugee sector, book recommendations, and plenty more, straight to your inbox three times a year.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

2021/22: An INSPIRING Year of Growth

The last school year was unprecedented for Schools of Sanctuary with a huge uptick in interest from schools across the country, along with many impressive acts of solidarity and more innovative learning activities taking place in schools that are either awarded or working towards recognition.

We started the year with 295 awarded or reaccredited schools and 129 schools working towards the award. One year on, we have 355 awarded and reaccredited schools and a mind-boggling over 300 schools having signed the pledge and working towards the award.

The schools’ network has also grown geographically, with Local Leads of Schools of Sanctuary in 35 local areas of the UK last year with the Schools of Sanctuary programme being actively delivered in over 55 local areas now. Even more excitingly, in the last school year we recognised our very first School of Sanctuary in Scotland meaning that all four nations are now represented in our Schools of Sanctuary network.

We’ve also been more impressed than ever by schools’ efforts to be places of inclusion and belonging and the innovative ways schools have worked to meet the award criteria. From Dene Academy’s efforts to ensure sanctuary themes were represented in every subject within the curriculum across all year groups, to Richmond Park’s (Carmarthenshire) Cymuned Croeso (Welcome Committee) making sure students’ voices were heard at every turn and students had opportunities to take ownership of sanctuary efforts, schools have taken efforts to really reflect on the most comprehensive approach they can take to meeting the award criteria.

A display at Wood Ley Primary School, Suffolk

Birmingham schools welcome Little Amal to the city
A Day of Welcome: Bigger and Better than EVER

A Day of Welcome is a day of solidarity and learning in schools, the Friday before Refugee Week that is organised by the Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary Team with support from Anglia Ruskin University. The Day aims to build a culture of welcome and understanding for refugees and asylum seekers. The celebration is designed to support schools and families in marking Refugee Week and to send a clear message that for those in need of sanctuary, our communities are welcoming places.

This year, the Norfolk team planned more than ever before. Not only did the teacher’s guide and toolkit feature more activities, lesson plans and resources (divided by key stage and theme!) than in previous years, but the fantastic team behind it had organised a series of interactive webcasts with authors and poets Michael Rosen and Miriam Halahmy.

In the online sessions, involving over 270 schools and a whopping 8,000 children, the sanctuary stars read from their work and shared their own connections to migration.

A Day of Welcome will return in 2023 - make sure to keep an eye open in the summer edition’s newsletter to sign up to everything that’s planned.

An INSPIRING Year of Growth continued....

In the past year, the Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary network have mobilised collaboratively to campaign for more compassionate approaches to people seeking safety. Children have been empowered to articulate what they know about the experiences of people seeking safety and why they think refugees should be treated with kindness and not cruelty. Pupils have met with local press, other schools and their MPs and councillors to share their support for welcome. In one particularly memorable moment, the letters of students at St Dunstan’s Primary Schools to their local MP were read out in the House of Commons!

In other places, we’ve been inspired by the ways in which schools have supported people seeking sanctuary in meaningful ways. From writing welcome letters and sending care packages to those in contingency hotels, to opening school-based food banks run for and by the wider school community, to offering work placement opportunities in school to those from sanctuary seeking backgrounds: there are so many ways that schools can stand in solidarity with people seeking safety in addition to, and beyond fundraising and donations.

With all that we’ve seen in the past year, we’re so excited to see how the schools in our network seek to build welcome in the coming year. As and when your school develops a particularly innovative way of supporting people seeking sanctuary, please let us know so we can share in the next newsletter!
The Travelling Suitcase in the Wirral

In the Wirral, schools came together with the support of the Wirral Deen Centre to participate in the journey of the travelling suitcase. The suitcase - filled with books on sanctuary themes and resources for learning activities - were passed between 30 schools to help stimulate focused learning and support for people seeking safety.

As a result of the project, all schools contributed welcome handkerchiefs that will soon be sewn together in a banner of welcome to be displayed at the local refugee organisation, whilst many students also wrote letters of welcome, sharing their favourite things about the local area - including (naturally!) visits to McDonalds.

Learn more about the project on our website.

Suffolk School Spreads Welcome in Stowmarket

Wood Ley Primary School is proud of being a place of welcome and awareness - and wants everyone in their town to be one too!

In the last weeks of the school year, students made posters of welcome for people seeking safety and then asked local businesses if they could display them in their windows.

Not only does this help create a visible show of solidarity for those seeking sanctuary in the local community, but helps to engage others in the local area in building a culture of welcome beyond the school gates.

Well done Wood Ley!

You can read more about Wood Ley’s support for people seeking sanctuary on our website.

