



The Schools of Sanctuary Award : Guidance for Completing an Application

1.0 Introduction

Schools of Sanctuary is an initiative to celebrate the good practice of schools who foster a culture of welcome and belonging for all, especially asylum seeking and refugee families. Schools of Sanctuary helps and encourages schools to educate the whole school community about the experiences of people who are forcibly displaced and engage with and support people seeking sanctuary in their local communities. The aim is to create a school environment that fosters belonging, safety, respect, awareness and support, regardless of people's background, ethnicity, faith or gender. Schools that are committed to our shared vision of welcome and belonging can apply for an award from the City of Sanctuary movement.

City of Sanctuary recognises that schools vary in their contexts, so there is no expectation that every School of Sanctuary will follow the exact same path to embedding the ethos of welcome to all and achieving an award. This document outlines the principles and minimum criteria required for the award, but we encourage schools to build on these in a way that best reflects their unique situation and to aim for a whole school approach.

This guidance is designed to be read alongside the [Schools Resource Pack](#) and [sanctuary award application](#). In addition, we have developed an [audit or self-assessment tool](#) to aid schools to review how existing practice and provision meets the minimum criteria and identify areas for further development.

2.0 The Application Process

To become a School of Sanctuary, City of Sanctuary UK expects schools to follow a series of processes to Learn, Embed and Share about asylum, refugee and migration issues and meet eight minimum criteria. An overview of the necessary steps includes:

Step 1: First, schools must sign an [Organisation Pledge](#) which affirms their commitment to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome for all in the UK: this is also one of the eight minimum criteria to become a Schools of Sanctuary. You can find more information here: [Sign an Organisation Pledge](#).

Unlike many comparable award schemes, the Schools of Sanctuary award and resources are completely free, but we also ask that schools donate in recognition of the value you see in the award and all the support and resources we offer. Ideally this would be an annual donation to help our



long-term planning. [Donate now.](#)

Step 2: On signing the pledge, you will be contacted to introduce you to your main contact. This will either be a Local Lead who will oversee your school's journey and appraisal process and may be able to offer support and link you with local opportunities and organisations, or your main contact will be someone at City of Sanctuary UK who will provide you with support and advice and offer support meetings. You should bear in mind that most Local Leads and City of Sanctuary UK implement application deadlines for the schools they work with to better manage their time, so you should discuss appropriate times to submit in plenty of time in advance.

Step 3: It is recommended that schools then review and recognise everything they already have in place or done to date to meet the award criteria; it is not compulsory but you might find our [audit](#) tool useful for this. Identify areas for improvement using ideas from the audit tool, the website and newsletter and the [resource pack](#) for inspiration.

Step 4: We advise starting the application process early and collaborating with several staff members. Have a look at the [application form](#) to familiarise yourself with it and then use this document to complete the application concisely and clearly and with reference to the minimum criteria. As you work on your application form you should also compile a folder of supporting 'evidence'.

Step 5: Once ready, you can submit your completed application and supporting evidence to your Schools of Sanctuary Local Lead or main contact. They will then review your application with an appraisal panel, share their feedback and arrange a visit (either in person or virtually depending on current circumstances) to assess your application and hear from staff and students.

3.0 Becoming a School of Sanctuary

3.1 The Core Processes: Learn, Embed & Share

A school can attain an award if they can provide evidence that they have integrated our three core processes:

- **Learn:** learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general, and specifically with regards to the needs of students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds.
- **Embed:** taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and belonging within the school including, but not limited to in school practice,



provision and culture. To take steps to ensure this progress remains sustainable.

- **Share:** sharing your vision, achievements, what you have learned, and good practice with other schools, the local community and beyond. Working in partnership with people, organisations and institutions within the wider community to build a culture of welcome that extends beyond the school gates.

The Schools of Sanctuary criteria have been structured to fit into the three overarching processes of Learn, Embed, and Share, which are used for all sanctuary awards. Please provide evidence of meeting each of the criteria in the relevant section of the award application.

