

Schools of Sanctuary Charter and Pledge

Introduction

Schools play a crucial role in helping young people to make sense of the world, to become responsible citizens and to create positive change in their communities. By pledging to become a School of Sanctuary, your school will be part of a grassroots network and growing movement across the UK and Ireland. The Schools of Sanctuary initiative in Ireland is coordinated by Places of Sanctuary Ireland, and is part of the City of Sanctuary movement, which aims to:

- Create a culture of welcome for everyone, especially refugees, asylum seekers and other sanctuary seekers and marginalised groups
- Promote the voices and celebrate the contributions to our society of people who have either sought or are seeking sanctuary

What is a School of Sanctuary?

A School of Sanctuary is a school that is committed to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that benefits everybody, including anyone in its community who is seeking sanctuary. It is a school that helps its students, staff, parents and the wider community to understand what it means to be seeking sanctuary, and to extend a welcome to everyone regardless of their status.

A School of Sanctuary can be in any kind of place (village, town or city), and be either diverse or ethnically homogenous – what counts is the attitude of the school as a community, not what its children, staff and parents look like or where they were born.

Why become a School of Sanctuary?

Becoming a School of Sanctuary provides schools with a valuable strategic tool for school improvement, and enables them to meet a wide range of statutory and non-statutory obligations. This process can:

- Create a culture that makes newcomers, especially those from different culture or language groups, feel safe and included more quickly
- Help meet the school's commitment to equal opportunities
- Provide learning opportunities around global issues, human rights, social justice, diversity and interdependence
- Build a school culture that reduces intolerance, hate speech and bullying
- Underpin work on building an inclusive and supportive school community
- Increase Student Voice and promote active citizenship
- Engage families and strengthen the school's role in the local community

How do we become a School of Sanctuary?

Schools should apply to their nearest City of Sanctuary group or to Schools of Sanctuary Ireland to be recognised as a School of Sanctuary. The accreditation process asks the school to show how they are committed to the three core actions:

1. **TO LEARN** about refugees and migrants, including hearing their stories
2. **TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION** to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within your school and the wider community
3. **TO SHARE** your vision and achievements with the wider community and, where possible, with other schools.

Minimum Criteria to become a School of Sanctuary

- The leadership and governance of the school is fully supportive of the process
- Learning activities about refugee/asylum/migration learning issues are included into school life at all levels.
- The School must demonstrate how it has embedded the concept of welcome and inclusion in the school. This should show how the school will continue to develop and sustain a culture of welcome beyond the award and ideally, this should be linked to the School's Improvement/Development Plan.
- Celebration or community events which highlight the contribution of sanctuary seekers and migrants to Ireland.
- Commitment to supporting age-appropriate active pupil voice on sanctuary and welcome/welcoming activities in the school.
- The school publicly highlights its activities in support of welcome and inclusion in its communications including on its website and social media streams.
- Commitment to sharing resources, ideas and achievements via the school's website or the City of Sanctuary website, and with other schools.

When the school is ready, they can submit an application alongside accompanying evidence which will be reviewed by an appraisal team, including at least one school visit. Successful schools will be publicly recognised at an awards event and presented with a certificate.

If your school is ready to make a commitment to this journey, please have representatives of the Management Board, teaching staff and students body sign the pledge form below.



SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY PLEDGE FORM

Name of school: _____

School address: _____

School e-mail address: _____

We pledge our support to the City of Sanctuary vision that Ireland will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. As a school, we recognise the contribution of refugees, migrants and people seeking sanctuary to Ireland. In working towards becoming a School of Sanctuary we pledge to:

1. **Learn** what it means to be seeking sanctuary and about the lives of refugees, migrants and marginalised groups in Ireland.
2. **Take Action** to support sanctuary seekers in the daily life of the school.
3. **Share** this new knowledge and understanding with the school's wider community & the Schools of Sanctuary network.

We are committed to working towards becoming a recognized School of Sanctuary and we are willing for our school to be added to a list of Schools of Sanctuary Ireland.

Signatures below should include representatives of management, staff and students

Name/Position/Class	Date
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Further signatures may be added on extra pages if required.

Please email this completed form to your local City of Sanctuary group or to schools@ireland.cityofsanctuary.org