Celebrating Schools of Sanctuary Award with Local MP

To celebrate being recognised as the latest School of Sanctuary in Coventry, Earlsdon Primary invited in their local MP, local refugee support organisation and other members of the community to celebrate with them.

This was a fantastic opportunity to share what they had learnt and encourage key members of their community to also show their support for people seeking safety. Zarah Sultana MP said ‘It’s inspiring that Coventry’s youngest citizens are upholding our city’s best traditions’.

Once awarded, we encourage schools to help students to write letters to local dignitaries inviting them in to learn more about why their school is a School of Sanctuary, what they have learnt and how they feel people seeking sanctuary should be treated. This is an important ways students can develop as active citizens and future leaders!
Chester Schools' Poetry Anthology

This summer, over 60 schools in Cheshire took part in the 'No Outsiders Poetry Project 2022' in which pupils participate in a bespoke poetry unit of work called 'A Recipe for a New Beginning' which was kindly written by Allison Riley and the team at The Literacy Company.

The unit focused on the experiences of refugees and how local communities can make sure to offer the warmest of welcomes to all people seeking safety with them.

Inspired by the example, students from the various participating schools contributed to the anthology which was compiled and is now available to buy, with all money raised going to support the local refugee support organisation.

Have a look below for a wonderful example from Tilly at Brereton CE Primary School.

A Recipe for a New Beginning

Cook up some compassion
Add a dash of friendship
Whisk up some love
Sprinkle gently with some support
Finish with a welcoming smile.

Spread a drop of belonging
Stir in some kindness
Slice out unfriendliness
Slip in a smile
Spoon in a dash of love.

Blend in some education
Twist with a couple of books
Scatter with a splash of school
Drop in some joy.

Tilly - Brereton CE Primary School

Fill the Sky with Hope: 23rd September

This September, with the return of parliament and the start of a new government, join organisations and groups across the country to call out the cruel Rwanda plan.

Instead, let’s ‘Fill The Skies With Hope’ to stop the flights. With colleagues and students, make origami orange heart-shaped paper airplanes and write how you feel people seeking safety should be treated instead.

On the 23rd September, come together to make the airplanes, post or deliver them to your MP, share on social media or fly them in a public place to get more people asking what you’re doing and why, and see if they will also get involved.

Learn how to make the airplane here. Make sure to take photos as students are making, flying and delivering them, sharing on social media and tagging in @SchsOfSanctuary and @RefugeeTogether.

Positive Schools’ Media Stories

Over the past year, we’ve had wonderful feedback from local groups, partners and local authorities about how inspiring the Schools of Sanctuary network has been with your efforts to support newly arrived children and build compassionate communities.

Schools can play a HUGE role in leading a culture change and sharing positive stories from schools and about children’s efforts can engage those otherwise not interested in refugee issues. So next time you hold a fundraiser, lead a welcoming activity, empower your students’ voices and create a creative way of supporting new arrivals and their families reach out to you local press to celebrate your efforts - and make sure to share the piece with us!
Policy Development: Clarity over FSM & Other Eligible Opportunities and Funding

In the last term we were delighted to hear the news that Free School Meals were being permanently extended to more children in need including those affected by No Recourse to Public Funds.

Nonetheless, this has caused queries about how to make sure every child eligible receives this support. If you have questions regarding children affected by NRPF, we encourage you to read our post on the website about supporting children affected by NRPF and look at the Children’s Society’s guidance and resources.

In terms of children seeking asylum, when a person/family enters the UK seeking asylum and requests support they will be placed on Section 98 Emergency Provision which seeks to prevent them being hungry and destitute. At this point in time they will have a PORT number but no NASS number. This will be given to them once their application has been processed further and they move on to Section 95 support. At this point they will have a NASS number and their claim will progress further. If their asylum claim is refused they will move to Section 4 and they will have the right to appeal. They will still have a NASS number during this time.

Throughout this whole procedure the child in school should be able to claim Free School Meals, even when they are on Sec. 98 with no NASS number. The family should be able to present a document to the school which shows which part of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act they are receiving support under and this should be scanned and sent to the FSM department at the council and this should be sufficient to provide them with FSM.

For refugees who have settled status, their parents should be in work or able to claim Universal Credit and are therefore able to claim through their National Insurance number. All Ukrainian families are entitled to claim Free School Meals as they are immediately able to claim for Universal Credit. They just have to register for Universal Credit, get their National Insurance number and they can then put the NI number of the form.

We're conscious that the differing eligibilities and paperwork is getting increasingly confusing, with funding for schools tighter than ever - and so we’ve made it as easy as possible for you. Have a look at our brand new funding page on our website for further information.

