



# An Educator's Checklist for Supporting Immigrant Students in Schools

**Schools should be safe spaces for *all* students. Federal law protects the right to a free public education for all students regardless of citizenship status.** However, recent shifts in national immigration policy and related initiatives are having a chilling effect and threatening that core value. The removal of school-based protections against immigration enforcement, and the presence—or even the rumor—of immigration agents near schools can keep students home, deter families from engaging in their child's learning, and turn schools from safe havens into places of fear.

As educators, you have the power to preserve the integrity of the learning environment and ensure the safety of all students, regardless of immigration status. You can set up a meeting with your school leaders, write a letter, or even raise concerns at a staff meeting or school board hearing. **Here are five actions to request of your school leadership:**

- ✓ **Establish a clear protocol for responding to visitors, including law enforcement, at your school.** School leaders should train all school staff to ensure they understand and follow the policy. Here are examples from [Los Angeles Unified](#) and [Austin Independent School District](#).
- ✓ **Require all visitors, including law enforcement, to check in at the front desk or your school's administrative office and present identification and documentation.** Officers must present a valid judicial warrant or judicial subpoena for review by the school principal and legal counsel *and* be instructed to wait in the administrative office while the principal, in consultation with legal counsel, reviews the documents and requests. Regardless of the warrant or subpoena status, law enforcement officers should not be given access to the entire learning environment, so we recommend instructing them to stay in the administrative office or outside the school to comply with valid warrant requests.
- ✓ **Define and mark private areas in your school site to protect students' Fourth Amendment right** against unreasonable search and seizures. Spaces that are marked private (e.g. through signage and gates) are protected from immigration enforcement activities without a valid judicial warrant or subpoena. Here is a relevant [guide from the National Immigration Law Center](#).
- ✓ **Limit the information that your school collects from students** and their families. Avoid collecting any information that you are not legally required to, especially any personal information such as SSNs and birthplace. Do not collect immigration status information.
- ✓ **Provide Know Your Rights materials**, including posters, videos, and live trainings, to educate immigrant students and families on their rights. Most often, you can access these resources from related local organizations. These external partnerships with local immigrant-serving community-based organizations and legal aid groups help to ensure those resources are linguistically appropriate and culturally responsive. Remember however that Know Your Rights materials only provide general information and do not constitute legal advice.

**Join the [National Newcomer Network](#) for more information and advocacy resources!**

*This advisory is not legal advice. A school, district, or parent/guardian should consult with legal counsel about specific concerns.*

