Schools of Sanctuary
An Introduction

City of Sanctuary UK

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A national movement about welcome and belonging

All places in the UK should be welcoming places of safety and belonging for people seeking sanctuary in the UK.

City of Sanctuary UK

What do we do?

120 + Community Groups

Streams of Sanctuary

What are Schools of Sanctuary?

- A network of 370+ schools, nurseries & Sixth Forms
- Raise awareness about forced displacement and migration
- Support newly arrived students and all people seeking sanctuary

Why is Schools of Sanctuary important?

- Global Context
- National Context: Hostile rhetoric & policies, new asylum-dispersal practices
- Education Context: lack of policy & advice

- Guide and celebrate schools/ teachers
- Raise awareness amongst young people & empower them to build community welcome & cohesion
- Ensure students seeking sanctuary are effectively supported & welcomed

How does a school become a School of Sanctuary?

1. LEARN

2. EMBED

3. SHARE

What are the steps for schools?

1. Sign an organisational pledge
2. Connect to a Local Lead (if possible)
3. Review current efforts & develop an action plan
4. Submit your application to your Local Lead
5. Celebrate the award & plan to renew in three years

What support do we offer?

01 The Schools of Sanctuary Website

02 Webinars, Events & Meetings

03 Termly Newsletter

04 One-to-one advice & guidance

05 Mailings list: Sharing opportunities

Case Study

John Smeaton Academy, Leeds

"We feel passionately about ensuring our school is a 'sanctuary' for all young people - especially those who have experienced the trauma of war, the upheaval of moving to a new country and may be experiencing grief[...]. Our students are now more exposed to a multitude of cultures and have responded in such a welcoming and inclusive manner."

- Welcomed 42 students seeking sanctuary over the past year, including 35 Afghan and 3 Ukrainian students.
- Preparing & raising awareness amongst existing staff & students to build compassion & welcome.
- Empowering new students & their parent/carers: buddies, student forums & ambassadors, support for families outside school.

Case Study

Wood Ley Primary School, Suffolk

- Largely White-British rural school
- Thoughtful and nuanced approaches to learning
- Developing staff expertise & relevant policies
- Proactive community outreach & acts of solidarity

"We're not particularly diverse but by showcasing different cultures and ethnicities, our children's outlook has broadened. The impact extends to the wider community too as parents have begun volunteering at the [local refugee support organisation]".

Last questions?

01

How much does it cost?

It's FREE!

02

We've got an award, are we done?

No! The award lasts three years & then there's a reaccreditation process.

03

Can we be a School of Sanctuary if we don't have refugee or asylum-seeking students?

Absolutely!

What's the future for Schools of Sanctuary?

- Growing network of schools
- Developing expertise & school practice
- Building understanding, compassion & welcome
- Improving support for newly arrived children & ALL people seeking sanctuary.

A more welcoming future is possible - schools are at the heart of achieving this

Thank You

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