

Schools of **Sanctuary**



Welcoming Refugees in Our Schools

Helping Families and Children to feel safe

Ensuring that everyone can say "I Belong"



Why its needed

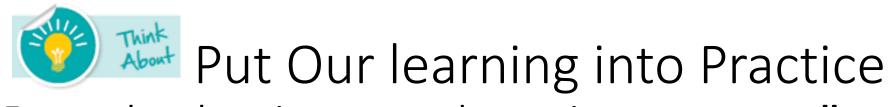
- Families fleeing war are arriving in Ireland every day
- Parents and children are looking for schools
- We want them to feel welcome
- We want to help them to understand how our schools work
- How can our schools get ready?
- How can we help newcomers to feel part of our community?
- How can we make sure the whole school is involved in the welcome?





- It's important for our school communities to understand the special needs of people who have had to flee war
- Ensure that the staff are all briefed and know where to go for additional help
- Ensure that the focus is on the experience and needs of those arriving, not on the politics of what caused them to flee
- Be aware of children and young people who may feel especially vulnerable:
 - Children from Ukrainian and Russian families
 - □ Children from asylum seeker/refugee families
 - Children who have experienced loss or trauma





- Ensure that there is a renewed commitment to treat **all** new arrivals with equal compassion and care, wherever they are from
- Where possible, help children to prepare by asking them to imagine what it's like to arrive in a new school where you know no-one and don't understand the language or culture here. This exercise can be age-adapted
- Be aware of sensitive issues (for example, the presence of children from Russia as well as Ukraine in a classroom)
- Take positive steps to ensure the well-being of the whole school community
- Involve the children in preparing welcoming materials/posters etc in all languages spoken in the school community

There are many excellent resources to help you

- <u>https://schools-ireland.cityofsanctuary.org/</u>
- <u>www.narrellbyrneealguidance.ie</u>
- <u>https://www.twinkl.ie/resource/ukraine-ks2-fact-cards-t-g-1646401680?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_2022</u>
- <u>https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/toolkit/toolkit-for-diversity-in-primary-school</u>
- <u>https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/toolkit/toolkit-for-diversity-in-the-post-primary-school</u>
- National Educational Psychological Service



Emotional needs of Refugees

- Children may be experiencing **trauma**. Know where to go for help
- Children may be experiencing **grief or anxiety** about family members, friends, pets, left behind.
- Children may feel confused, isolated and friendless
- **Parents** will also have many emotional needs
- Help the school community to think positively about small daily actions that can help every teacher, class and member of the school community feels empowered to do something
- Maintain an atmosphere of Calm, Safety, Belonging and Hope





ACTIONS

- How would newly arriving families in our area know that our school is ready to welcome newly arriving refugees?
- Form a welcoming committee with representatives from every class
- Check the need for uniforms, books etc what help is needed?
- EAL set up systems and complement classes with 'language buddies'
- Inviting children to create Art Poetry or Music to express the Welcome







- What kind of welcome information do we have for new families?. Is it clear for people who don't know our Education System? Can it be translated into other languages?
- Is there a 'sanctuary space' in the school?
- Consider activities such as Mindfulness to help children and staff
- Celebrate diversity days to highlight food, culture, languages, music of all nationalities in our school
- A welcoming event for new families (including parents)
- Language learning help for parents

Ideas and Resources to Help

- <u>ROI-Schools-of-Sanctuary-Resource-Pack.pdf (cityofsanctuary.org)</u>
- Mount Sion CBS School of Sanctuary Portfolio (padlet.com)
- <u>Bunscoil Loreto School of Sanctuary Portfolio</u> <u>https://read.bookcreator.com/w4eTSzbEVOMhtfj0AEPVRJOuwTR2/rtIQ3IcQT9WIFrR51Tdd1A</u>
- <u>https://youtu.be/rKagnuVAYDM</u> How to help newly arrived Afghan refugees
- <u>https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School</u> <u>%281%29.pdf</u>
- <u>Forced-to-flee</u> Final.pdf (cityofsanctuary.org) UNICEF Education Pack
- <u>Refugee crisis school resource UNICEF UK</u> In Search of Safety
- Leaving Home: The Stories of Brigit and Sami from Trocaire on Vimeo



Resources

- <u>Teaching refugee and asylum issues Amnesty International</u>
- Also see the Ireland Refugee Education Pack
- <u>UNHCR Teaching about refugees guide-</u> short animations and teacher-led discussion notes
- In Search of Safety- Teaching about the refugee crisis. UNICEF
- UNHCR Teaching materials ages 6-9
- UNHCR Teaching materials ages 9-12

SHARING

- Many schools are in the same situation. Be ready to share your welcoming ideas and resources with other schools and to learn from them
- Get to know the services and voluntary groups in your town or area that are involved in welcoming refugees. Pass this information on to newcomers
- Get to know the FE Colleges and other providers of Adult Education, and link in with them
- Celebrate your welcome as widely as you can







- Welcoming newly arrived refugees is an ongoing need, not just a one-off
- Make sure that everyone involved feels supported and part of a bigger picture
- Ensure that self-care and well-being for all is at the heart of our activities and plans
- Enjoy the adventure and learning of new arrivals and all the talents they are bringing to the school community

Thank you! https://schools-ireland.cityofsanctuary.org/