Free Sleep Packs for Separated Children

The Separated Child Foundation offers practical, emotional and social support to separated children and young people (sometimes referred to as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children [UASC]) in Britain up to the age of 21.

One of the main projects is the creation of sleep packs, which are usually given out some weeks or months after arrival. These packs each contain a nightshirt, a plug-in night light, a lavender bag, an eye mask, ear plugs, tissues, a stress ball and a specially created ‘Sweet Dreams’ card.

Sleep packs are proving successful in helping separated children with disrupted sleep patterns (often in addition to post-traumatic stress disorder) as they try to adjust to their new lives and homes.

Sleep packs are available free of charge from The Separated Child Foundation although distribution partners are asked to cover the cost of postage / delivery.

To apply for packs – which must be given to UASC only – please visit The Separated Child Foundation’s website.

Do you have News from Your School?

We are now accepting submissions for the next Schools of Sanctuary newsletter which will be published in January 2023.

We aim to includes stories from schools across the network, highlighting examples of creative ways of learning about immigration and best practice in inclusive practice.

If you think you have something to share, please get in touch with Megan at megan@uk.cityofsanctuary.org by the 1st July.

Submissions should be between 150-300 words in the third person and include some photos (in jpeg).
Welcome to the Network

We’d like to extend a congratulations to the schools that were (re-)awarded as Schools of Sanctuary in the last school term:

Adderley Primary School, Birmingham
Bordesley Village Primary School, Birmingham
Sacred Heart Primary School, Birmingham
St Thomas More Primary School, Birmingham
St Mary’s RC Primary School, Birmingham
St Paul’s RC Primary School, Birmingham
St John Fisher RC Primary, Birmingham
Holy Family RC Primary, Birmingham
St Alban’s RC Primary, Birmingham
St Mary Redcliffe CoE Primary, Bristol (reaccredited)
Fairfield High School, Bristol
Cathedral School, Cardiff
Grangetown Primary, Cardiff
Fitzalan High School, Cardiff
Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff
St Mary the Virgin Primary School, Cardiff
St David’s Primary School, Cardiff
St Monica’s Primary School, Cardiff
Richmond Park School, Carmarthenshire
Earlsdon Primary School, Coventry
Ling Hall Secondary School, Coventry
Dene Academy, Durham
Bourne Primary School, Eastbourne
Lochardil Primary School, Inverness
Lawnwood School, Leeds
John Smeaton Academy, Leeds
Shaftesbury Junior School, Leicester
Academy of St Francis of Assisi, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
St Hugh’s Catholic Primary, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Dovedale Primary, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Our Lady Good Help, Liverpool
LIPA Primary and High School, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Wellesbourne, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Hey Green Primary School, Liverpool
Garston C of E School, Liverpool
Abercromby Nursery, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Pleasant Street Primary School, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Gwladys Street Primary School, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Lawrence Primary School, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
St Clare’s Liverpool (Reaccredited)
St Anne Stanley, Liverpool (Reaccredited)
Surrey Square Primary School, London
Freshfield (Sefton) (Reaccredited)

We are now a network of 355 recognised schools, nurseries and Sixth Forms with a whopping 350+ settings working to be recognised.

Students and Assistant Principal Zira Hanif from John Smeaton Academy celebrate their award.
The threat and reality of detention and deportation are horrifically damaging for the thousands of people who are affected by these needlessly cruel practices, and the spouses, partners and - perhaps most importantly - children who love them. With the announcement of the detention centre at the former barracks in Linton on Ouse (plans since withdrawn), and the so-called 'Rwanda plan' putting detention and deportation at the forefront of everyone’s minds, it’s important to remember the impact on those who are targeted and the subsequent harm to their families.

There is currently no limit on the amount of time a person can be held in immigration detention in the UK. Decisions to detain indefinitely are made by Home Office caseworkers, with no prompt, automatic judicial oversight.

In the year ending September 2021, 21,365 people entered immigration detention in the UK, 24% higher than the previous year. At the end of September 2021 there were 1,410 people in immigration detention. Increasingly, prisons are being used to hold people under immigration powers and 648 people were being detained in this way at the end of September 2021: almost double the number at the same time the previous year. Only 16% of those leaving detention in this period were removed from the UK, with the rest released into the community, showing that there is little reason to deprive them of dignity in detention at all. People are routinely detained for months and sometimes years without a time limit on how long they can be detained - or even be re-detained indefinitely.

Whilst there are many times someone could be at risk of immigration detention, often this happens on entry to the UK, when a visa or leave to remain has expired, or when an application has been refused and you don’t have the right to appeal that refusal. Shockingly, children can also be detained with their families.

