



# Supporting Immigrant Students and Families Toolkit

Resources and Guidance  
for Schools, Students  
and Families



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**



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# SUPERINTENDENT'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Los Angeles County draws its strength from our extraordinary diversity, with 3.5 million immigrants making up 34% of our population. We are home to families from across the world who enrich our schools and communities with their vibrant cultures, languages and traditions. In these uncertain times, when rhetoric about mass deportations has caused fear and anxiety in our communities, I want to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to supporting all families who call L.A. County home.

Every child has the constitutional right to a quality education, regardless of immigration

status. Our schools are, and will remain, safe havens where all students can learn without fear or hesitation. This is not just our policy—it is our promise.

To support this commitment, we have developed a comprehensive toolkit that empowers immigrant students and their families, and the school and district staff who serve them, with vital resources and information. This toolkit includes legal assistance, know-your-rights guidance, emergency planning resources and support services for students and families.

By equipping our schools and families with these essential

tools and knowledge, we aim to empower our families and educational communities with knowledge and support, help schools maintain welcoming, inclusive environments, ensure every student can focus on learning and growing and strengthen our school communities through mutual support.

Sincerely,  
Debra Duardo, M.S.W. Ed.D.  
Los Angeles County  
Superintendent of Schools



Please note: This toolkit is meant to serve as an informational resource only and does not constitute legal advice. For specific legal guidance regarding immigration matters, please consult with qualified legal professionals or immigration attorneys.



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# LEGAL FOUNDATION

All students in the U.S. have a constitutionally protected right to education regardless of immigration status, supported by multiple legal frameworks:

## Federal Protections:

- **Plyler v. Doe (1982)**: Supreme Court ruling guarantees free public education for all children and prohibits states from creating enrollment barriers  
Resources: [Plyler Fact Sheet](#), [Plyler Questions and Answers](#)
- **FERPA**: Protects student record confidentiality, limiting information sharing with third parties including immigration officials except under specific legal circumstances

## California State Laws:

- **AB 699** ([Safe Schools for Immigrant Students](#)):
  - Prohibits collecting immigration status information
  - Requires policies preventing immigration enforcement on campus
  - Forbids immigration status-based discrimination
- **Education Code § 234.1**: Explicitly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on immigration status

## Enforcement and Complaints:

- Schools must provide immediate enrollment regardless of immigration status
- Students and families can file complaints through Uniform Complaint Procedures with protection against retaliation
- Federal law cannot compel state/local governments to enforce federal immigration programs



# SAFE SPACES AND SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

Schools must adopt policies to protect and empower all students regardless of immigration status

- Establish “[Safe Haven](#)” or immigrant inclusive policies and Board Resolutions or reaffirmed these policies that protect students from immigration enforcement on school grounds without proper legal protocols.

Resources: [Sacramento City USD Safe Haven](#)  
[LACOE Reaffirmation Resolution](#), [LAUSD Safe Zones Resolution](#)

- Implement clear procedures for monitoring visitors, including immigration officers. Consider placing signs and banners in multiple languages in school buildings announcing and explaining school policies.

Resources: [LACOE SP4050 Safe Locations Policy](#), [Fresno USD](#)

- Schools are considered “sensitive locations” and ICE agents are generally directed to avoid enforcement actions at these sites. However, this could change with a new administration. [Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations](#)



# STAFF TRAINING AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

Schools need clear protocols to handle potential visits from immigration enforcement agencies that balance student safety with legal compliance.

## Policy Development:

- California law requires LEAs to adopt model policies on immigration, with updates required by May 2025.
- Resources: [California Attorney General: Guidance and Model Policies to Assist California's K-12 Schools in Responding to Immigration Issues](#) and [CSBA Legal Guidance Immigration Issues Affecting California LEAs](#)
- Create comprehensive procedures for handling immigration enforcement presence on campus
- Establish documentation requirements and specific responses based on warrant types
- Implement notification protocols for governing board and parents regarding enforcement attempts

## Staff Training Requirements:

- Train all personnel on immigration enforcement response procedures
- Educate staff about student privacy rights and FERPA protections
- Build awareness about deportation's impact on students and families

## Parent Communication:

- Obtain parental consent before allowing student interviews or searches by immigration officers, unless required by valid warrant
- Provide immediate parent notification if immigration officers request or gain student access, except when legally prohibited

Resources:

[Know Your Educational Rights – LACOE Training](#)





# SAMPLE SCHOOL RESPONSE IF ICE AGENTS APPROACH THE SCHOOL

Equip school staff with knowledge and procedures to protect student rights and maintain a secure learning environment.

If ICE agents approach the school, refer ICE agents to the Superintendent's Office. The Superintendent should follow these procedures:

- Request and verify agent credentials and supervisor contact information.
- Inquire about the reason for their presence, particularly why they are not adhering to the policy against enforcement actions at sensitive locations.
- Request written authorization demonstrating prior approval for their actions.
- Contact the agent's supervisor to confirm the situation and seek clarification.
- Involve school attorneys in any discussions with law enforcement or contact LACOE's Immigrant Relations Hotline for guidance: 562-419-5275
- Document all interactions and communications.
- Contact elected officials and relevant organizations to report the incident and seek support.

