



PSESD Guide For Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Schools

Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Please consult the district's legal counsel and superintendent for guidance specific to district and board policy.

Recent incidents involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have led schools to review and clarify their response plans. This guide offers supportive principles and steps to help keep everyone safe and informed while upholding legal rights.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1

Know Your Rights — And Be Ready to Use Them

It's crucial to understand your rights and calmly exercise them when needed.

2

Be Prepared

Preparation means having a clear, actionable plan. Central to this plan is recognizing the type of warrant, if any, that ICE agents present.

KEY RESOURCES

-  [PSED Operating Policy No 4300 Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Schools and](#)
-  [PSED Operating Procedure 4300P Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Schools](#)
-  [From the **Washington State Attorney General's Office**: Keep Washington Working Act Guidance, Model Policies, and Best Practices for Public Schools](#)
-  [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction **OSPI Guidance on state protections for immigrant students in Washington's K-12 public schools.**](#)
-  [DCYF Task Force to Support Children & Youth Impacted by Recent Immigration Enforcement](#)

Gov. Bob Ferguson signed an Executive Order creating a task force within the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to support children and youth who face the risk of family separation due to recent immigration enforcement actions.





KEY RESOURCES (continued)

National Immigration Law Center: Warrants and Subpoenas

Outlines “Warrants and Subpoenas” and shares a case study about Liberty High School in New York City, highlighting how schools, advocates, and lawyers can intervene to block immigration subpoenas and help keep immigrant communities safe.

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN)

WAISN Hotline: 1-844-724-3737

Emergency Planning Guide for Parents with Uncertain Immigration Status (English) | (Spanish Guide)

Legal options a parent might consider for a child who would remain in the United States in the event of parental detention or deportation.

Immigrant Safety Plan for Youth and Children

A collective community resource to help parents plan for the care of their child(ren) (with or without legal status) if the parent is unable to care for them, particularly if the parent is detained or deported.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS (Bilingual English/Spanish): **Flyer** and **Card Size**

Procedure/Script/Flow Chart for When ICE Arrives (English | Spanish)

UNDERSTANDING WARRANTS

A warrant is a formal order permitting the arrest or detention of an individual. ICE may arrive with one of the following documents:

1. **No Warrant at all**
2. **An Administrative Warrant**
3. **A Judicial Warrant**

EXAMPLE: Judicial vs. Administrative Warrant

No Warrant Action

- Contact your district office, principal, or a designated school official immediately.
- Remain calm and respectfully say: ***“I’m not able to speak with you at this moment without a valid warrant. I kindly request that you leave.”***
- Avoid further discussion.



Administrative Warrant Identification

- Issued by ICE or a related agency (TSA, FEMA, U.S. Secret Service, CBP, USCIS), not by a court.
- Typically displays “Department of Homeland Security” and may include a form number starting with “i.”

Administrative Warrant Action

1. Contact your district office, principal, or designated school official immediately.
2. Keep doors secured and avoid granting access to the school.
3. Calmly explain you are unable to comply with the administrative warrant since it is not court-issued.
4. You may designate a specific welcome area or public common space, if needed.

Judicial Warrant Identification:

- Issued by a court, typically stating “United States District Court.”
- Signed by a judge and specifies who is to be arrested or what is to be seized.

Judicial Warrant Action:

1. Contact your district office, principal, or a designated school official immediately.
2. Follow the instructions outlined in the valid judicial warrant, remaining calm.
3. If possible, discreetly document the encounter (e.g., with video or notes) for accuracy.
4. Promptly inform your principal or district office.
5. Contact an immigration lawyer for further guidance.



PROCEDURES WHEN ICE ARRIVES

1

Initial Verification

■ Verify Documents

Do not allow ICE agents into the school until the nature of their warrant is confirmed.

■ Confirm with Leadership

Contact your district office, principal, or a designated school official as soon as possible to discuss the next steps.

2

On-Site Response

■ If It's an Administrative Warrant

Keep doors secured and politely **decline to comply** because it is not court-issued.

■ If It's a Judicial Warrant

- Have the principal or a designated school official meet the agents at the door.
- Limit their access to the scope of the warrant.

3

Student and Staff Safety

■ Safety Measures:

- Support students and staff by guiding them away from areas where ICE is present.
- Ensure a designated school official is present if any interviews occur.

■ Communication:

- Reach out to school staff and your crisis response team as soon as it is safe.
- Notify parents/guardians at an appropriate time.
- Work closely with district leadership to maintain consistency in communication.