Equally, people might be deported if they do not have any leave to remain or if their asylum or immigration application has been refused. Currently, UK deportation law also requires that any person with nationality of another country, who serves a prison sentence of 12 months or longer, will automatically be targeted for deportation.
The law doesn’t care if they have children and families here. It doesn’t care if they’ve lived here since they were kids themselves. This law makes people into single parents, depriving children of a parent and leaving those left behind financially and socially disadvantaged, with no additional support from the Government.

Families for Justice is a group of women - mums, wives, partner’s daughters - living at the sharp end of the UK’s immigration policies. ‘We’ve answered the phone at three AM to our partner, saying that the Home Office has taken him to the plane and he’s calling to say goodbye. We’ve rushed across the country so our kids can have twenty minutes to say goodbye to their dad in the visitor’s room of a detention centre. We’ve spent sleepless nights worrying about our sons, waiting for the sound of an immigration officer knocking on the door - or even coming through the window - to take them away. We refuse to accept this.’

As the vitally important report of Families for Justice demonstrates [Separated Families: Unjust Deportations and the Families Left Behind], the deportation of a parent has a terrible impact on their families and children.

“To not have him here to say this (‘you can do it’ during GCSEs) took a toll on my daughter and she suffered from panic attacks during that time. There is no consideration for the impact of a child. You just can’t raise your children via FaceTime.”

Today, the sad reality is that too many families and children are affected by the practices of detention and deportation and are needlessly separated from their parents. It is important that schools carefully think of ways to support - and not stigmatise - children and families who are affected by these policies, and remember that whilst a parent may now be living far away and not able to visit school, they remain actively interested in their child’s life.

With the threat of deportation and detention ever present, and perhaps even more so amidst the plan to detain and deport people who are seeking protection to Rwanda. Why not search for the nearest detention centre to you and see ways to support the groups campaigning against detention and offering aid to those affected by it, such as the ‘No to Hassockfield Campaign’ in Durham, ‘Oxford against Immigration Detention’, ‘End Deportations Belfast’, ‘SAMPHERE’ in Dover, ‘AVID’ ‘Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees’ and ‘Detention Action’. Alternatively call on airline bosses to stop carrying out unjust deportations on behalf of the government.

CPD Opportunities

NB: We have recently updated our website with a page specifically listing ongoing opportunities for school staff to develop their professional expertise in meeting the needs of sanctuary-seeking students.

Leading a Whole-School Strategy for EAL (Online course from the Bell Foundation on the 13th Sept.)
Supporting New Arrivals who are New to English (Online course from the Bell Foundation on 20th Sept.)
Supporting Refugee Students in School (Free webinar from Refugee Education UK run on 26th September, 20th October and 22nd November)
Unconscious Bias - Understanding Diversity and Discrimination (Course from Coram on the 4th Oct)
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (Course from Coram on the 7th Oct)
Therapeutic Interventions: Making the right choices (Course from Coram on the 13th December)
Latest Resources

**Learning Resources**
**No Radio Silence: Human Rights for New Scots - Educational Resource** is based on the film No Radio Silence by Unity Sisters and Govan Hill Baths which looks at the experiences of people seeking sanctuary (particularly women) in Glasgow.

**Welsh language/Wales specific learning resources** - A compilation of lesson plans, classrooms activities, videos and other resources for teaching about migration and sanctuary.

**Other Resources and Opportunities**
**Empathy and Migration Workshop with the British Red Cross** - In this FREE online workshop participants will look at the different reasons people leave home and help students to develop empathy for migrants' motives for moving. They will also learn more about the obstacles migrants face in their new homes.

**The Healing Classrooms Programme** - The free course, delivered by the International Rescue Committee, is now available across England. The online course helps teachers and support staff provide a safe and predictable place for children to learn and cope with the consequences of conflict and displacement. In person workshops are also available upon request. The Training is led by IRC education specialists with extensive experience in the English education system and of working with refugees in Britain and abroad. All sessions will be accompanied by resources, including lesson plans and country specific briefings. For more information please visit - [Healing Classrooms](#).

**Wellbeing and Trauma - Schools of Sanctuary** - A compilation of resources, advice and organisations to help your school support students’ wellbeing and those affected by trauma.

**EAL Strategies, Advice and Resources - Schools of Sanctuary** - A compilation of different resources, advice and organisations to help your school develop and effective EAL policy, developed with thanks to Dominic Brassington (@EALDominicB)

Have you had a look at [our website](#) recently?
Over the summer we’ve worked hard to develop more webpages and better organise the content to help your school develop as a place of sanctuary - have a look and see what’s new.

