

# WINGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Policy

Agreed: By Governing Body

Signed: *J Mullarkey* (HT)

Signed: *Anne Laws* (CofG)

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# **Wingrove Primary School**

## **Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Policy**

### **Aim**

Wingrove Primary School comprehends that asylum-seeking and refugee children have equal education rights as other children resident in the UK.

Wingrove Primary School also recognises that unique challenges to the social, cultural and linguistic inclusion of asylum-seeking and refugee children are a product of the circumstances surrounding their arrival.

This policy summarises how our school will create a learning environment that will both meet these rights and address these challenges, ensuring that asylum-seeking and refugee children have the best possible opportunities to meet their academic potential.

### **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy takes into account (but is not limited to) the following legislation:

- United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
- Children Act 1989.
- Education Act 1996, s 14.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, s 117.
- Equality Act 2010.

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following policies of the school:

- Admissions Policy.
- Free School Meals Policy.
- Looked After Children Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. Asylum-seekers are people who flee their home country and seek refugee status in another country, possibly due to war or other human rights abuses, and then lodge an application with the government.
- 2.2. Refugees are people recognised by the government as meeting the definition of refugee under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951.

## 3. Admissions

- 3.1. Local Authorities have a legal duty to provide full-time education for all children of compulsory school age resident in their area, including asylum-seeking and refugee children.
- 3.2. Admissions staff are aware of the entitlements to education of asylum-seeking and refugee children and of the need to be sensitive when interviewing families who may speak little or no English.
- 3.3. Asylum-seeking and refugee children should be offered a school place as soon as possible after arrival in the authority, in accordance with the LA's published admissions arrangements.
- 3.4. Whilst admissions staff ask for proof of date of birth, passports or immigration documents are not mandatory.

## 4. Induction

- 4.1. Newly admitted asylum-seeking and refugee children will undergo a special induction to help facilitate their smooth integration and to ensure that they become effective learners as quickly as possible.
- 4.2. Prior to their child's admission at the school, an interview will be arranged with the parents/carers in order to assess their child's past educational experiences and future needs.

During the interview, parents are:

- Provided with an appropriate interpreter, or a bilingual member of staff to translate should one be required.
- Provided with the appropriate welcoming material such as a map of the local area, a plan of the school, the name of their child's class teacher, details of any 'buddy' or mentor and the school timetable.
- Where possible introduced to an existing parent who is able to speak the same language and provide appropriate guidance and support.
- Shown around the premises and introduced to relevant members of staff.
- Asked whether they are in receipt of benefits or asylum support vouchers, as this will affect the administration of free school meals and other benefits for their child.
- Given essential information, such as how their child will be helped to learn English and about whether their child has rights to free school meals, school milk, travel and uniform grants.

## 5. Language

5.1. The following instructions are considered effective practice to help a child to learn English:

- Making sure their names are pronounced properly and they are greeted in every lesson.
- Making sure pupils know the names of their teachers and support staff and that they have the opportunity to write down their names.
- Sitting the pupil next to sympathetic members of the class, preferably those who speak the same language and can translate.
- Where children are proficient in their home language, they will be buddied-up with another pupil who is equally proficient in English;
- Encouraging pupils to contribute to the lesson by using their home language until they can confidently use English;
  - Teaching beginners some useful basic phrases such as 'yes', 'no', 'thank you', 'please can I have' and 'I don't understand';
- Encouraging pupils to help give out equipment and collect books so they have to make contact with other children;
- Encouraging pupils to learn the names of equipment, symbols and terms essential for every subject;
- Asking pupils for the home language equivalents of English words.
- Using visual cues.

5.2. Wingrove Primary School understands that the linguistic background of asylum-seeking and refugee children varies widely, with some arriving in the UK speaking little or no English.

5.3. An assessment of such pupils' linguistic background is undertaken as part of the induction process in order to ascertain their language requirements.

5.4. Classroom teachers take responsibility for ensuring that pupils can participate in lessons.

5.5. Pupils may be withdrawn from classes if they:

- Have little or no previous schooling and lack literacy in their home language;
- Have no learning behaviours in place;
- Are having problems coping.

5.6. Where a child needs to be withdrawn, alternative educational provision is provided.

5.7. Appropriate home language and dual language books can be used from the library and multilingual pupils are encouraged to read them.

