

# Building Sanctuary in Your Classroom

## Guidance for OUSD Educators

OUSD is a Sanctuary District. All students are safe to pursue an education in our schools, regardless of birthplace, immigration status, or any other aspects of their identities. In response to current political challenges, Oakland teachers, students, and community members drafted these recommendations.

**Note:** All recommendations should be grounded in student needs. One size does NOT fit all.

**Do** communicate that ALL students are safe and welcome

Multiple groups feel attacked right now. Ensure you consistently message to students that you are happy they are in school, you value their identities, and adults in the building will do everything possible to ensure their safety.

**Do** link current events with historic treatment of other groups

Highlighting connections between oppression of different groups—and resistance to that oppression—helps reduce student bewilderment and build cross-group coalitions.

**Do** give space for class-wide or private student conversations

Create routines for students to discuss reactions to current events (e.g. circles), but don't force participation. Make yourself available during lunch or before/after school for students wishing to discuss emotions privately.

**Do** practice self care

Recognize if you are experiencing vicarious trauma and seek support. Take a break, take a day off, practice mindfulness. Ensure you can sustain yourself in this work.

**Don't** expect "typical" responses from students

There is not one single expected response from students experiencing confusion or trauma. Students might make jokes, disengage, be emotional, or act apathetic when facing issues. Don't draw conclusions from outward signs.

**Don't** "other" students in an attempt to be helpful

Before broaching difficult concepts in class, check in with students who might feel put on the spot because of parts of their identities. If they don't want to engage, provide alternative options or rethink having the discussion.

**Don't** forget your primary role: teacher

For many students, schools are an escape from troubling realities, and they see education as key to becoming change makers. Balance addressing the latest news with providing a reprieve and learning-focused space.

**Don't** make this about you

It's normal to react strongly to the impact of current events on students, but adult emotions cannot supersede student needs. With emotionally fraught topics, seek colleagues' or supervisors' assistance, or draw upon community groups.



# Sanctuary Resource Toolkit

## Supports from OUSD and Outside Organizations

### Sanctuary District and Sanctuary City Status

**OUSD Sanctuary District** ([ousd.org/sanctuary](https://ousd.org/sanctuary))

Video and printed resources on OUSD's Sanctuary District status, including the board-adopted resolution and protocols for schools on interacting with ICE

**Oakland Community Organizations**  
([oaklandcommunity.org](https://oaklandcommunity.org))

Federation of local organizations with links to Oakland's sanctuary city resolution and action items

**East Bay Sanctuary Covenant** ([eastbaysanctuary.org](https://eastbaysanctuary.org))

Berkeley-based organization supporting refugee and immigrant communities, with volunteer opportunities

### Combating Islamophobia and White Supremacy

**OUSD African American Male Achievement**  
([ousd.org/aama](https://ousd.org/aama))

Curricular resources, publications, reports, and suggestions for further reading

**Islamic Networks Group (ING)** ([ing.org](https://ing.org))

Educator resources related to Islam and other faiths, and resources for getting to know your neighbors

**Teach Human Rights** ([teachhumanrights.com](https://teachhumanrights.com))

Lesson plan collections on nativism, refugees, Islamophobia, and other topics

### Undocumented/DACAmented Students and Families

**OUSD DACA** ([ousd.org/daca](https://ousd.org/daca))

DACA-related facts and links, including OUSD's stance in support of DACA

**United We Dream** ([unitedwedream.org](https://unitedwedream.org))

Comprehensive website with reports and action steps. See the "Here to Stay" toolkit and guide for building "undocu-friendly" classrooms

**Here to Stay** ([weareheretostay.org](https://weareheretostay.org))

Immigrant youth-organized website with FAQs, mental health resources, and action items

**Centro Legal de la Raza** ([centrolegal.org](https://centrolegal.org))

Oakland-based legal services agency focused on low-income, immigrant, and Latino communities, with links to ICE rapid response and legal services resources

**Immigrant Family Defense Fund**  
([immigrantfamilies.org](https://immigrantfamilies.org))

OUSD parent-started organization providing legal support if family members are detained by ICE

**Immigrant Legal Resource Center** ([ilrc.org](https://ilrc.org))

Trainings and educational materials on immigrants' legal rights. See family preparedness plans and the guidance for schools document

**Ready California** ([ready-california.org](https://ready-california.org))

Statewide collaborative providing information and legal services to immigrant communities





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