3.2 The Schools of Sanctuary Minimum Criteria

Learn Criteria

Within the learn process, we will be looking for examples of work which signals the commitment of your school to learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary and how we can foster a culture of belonging and solidarity. It is important that the diverse stories, experiences and voices of people seeking sanctuary are centered in learning activities.

To receive a School of Sanctuary award, a school must meet these two 'Learn' minimum criteria:

Criterion 1: Training and education opportunities are provided for school staff & management on refugee, asylum and migration issues.

Within this criterion we want to see how a) all staff and governors have been offered opportunities to develop their own understanding of migration and seeking sanctuary and the Schools of Sanctuary process, and b) relevant training opportunities have been offered to develop staff expertise in best meeting the needs of students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds. This might include training specifically around specific refugee cohorts, English as an Additional Language, trauma-informed practice and wellbeing, anti-racism, unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity and more.

Criterion 2: Evidence of refugee/asylum/migration learning activities are included into school life and at least one example in the curriculum, across the



key stages.

Within this criterion we typically see schools divide learning activities between a) classroom/curricula activities and b) extracurricular activities. In the former, schools will outline when learning about migration or forced migration themes are included in schemes of work within subjects or year groups. In the latter, schools might discuss learning that has taken place in assemblies, registration/form group discussions, school trips or one-off workshops.

Embed Criteria

Embedding means that institutions are taking positive action to implement welcome, safety and belonging throughout the school and across its entire community. City of Sanctuary wants schools to detail how they will ensure a continuation of support for sanctuary beyond the current student and faculty population.

To receive a School of Sanctuary award, a school must meet the following three 'Embed' minimum criteria:

Criterion 3: The School must demonstrate how it has embedded the concept of welcome and inclusion in the school.

This criterion includes both the policies, practices and provision schools adopt to support newly arrived students and how the school recognises and celebrates the way that new arrivals enrich the school community to which everyone belongs. Within this section then, a school might refer to their admissions procedures, buddying programmes, practice related to English as an Additional Language, wellbeing and trauma, multilingualism and diversity and inclusion amongst other themes. This criterion should also show how the school will continue to develop and sustain a culture of welcome beyond the award and ideally, this should be linked to the School's Improvement /Development Plan and made clear in policy documents and staff induction processes.

Criterion 4: Recognition of and participation in the annual Refugee Week or other annual/regular celebratory events which highlight the contribution of people seeking sanctuary and migrants to the UK.

More information about the annual event can be found here: <http://refugeeweek.org.uk>. We see Refugee Week as an opportunity for schools to dive into themes relating to forced displacement in depth, stand in solidarity with those seeking sanctuary and connect with the wider refugee sector and local sanctuary seeking communities. NB. We recognise that not all schools will be able to participate in the annual national Refugee Week which usually takes place during the third week of June, but would encourage all schools to find ways to regularly mark and celebrate the experiences and contributions of sanctuary seekers living in the UK.



Criterion 5: Commitment to supporting age-appropriate active pupil voice on sanctuary and welcome/welcoming activities in the school.

This section is about how students have been given opportunities to advise and lead on sanctuary efforts and also how students have been given opportunities to develop their skills as future leaders and positive changemakers. This could include students leading diversity walks, organising fundraising efforts, delivering assemblies to younger year groups, speaking about sanctuary issues at public events and writing to their MP. For students with sanctuary-seeking backgrounds, it is often helpful to give them a dedicated safe space to lead on welcoming activities, for example some schools have established 'welcoming committees' made up of students who have arrived in school mid-year and who can help advise on what the school can do better. Alternatively you could have 'welcome buddies' who are responsible for caring for new arrivals.

Share Criteria

The third and final process in the City of Sanctuary model is Share. City of Sanctuary will be seeking evidence that the school is seeking to share its commitment with the wider community; reaching parents, local organisations and spreading the word about the school's efforts. Schools can also tap into national (or even international) school networks to spread the ethos within the sector.

To receive a School of Sanctuary award, a school must meet the following three 'Share' minimum criteria:

Criterion 6: A public commitment to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome, including the endorsement of [City of Sanctuary charter](#) which can be done via signing the City of Sanctuary [organisation pledge](#). This pledge should be included on the school's website and in a public space in the school.

