



**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?





# LEARN & PREPARE

- 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



## Put Our learning into Practice

- 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

- <https://schools-ireland.cityofsanctuary.org/>
- [www.narrellbyrnealguidance.ie](http://www.narrellbyrnealguidance.ie)
- [https://www.twinkl.ie/resource/ukraine-ks2-fact-cards-t-g-1646401680?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter\\_2022](https://www.twinkl.ie/resource/ukraine-ks2-fact-cards-t-g-1646401680?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_2022)
- <https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/toolkit/toolkit-for-diversity-in-primary-school>
- <https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/toolkit/toolkit-for-diversity-in-the-post-primary-school>
- 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



# ACTIONS

- 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

- [ROI-Schools-of-Sanctuary-Resource-Pack.pdf \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](#)
- [Mount Sion CBS School of Sanctuary Portfolio \(padlet.com\)](#)
- [Bunscoil Loreto School of Sanctuary Portfolio](#)  
<https://read.bookcreator.com/w4eTSzbEVOMhtfj0AEPVRJOuwTR2/rIcQT9WIFrR51Tdd1A>
- <https://youtu.be/rKagNuVAYDM> How to help newly arrived Afghan refugees
- [https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School %281%29.pdf](https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Toolkit%20for%20Diversity%20in%20the%20Primary%20School%281%29.pdf)
- [Forced-to-flee Final.pdf \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](#) UNICEF Education Pack
- [Refugee crisis school resource - UNICEF UK](#) In Search of Safety
- [Leaving Home: The Stories of Brigit and Sami from Trocaire on Vimeo](#)

# Resources

- [Teaching refugee and asylum issues – Amnesty International](#)
- Also see the [Ireland Refugee Education Pack](#)
- [UNHCR Teaching about refugees guide-](#) 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

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- 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





# SUSTAINABILITY

- 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/>