4

Documentation and Legal Follow-Up

■ Record the Encounter

Keep a thorough record—through notes, video, or both—of all interactions, including dates, times, names, and actions taken.

■ Legal Consultation

Consult with an immigration lawyer immediately afterward for guidance.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE AN ICE VISIT

1. Regularly Update & Emergency Preparedness Plan

- Provide parents/guardians with opportunities (e.g., online forms, paper forms, text/email reminders) to update emergency contacts, alternative caretakers, and authorized pick-up contacts.
- Use a variety of communication methods.
- **Template Letter for requesting updates**

2. Share Emergency Planning Resources with Families

- Emergency Planning Guide for Parents with Uncertain Immigration Status | [Spanish Guide](#)
- Immigrant Safety Plan for Youth and Children
- Distribute via school websites, parent meetings, newsletters, social media, and school apps.

3. Ensure Safe Student Return Policies

- Review policies for situations where a student is not picked up.
- Establish protocols for unclaimed students.
- Coordinate with local child welfare agencies (e.g., **DCYF**) to ensure students have safe alternatives.

4. Support Students and Families Facing Anxiety

- Be mindful of students and families directly affected by changes to federal immigration policy (e.g., minority, immigrant, BIPOC communities).
- Offer resources or referrals to counseling or supportive services.



5. Establish Procedures for ICE Visitations and Interactions

- **Educate Staff:** Train employees to distinguish between judicial and administrative warrants.
- **Plan for ICE Visit:** Identify who will communicate with ICE, have a backup designee, secure offices/hallways, and determine how updates will be relayed to staff and students.
- **Template Memo for Internal Staff Protocol**

6. Define the Role of School Resource Officers (SRO/SSO)

- Clarify how SROs/SSOs should be involved in immigration-related matters.
- Ensure they follow school policy and prioritize student safety.

7. Develop a Communication Plan for ICE Visits

- **Pre-Visit Planning:** Train staff on protocols; have legal resources ready.
- **During Visit:** Activate the crisis response team; communicate calmly within the school.
- **After Visit:** Send a clear message to families about what occurred and provide available resources.

8. Partner with Child Welfare Agencies

- Form connections with **DCYF** and local support organizations in advance.
- Outline procedures to safely place students if parents/guardians are unavailable.



WHAT TO DO DURING AN ICE VISIT

1

Direct ICE Agents to a Designated Public Area

- Politely direct ICE agents to a secure public space (e.g., front office, conference room).
- Avoid allowing them to move freely around the school.

2

Staff Reminders

- Staff do not have to answer questions from ICE.
- Do not provide student information unless legally required by a valid judicial warrant.
- If approached by ICE, direct them to the designated liaison.

3

Ensure ICE Stays Within the Scope of Their Warrant

- Ask to see the warrant immediately.
- Verify that it is signed by a judge (rather than an ICE-issued administrative warrant).
- If the warrant only applies to certain areas or individuals, make sure ICE does not exceed those limits.

4

Document & Record the Entire Visit

- Designate a staff member to keep a thorough record (video or notes).
- Note agent names, badge numbers, warrant details, and any verbal exchanges.
- Maintain a log of all ICE-related visits for legal review.

**5**

Protect Student Rights

- A school representative should be present at all times if a student is approached.
- Notify a student's parent/guardian before any questioning, if possible.
- The student should not be pressured to speak with ICE.
- Students should understand their right to remain silent and have legal counsel.

6

Minimize Student Fear & Disruptions

- Consider a "HOLD" procedure to keep students in classrooms.
- Encourage staff to remain calm in their communication.
- Avoid alarming school-wide announcements; communicate only necessary instructions to staff.

7

Contact Parents/Guardians Immediately

- If a student is requested for an interview, call their parent/guardian right away.
- Provide families with legal support resources as needed.
- If ICE attempts to detain a student, follow legal and school policies to safeguard their rights.
- Contact WAISN for assistance (844-724-3737).

Procedures When ICE Arrives

Initial Contact

Do not allow entry

Meet ICE agents at the door and request identification, badge number and purpose of their visit. Immediately notify building and district admin.

Notify Admin

Do not allow entry

Notify building and district leadership for immediate response. Request documentation and consult legal counsel before permitting entrance.

Request and Verify Documents

- Be issued by a judicial court
- Be signed by a state or federal judge or magistrate
- State the address of the premises to be searched
- Be executed within the time period specified on the warrant

If the warrant includes all the above, then it is a valid judicial warrant and you must comply.

No Judicial Warrant

If it is determined NOT to be a valid judicial warrant; ICE does not have authority to conduct enforcement action on school grounds and/or activities.