Under criterion 6, we expect the school to have signed the supporting organisation pledge, developed a webpage about being a School of Sanctuary and have a public display of sanctuary in school. The school should also have sought to share their intention and journey with the wider school community and parent/carers. Everyone should be able to explain what a School of Sanctuary is and why it is important. NB: Some local City of Sanctuary groups have their own pledge and therefore schools would be encouraged to also sign these pledges if appropriate.

Criterion 7: The school publicly highlights its activities in support of welcome and inclusion.

Within criterion 7, we want to see how the school seeks to extend a culture of welcome beyond the school gates and into the local community. This should include collaboration with



local partners like refugee support organisations where schools can learn from and support them in their efforts but could also relate to working with other organisations/institutions (like libraries, theaters, museums, churches, etc..) to help raise awareness amongst different communities. It might also be engaging with local decision makers and politicians. In the simplest form, this can include social media/website posts, school newsletter updates or attending regional activities or meetings to share the school's efforts with other schools. NB. Once a school has achieved a sanctuary award, we expect schools to include the Schools of Sanctuary logo and a link to the Schools of Sanctuary webpage on their website.

Criterion 8: Commitment to on-going engagement with the Schools of Sanctuary stream.

This criterion is all about supporting and helping to sustain the predominantly grassroots and volunteer nature of the Schools of Sanctuary Stream and wider Sanctuary networks. This may include sharing resources, ideas and achievements via the school's website and social media or the national City of Sanctuary website, and/or with other local/regional schools. It might also be engaging with suggested activities and opportunities shared via the Schools of Sanctuary network. To offer more meaningful support, we would want to see schools working in collaboration with other local schools to share practice and resources and/or mentor one another through the process. We might also ask awarded schools to participate in future appraisals. Ultimately, the most meaningful way to support Schools of Sanctuary is to offer a donation or fundraise for Schools of Sanctuary.

4.0 Filling in the Application

When approaching the application form, we encourage schools to start early and treat it as an ongoing, collaborative process. Many schools find that saving the application form in a shared online drive where multiple staff can access and edit it helps to share responsibility. As and when a staff member leads or attends a training session, or addresses sanctuary themes in the classroom they can simply add to the application form and upload a relevant form of evidence to the same folder.

Evidence might include lesson plans, schemes of work, powerpoints, meeting agendas, photos, students' work, etc: all of which could be uploaded to the shared folder, or hyperlinks to training provider webpages talking about the course, or to school blog, etc.

For example, under criterion 1 you might include something like:

- All staff and governors attended after school training with Local Lead about the global and local migration context, challenges people seeking sanctuary



experience and School of Sanctuary. [see PPT: Training to Staff and Governors]

- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Lead attended [Bell Foundation training](#) for EAL Coordinators in October 22.
- EAL Lead delivered teacher training on EAL pedagogies in the classroom on inset day February 23. [see PPT: EAL pedagogy training]
- Wellbeing and mental health lead attended trauma-informed training with the Anna Freud Centre [see DOC: email registration confirmation] and then cascaded key points to teaching staff in an email notice. [see DOC: email update]. Teacher training planned for the new school year.
- Schools of Sanctuary Lead attended Refugee Education UK Training on [Welcoming Newly Arrived Refugee Students](#).
- The Schools of Sanctuary Lead set-up a staff sanctuary library in the staff room where staff can borrow books on refugee themes, including 'A Lightless Sky' by Gulwali Passarlay. [see photo: Sanctuary Library].

Some Local Leads might ask for your evidence and application to look a little differently and they might be able to provide some support in completing the application so we suggest getting in touch with them in plenty of time in advance to learn more.

4.1 Section Guidance

As you complete the application, here are some suggestions to support you in replying to each of the sections.

Name and type of organisation:	
Town / City you are based in:	
Name / position of lead applicant:	
Job Title of lead applicant:	
Contact (phone no. and email):	
Date of application:	
Name of local City of Sanctuary group if relevant	
Please put an 'X' this box if you are happy for your application to be shared with other organisations applying for sanctuary awards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide a summary of how your organisation engages with people seeking sanctuary: Click or tap here to enter text.	
Link to Website page with information about your commitment to the sanctuary vision	

State your school type (primary, secondary, nursery, SEN, independent, grammar, etc).