Resources: [Preparing for ICE raids: a guide for school and community partnerships](#)





# SAMPLE SCHOOL PROTOCOL IF ICE AGENTS PRESENT AN ARREST WARRANT

The Superintendent should consult with the school's attorney. ICE may present an "administrative warrant," which is not legally equivalent to a judicial warrant and does not require compliance. Only a warrant signed by a judge is legally binding. If a valid arrest warrant is presented, the Superintendent can request that the arrest not occur on school property to protect other students from witnessing the event. It is crucial to contact legal aid organizations immediately to ensure legal representation for the student.

## Understanding Types of Warrants

- **ICE Administrative "Warrant":**
  - Does not grant access to non-public areas or school records.
  - School staff should not interfere with officers but are not required to assist or consent to searches.
- **Federal Court Warrant:**
  - Issued by a judge based on probable cause.
  - School officials should follow guidelines established by the agency's legal counsel.





# WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS OF A STUDENT IF ICE AGENTS REQUEST AN INTERVIEW?

Students have the right to remain silent and cannot be compelled to provide information that would reveal their immigration status.

## **The Superintendent should:**

- Immediately notify the student's parents and local legal aid organizations.
- Ensure a lawyer is present to protect the student's legal rights during any interaction with ICE.
- Advise the student of their right to remain silent and avoid self-incrimination.

Resources: [ACLU Know Your Rights](#)



# PREPARE A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Build your school's capacity to respond swiftly to immigration emergencies.

## 1. Create Communication Resources

- a. Develop an easily searchable database of multilingual staff members who can serve as the immigration resource advocate
- b. Prepare template letters for federal policy changes
- c. Establish clear channels for emergency notifications
- d. Educate students, families and communities about what to do if a raid occurs or an individual is detained.

## 2. Gather Emergency Contact Information

- a. Request backup contact details for 1-2 local friends/family members
- b. Implement a system for regular updates of contact information
- c. Remind families regularly about keeping details current

## 3. Distribute Emergency Toolkits

- a. Provide essential forms and documents
- b. Include step-by-step instructions
- c. List key contact information
- d. Add local support service directories

## 4. Plan Essential Support Services

- a. Consider plans to arrange emergency transportation
- b. Develop a meal delivery system for affected students
- c. Create a system to identify and support students who may need extended day care
- d. Provide a safe place for students to wait if a parent or sibling has been detained.
- e. Establish protocols for ensuring students have safe adult supervision
- f. Plan for continuing student access to school programs and services
- g. Provide counseling for students who have had a family member detained by ICE.

Resources:

[Communications Templates on Policy Change, Deportation Incident and Immigration Resources](#)





# SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH CRISIS

Build a support network that addresses emotional needs of affected families.

## 1. Educational Support

- a. Offer workshops for families on discussing deportation with children
- b. Provide training on understanding immigration impacts on student wellbeing
- c. Host information sessions about available community resources

## 2. Staff Preparedness

- a. Train staff to recognize and respond to trauma symptoms
- b. Develop protocols for providing appropriate emotional support
- c. Create referral pathways to mental health professionals

Resources:

[L.A. County Department of Mental Health](#)

[Employee Assistance Service for Education \(EASE\)](#): Call 24/7 access line at 800-882-1341



# BUILD STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Establish relationships with support organizations before crises occur to ensure seamless assistance for families.

## 1. Identify and Connect with Partners

- a. Map local nonprofits supporting immigrant families
- b. Identify emergency shelters
- c. Establish relationships with legal aid organizations
- d. Connect with faith-based groups and cultural centers
- e. Partner with mental health service providers

## 2. Establish Support Protocols

- a. Create clear referral pathways to community services
- b. Define roles and responsibilities of each partner organization
- c. Develop protocols for confidential information sharing
- d. Plan regular network meetings to update resource information

Resources:

[List of L.A. County Non-Profit Legal Service Providers](#)

[The State Bar of California](#)

[Legal Aid Foundation of L.A. immigration referral list](#)

[211LA](#)



# FAMILY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Protect your children’s wellbeing and ensure continuity of care during emergencies.

## 1. Emergency Contacts and Care

- a. Update your child’s school emergency card with current contact information
- b. Designate a trusted adult who can care for your child in an emergency
- c. Establish a plan for communication with designated caregivers

## 2. Legal Planning

- a. Consult with legal organizations about guardianship options
- b. Complete a Caregiver’s Authorization Affidavit or a Petition for Appointment of Temporary Guardian of the Person
- c. Document any specific care instructions for designated guardians

## 3. Essential Documentation

- a. Organize and secure vital documents in a safe, accessible location:

Resources:

[LACOE Sample Family Emergency Preparedness Plan Forms](#)

- b. Memorize important information (such as Alien Number, full name and date of birth) and contact phone numbers

## 4. Medical Preparedness

- a. Document any medical conditions or required medications
- b. Create a list of healthcare providers and emergency numbers
- c. Prepare a supply of necessary medications
- d. Share medical history with designated caregivers