"I do not consent to your entry or speaking to you. Please leave"

Know Your Rights

Don't Open the Door

ICE authorities cannot come in without a signed judicial warrant. Documents can be passed under the door for verification.

Remain Silent

ICE can use anything you say against you in your immigration case, so claim your right to remain silent! Say "I plead the Fifth and choose to remain silent"

Don't Sign anything

Don't sign anything ICE gives you without talking to an attorney

Report the raid to WAISN

WA Immigration Solidarity Network
1-844-724-3737

Response

- Keep initial response to a designated public area
- Remind staff of their right to remain silent
- Limit access to the parameters of the warrant
- Initiate crisis response plan

Student Safety

- Provide *Know Your Rights* cards
- Remind them to remain calm and breathe
- Notify parent/guardians
- Ensure a school official stays with student

Documentation

- Document all interactions, including dates, times, names and actions taken.
- Record with your phone
- Make copies of any documentation provided



PLAN FOR AFTER AN ICE VISIT

1. Debrief with Staff & Key Personnel

- Arrange a timely debriefing session with administrators, legal counsel, and the crisis response team.
- Review the events, confirm whether protocols were followed, and discuss opportunities for improvement.
- Document any student or staff interactions with ICE.
- Provide mental health support for staff if needed.

2. Notify Parents & Guardians

- Prepare a calm and factual message ahead of time about how to inform families.
- If specific students were directly involved, call their parents/guardians to explain the situation and offer resources.
- **General Schoolwide Notification** (if necessary):
 - ☐ Reassure families via email, text, or letter about the school's commitment to student safety.

Example Letter

3. Provide Emotional & Mental Health Support for Students

- Identify students who may have been affected (directly or indirectly).
- Have school counselors available for individual or group conversations.
- Train staff to recognize signs of trauma, anxiety, or distress.

4. Document & Review the Incident

- Securely store all notes, videos, and records of the ICE visit.
- Document agent names, legal documents presented, a timeline of events, and any policy or safety concerns.
- Consult with district staff and legal counsel to address any follow-up actions.

5. Prepare for a Press Conference if Needed

- When it May Be Necessary:
 - ☐ High-profile ICE visit (e.g., media present, student detainment).
 - ☐ Widespread community concern or misinformation.
 - ☐ Advocacy groups or public officials requesting transparency.



- When It May Not Be Needed:
 - Low-impact visit with no direct student involvement.
 - Effective internal communication has already occurred.
 - A written statement or community meeting may suffice.

6. Enact Protocol for Student Care

- If a student is left without proper care following an ICE encounter or parents are absent at pick-up time, follow the school's crisis plan.
- Contact DCYF to ensure the student has safe care or placement options.

CREATING AN ICE VISIT COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. Pre-Event Messaging (Prepared Statement for Families & Staff)

- Be proactive and transparent about how the school would respond if ICE visits.

Template

2. Post-Event Messaging (After an ICE Visit Occurs)

- Have a **response letter template** ready if ICE interviews or detains a student.
- Clearly share the facts, reassure families, and provide next steps.

Template

ROLE OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROS)

■ Guidance for SROs:

- Follow local law enforcement and school policies.
- In Washington State, the **Keep Washington Working Act** limits local police involvement in federal civil immigration matters.
- Immigration enforcement is under federal jurisdiction, and federal authorities do not have direct authority over local law enforcement. See **Washington Sanctuary Law** and a statement from the **Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs**.
- SROs should be prepared to explain these distinctions to students and parents.



- **Role for School Security Officers (SSOs)**
 - **Guidance for SSOs:**
 - Adhere to school guidelines and support school officials during any ICE visitation.
 - While SSOs are not law enforcement, they should understand how SROs coordinate in these situations.
 - Be ready to clarify the difference between school security personnel and school resource officers if questions arise.

POLICY AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Stay Informed:**
 - Keep track of executive orders and policy shifts that could affect ICE operations or sanctuary-related funding.
 - Understand that federal authorities may pursue legal options against state or local officials who limit ICE enforcement.

RESOURCES

- **Local Legal Assistance:**
 - Seek out local legal advocacy organizations for ongoing guidance.
- **Immigration Resources:**
 - Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN)
 - Legal Counsel for Youth and Children and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
- **Additional Organizations:**
 - National Association for School Psychologists – Social Justice Resources
 - Fair Immigration Reform Movement’s 2016 What to Do If Ice Shows Up At Your School
 - National Education Association’s Guidance on Immigration Issues