## 6. Examinations

6.1. Pupils admitted to years 1, 2 and 6 are not expected to sit national curriculum assessments and public examinations

## 7. Free school meals

7.1. Wingrove Primary School meets its duty to provide free school meals for all asylum-seeking and refugee pupils receiving means-tested benefits.

7.2. All pupils in Reception, years 1 and Y2 receive free school meals regardless of family

income. These are called Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)

7.3. Parents/carers are obliged to provide the school with information regarding their child's dietary requirements.

## 8. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

8.1. Asylum-seeking and refugee children with SEND are supported with the appropriate SEND provision, and an education, health and care plan (EHCP) assessment, where necessary.

8.2. Essential information is translated or interpreted into the child's home language during EHCP assessments and reviews.

## 9. Working Together

9.1. Wingrove Primary School understands that establishing strong links with parents/carers is an essential part of supporting the education of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils. This will be achieved by:

- Making all parents/carers feel that they are wanted and have a positive role to play in their child's education;
- Showing parents/carers that they can always make their feelings and opinions known to staff, and that these will be dealt with respectfully and seriously;
- Demonstrating that parents/carers' linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds are valued and respected;
- Showing parents/carers that the school is part of the community it serves.

9.2. Wingrove Primary School understands that it is important to be sensitive to the different care arrangements within communities; not all children are cared for by their parents. Appropriate checks are undertaken to ascertain with whom a child lives, and that sensitivity is evident when invitations to parents' evenings are sent out.

9.3. Links have been developed with agencies such as the following:

- Refugee support and EAL teams within the Local Authority;
- Local colleges and other organisations offering English language classes;
- The police;
- Housing providers;
- Social service teams;
- GP surgeries and any healthcare projects working with asylum-seekers and refugees;
- Local organisations offering advice and advocacy;
- Local multi-agency refugee forums;

- Refugee community organisations.

## 10. Vulnerable children

10.1. Wingrove Primary School understands that while the attainment of minority ethnic pupils is improving in the UK, and asylum-seeking and refugee pupils are among the high achievers, there is evidence that some groups do underachieve.

10.2. A number of children from asylum-seeking and refugee groups will be looked after by the LA, and the school ensures that these children receive the appropriate support that looked after children are entitled to.

10.3. Where a group is underachieving, the school, in collaboration with the Local Authority, will put together a bespoke strategy for raising the attainment of that particular group.

10.4. Wingrove Primary School recognises that after a traumatic experience, such as violent conflict, persecution or bereavement, it is normal for children to manifest strong emotional reactions.

10.5. Where pupils originate from countries where female genital mutilation (FGM) is evident, or where it is suspected that a pupil has undergone such a procedure, staff refer to the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10.6. Wingrove Primary School will do its utmost to maximise the protective factors and minimise the negative factors, making it less likely that the child will suffer long term psychological stress.

10.7. Protective factors include the following:

- Having parents/carers and/or an extended family network, who can give their child full attention and good quality childcare;
- Having access to other people, particularly from their own community, who can give friendship and support;
- Having some understanding about the reasons for leaving their home country;
- Being able to maintain some links with their homeland;
- Remembering good things about life in their home country;
- Being happy in a new school, making friends and being able to achieve at school;

- Feeling optimistic about the future and making progress;
- Being able to talk about stressful events and gain control over them;
- Being able to ask for help when things go wrong;
- Having a hobby or interest to pursue;
- Having a specific member of staff or key worker to talk to.

10.8. All members of staff are expected to be observant, and to refer pupils to the appropriate support if they are showing signs of being distressed.

- School could organize additional counselling from Kalmer in order to respond quickly and effectively to children' needs. Staff should refer via the Inclusion Manager

10.9. Where internal support proves insufficient, vulnerable asylum-seeking and refugee pupils are referred to external support, including, but not limited to:

- Educational psychologists.
- Other external mental health programmes.

## 11. Training

11.1. Staff involved with admissions will be provided with training on the background of any asylum-seeking and/or refugee pupils.

11.2. Staff will, through in-service training, be taught the skills needed to support and teach asylum-seeking and refugee pupils.

11.3. The safeguarding lead will be made aware of the specific needs of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils.

## 12. Policy review

12.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the child protection officer and the head teacher.