Resources:

[ILRC Step-by-Step Family Preparedness Plan](#)





## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Stay informed of your legal rights so you can be prepared to protect yourself

### Legal Rights:

- **Right to Remain Silent:** You have the right to remain silent and not answer questions about your immigration status.
- **Don't Open Your Door:** ICE agents cannot enter your home or private spaces such as a doctor's office without a warrant signed by a judge.
- **Record Encounters:** Document interactions with ICE by taking pictures or videos.
- **Red Cards:** Use ILRC Red Cards to assert your rights when questioned by immigration officials.
- **Speak to a Lawyer:** Consult with an attorney before signing any documents or speaking with ICE.
- **Right to a Lawyer and a Hearing:** If detained, you have the right to a lawyer and a court hearing.
- **Immigration Fraud:** A Notario Público cannot practice law or provide legal advice related to immigration.

Resources:

[Red Cards available in multiple languages](#)

[WATCH: We Have Rights videos in multiple languages](#)

[National Immigration Legal Services Directory](#)

[Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles](#)

[LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)



# IF YOUR PARENT IS DETAINED: STEPS FOR STUDENTS

Stay calm and follow these steps to ensure your safety and access support.

## 1. Immediate Actions at School

- a. Inform a trusted teacher or administrator about the situation
- b. Request help contacting your designated emergency caregiver
- c. Connect with your siblings and their teachers if applicable
- d. Ask to speak with a school counselor for emotional support

## 2. Contact Support Network

- a. Reach out to your designated emergency caregiver
- b. Connect with other trusted family members on your emergency contact list
- c. Contact legal aid organizations for assistance
- d. Use the [ICE detainee locator system](#) to find your parent's location

## 3. Take Care of Yourself

- a. Stay in school and maintain your routine
- b. Talk to your school counselor about your feelings
- c. Join support groups if available
- d. Keep communication open with teachers about needed accommodations

## 4. Important Reminders

- a. Keep emergency contact information with you at all times
- b. Know where important documents are stored
- c. Save important phone numbers in your phone or notebook
- d. Remember you're not alone - help is available



# SCHOOL RESPONSE PLAN DURING DEPORTATION

Implement immediate support measures while maintaining student privacy and emotional wellbeing.

## 1. Immediate Response Protocol

- a. Execute student release procedures to designated emergency contacts
- b. Activate counseling and emotional support services
- c. Notify relevant staff while maintaining confidentiality
- d. Contact Child Protective Services only if all emergency contacts are unreachable

## 2. Student Support Services

- a. Provide flexible academic accommodations including the option of [Independent Study](#)
- b. Address food insecurity through meal programs
- c. Create safe spaces for emotional processing
- d. Monitor and support attendance challenges

## 3. Family Assistance

- a. Connect families with legal aid resources
- b. Share information about emergency services
- c. Provide access to mental health support
- d. Facilitate communication with community organizations

## 4. School Staff Guidelines

- a. Protect student information per FERPA requirements
- b. Follow protocols for responding to immigration officials
- c. Prioritize student emotional wellbeing over academic demands
- d. Serve as liaison between families and support services





# GATHERING AND HANDLING STUDENT INFORMATION

Protect student privacy while ensuring equitable access to education.

## 1. Enrollment Requirements

- a. Accept reasonable proof of residency and age, including foreign documents; offer affidavits for any documents that are not available
- b. Never request immigration or citizenship status
- c. Collect Social Security numbers only when legally required
  - i. For federal benefits, collect only last four digits from adults

## 2. Information Protection

- a. Create and publish clear policies on student information handling
- b. Train staff on privacy protocols
- c. Maintain student confidentiality under FERPA guidelines
- d. Avoid collecting or sharing data that could reveal immigration status

## 3. Parental Rights and Communication

- a. Obtain written parental consent before releasing student information
- b. Provide annual notice about privacy and directory information policies
- c. Exception: Information sharing for legitimate educational purpose

## 4. Information Request Procedures

- a. Document all requests for student information
- b. Notify families about information requests
- c. Establish clear protocols for school police regarding student information
- d. Follow FERPA guidelines for all information releases

Resources: [Governor Newsom Letter to School Leaders](#)



# LACOE CONTACT

To request a workshop or informational session to educate students and families on their legal rights, contact Fredy Ruiz, Immigrant Relations Coordinator, 562-419-5275 or [ruiz\\_fredy@lacoedu.edu](mailto:ruiz_fredy@lacoedu.edu)

[LACOE's Immigrant Relations Webpage](#)

[Sample District Preparedness Plan](#)

## Additional Resources

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center \(ILRC\)](#)

[National Immigration Law Center \(NILC\)](#)

[California Attorney General's Office](#)

[California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau](#)

[Catholic Legal Immigration Network](#)

[InformedImmigrant.com](#)

[L.A. County Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)

[Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles \(CHIRLA\)](#)

[EdSource: What rights do immigrant students and families have in](#)

[California schools and colleges?](#)

[OAG Care Community Briefing](#)

[Jan. 10, 2025 Slide Deck](#)

[LAUSD: We Are One LA Unified](#)