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**Grant to Promote Whole-School Reading Cultures**

**Bookmark are offering a limited number of grants** to PRIMARY SCHOOLS ONLY to help address the school’s specific literacy needs.
They want to:
1. Support primary schools to establish their whole school reading cultures
2. Ensure children have access to high quality reading materials and environments in their schools
3. Support children to develop positive reading habits and attitudes towards reading
4. Support teachers to develop the skills and knowledge they need to create a buzz around reading and motivate children to read for pleasure

There are two types of grants available:
- Whole School Reading Culture project grant (up to £5,000)
- Whole School Reading Culture teacher CPD grant (up to £500)

The full grant-making policy and application forms can be accessed via this link. Please do have a thorough read of the policy before making your applications to ensure you meet the criteria. Applications accepted until 21 November 2022.
"Rabbit and Bear: Attack of the Snack" by Julian Gough and Jim Field offers a great way to talk with young children about why people would flee their homes, the fear of the unknown and othering/how this contributes to othering.

Rabbit has only heard scary stories about owls so when a tiny burrowing owl ends up in their part of the woods, he assumes the worst. However as the story unfolds, Rabbit learns that this little owl was fleeing the scary owls Rabbit fears too.

This is a playful book that allows adults to talk to children about how to be open, welcoming and non-judgemental of new arrivals, even if they have heard untrue rumours about them before.

"Welcome to Nowhere" is a compilation of stories that Elizabeth Laird, heard while volunteering in camps in Jordan.

Twelve-year-old Omar and his family live in the beautiful and bustling city of Bosra, Syria. Omar doesn’t know much about politics, nor does he care, he just wants to grow up to be a successful entrepreneur. However, when his older brother, Musa, throws his lot in with the student opposition to the government, everything changes. Soon bombs are falling, people are dying, and Omar and his family have no choice but to flee their homes, and after that their country.

Moving through life in Syria, being on the run and then life in a camp, this is a great book to discuss the conflicts occurring around the world and how someone’s life can change unexpectedly. Perfect for older primary and younger secondary readers.

"(B)ordering Britain" by Nadine El-Enany is a great resource for an overview on the immigration policies in the UK, how they were developed and how they have impacted people seeking sanctuary.

This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in unlearning colonial legacies as it outlines how the modern history of immigration and nationality laws is a process of racial exclusion, and reinforces the premise that Britishness = whiteness, arguing that immigration law itself is a means for the continuing assertion of British colonial power.

Not a light read but an excellent book to read in parts and use as reference when trying to make sense of new immigration laws.
The past academic year has seen schools rapidly responding to crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, making sure the thousands of young children seeking sanctuary in the UK are welcomed and appropriately supported in schools.

Whilst some schools have a long tradition of welcoming and supporting students from sanctuary-seeking backgrounds, others will have little recent experience. Our Schools of Sanctuary network is all about making education safe, welcoming and empowering – for everyone.

With sanctuary seeking children entering classrooms in more schools across the UK than ever, the Schools of Sanctuary programme is increasingly being recognised as a useful tool for schools to develop their approaches to meeting the needs of the newest members of their student communities.

We are offering more resources than ever before: newsletters, webinars, policy advice and learning resources, and every day we are getting more enquiries and requests for support. We now support a network of over 360 schools with another 350 schools working towards the award.

This is interest like we’ve never seen before.

We are determined to keep the Schools of Sanctuary resources and awards free and accessible for every school, but we need your support to keep going.

Can your school make a donation or organise fundraising efforts to help us continue to support schools to welcome children seeking sanctuary?

If you can, please chip in to our emergency fundraiser.

Can’t donate? Another way to support us is to shop at the Sanctuary Store for all the tees and totes you need to say it loud, say it clear: “refugees are welcome here!”

Go to the Sanctuary Store
Connect and Engage

Schools of Sanctuary Website

The Schools of Sanctuary website has a wealth of information and resources for those interested in becoming a School of Sanctuary and for those who have already been recognised to continue to learn and embed positive policies and practices. We’re constantly updating so check back regularly for the latest.

Want to know more about a certain topic or in need of a particular resource? Get in touch with Megan at megan@uk.city of sanctuary.org and we will see if we can share or develop something to help you.

Connect with Schools of Sanctuary

Follow us on Facebook and our new Twitter account for the latest news, events, resources and chat...

Connect with City of Sanctuary UK

Follow City of Sanctuary UK on Facebook and Twitter for news across the network and to learn more about working to make the UK a place of welcome, safety and respect.