

Protecting Your Immigrant Students



EDUCATORS
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What to Know and Resources to Share

Why are immigration and schools making headlines?

Previously, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) internal policy was to avoid immigration raids at "sensitive locations" like schools and churches. On January 20th, Acting DHS Secretary Benjamine Huffman revoked that policy under President Trump's directive.

This policy change aligns with other Trump executive orders that attempt to revoke birthright citizenship, "close" the Mexican border, and suspend the refugee admissions program.

What does this mean for schools?



Immigrant students have protections and rights to attend school:

- Based on the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe*, students have equal rights to access education, regardless of immigration status or national origin. **A public school cannot legally require a student's social security number, birth certificate, or proof of immigration status in order to enroll them.** Attempts to do so should be [reported to the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division](#) and the [U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights](#). School districts can, however, require proof that a student and their family reside in the school district's geographical zone.
- Schools should review what documents they request from students, and school police should commit through a signed agreement or official policy not to inquire about immigration status or to detain or report students and family members for purposes of immigration enforcement.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cannot readily access schools:

- Despite the revoking of the "sensitive zone" designation for schools, **ICE agents cannot enter schools or gain access to student records without a warrant signed by a judge.** School administrators can also legally deny access to ICE agents. ICE agents may try to use an "administrative warrant," which schools can legally deny.
- A school may only disclose information to ICE officials with the consent of a parent or student (if 18 or older) or if necessary to comply with a judicial order or a subpoena signed by a judge.

School districts can communicate to families that all students are welcome through [resolutions or letters to families](#), which can offer needed reassurance to parents.

What should I do if ICE agents come to my school?



- **Immediately alert the school principal** and any onsite school safety agents, consistent with the arrival of any unscheduled visitor on school grounds
- **Do not provide information** about students, families, or employees under any circumstances.
- **Do not consent to agents accessing school facilities** without approval from your district's legal counsel.
- **Do not physically impede or obstruct an ICE agent performing their duties.** If the agent does not comply with your directions, contact your school safety department.

Resources to share with families and other educators



- [Fact Sheet: Confronting Discrimination Based on National Origin and Immigration Status \(Versión Español, Versions in Arabic, Chinese, Sikh, Somali, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese\)](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center Guide to Educators and School Support Staff](#)
- [Printable information sheet about Welcoming Immigrant Students | Spanish Version](#)