You must include a link to a School of Sanctuary landing page on your school website

Q: Please provide a summary of how your school engages with sanctuary seekers.

In this section, briefly summarise your school demographics including whether you have students from sanctuary seeking or migratory backgrounds and, if so, from where. This might include noting student nationalities, or numbers of students with English as an Additional Language or classed as New to English.

If you don't have students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds in your school community, you can also discuss how your school has sought to build relationships with local people seeking sanctuary and/or formed partnerships with any local support organisations or CoS groups?

Using the 3 principles of the sanctuary award, please reflect on how you have achieved these principles attaching evidence to support your answer.	
Learn	<p>1. Training and education opportunities are provided for school staff & management on refugee, <u>asylum</u> and migration issues.</p> <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p> <p>2. Evidence of refugee/asylum/ migration learning activities are incorporated into school life and at least one example in the curriculum, across the key stages.</p> <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
Embed	<p>3. The school must demonstrate how it has embedded the concept of welcome and inclusion in the school.</p> <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>

Q: Using the 3 processes of the sanctuary award, please reflect on how you have achieved these principles attaching evidence to support your answer.

Here we are looking for evidence of your initiatives, projects, policies and progress. Even if something is ongoing, include it as it helps to build a picture of how the school is developing.

We encourage schools to simply briefly bullet-point relevant activities/efforts under each criterion, keeping each point concise

and clear. Please don't also assume that the appraisal team will have knowledge of your school of the UK education sector, as the appraisal team will include someone with lived experience of seeking sanctuary who might not speak English as a first language and someone without background in the education sector (so please explain all acronyms and give context where necessary). See section 4.0 for an example of how this can be clearly formatted

Q: Any other additional supporting evidence

As we typically advise all supporting evidence should be compiled separately, in this section you can simply add supporting quotes and evidence from partners, parents and students. For example:



1) Feedback from others involved

Has feedback from the local community, prospective pupils or the refugee & migrant support sector has been considered? Have there been any changes or actions arising from the activities?

2) Feedback from refugee/migrant involvement

It is always useful to include quotes or comments from an asylum seeker, refugee or other migrant who has engaged with any aspect of the school's endeavors.

Q: Please identify how sanctuary seekers have been involved in helping you achieve these principles.

All applications for a Sanctuary Award are expected to involve people seeking sanctuary, refugees and migrants, in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of activities for each of the principles, where appropriate and possible.

If you have students from sanctuary seeking or migratory backgrounds in the student body how have they, and their parents, been consulted on your initiatives, if appropriate? Is there a mechanism or space in which they feel empowered to give feedback and advice to the school on what you can improve?

If you don't have students from sanctuary seeking or migratory backgrounds, what engagement have you had with local refugee support organisations to see how you can best support them and the communities they serve?

Q: How does your organisation intend to build on your achievements over the next three years in order that your award is renewed?

We want to acknowledge and celebrate institutions which show a commitment to the principles in the long-term and which have a forward-looking approach; receipt of the sanctuary award is just the beginning!

Each award is valid for three years and then a school must go through a re-accreditation process. Use this section of the application form as an opportunity

Any other additional supporting evidence	Click or tap here to enter text.
Please identify how people seeking sanctuary have been involved in helping you achieve these principles	
Click or tap here to enter text.	
How does your organisation intend to build on your achievements over the next 3 years in order that your award is renewed?	
Click or tap here to enter text.	



to share information about your strategic planning and identify 3-5 specific areas for ongoing development. Ideally, we would like to see sanctuary and inclusion built into a school plan.

Questions to ask yourself as you complete this section include: Has your school demonstrated a sustainable commitment to sanctuary in the long-term? Has this effort been embedded in the school plan? How will your school reevaluate and adapt to continue to demonstrate sanctuary, welcome and inclusion? Can you provide evidence that this commitment will continue after the award is granted?

Final note: We encourage all schools to keep their applications to no more than 8 pages maximum. We see this as plenty of space to be able to demonstrate how you meet the minimum criteria.