CIEN AGUAS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
2501 Buena Vista Drive SE · Albuquerque, NM 87106
Velia Cortalano, Executive Director

October 14, 2026

Dear Cien Aguas families,

We are writing to you with deep care and heavy hearts. In recent weeks, some families in our community have been detained by ICE. We know this has brought fear and uncertainty into many homes. We want you to hear this clearly: Cien Aguas is a safe place for your children and for you. We are a community, we are family, and we stand with you.

Cien Aguas is a safe haven.

Our school is a refuge for every student and every family. We do not ask about or record anyone's immigration status. Your children's records are protected by federal privacy law (FERPA), and we do not share them with immigration agents unless the law requires it through an order signed by a federal judge.

New Safety Measures at the Front Door

To protect our students, starting now:

- The front door will stay locked at all times. No one will be allowed in without first identifying themselves and signing in.
- Everyone who comes to the school must use the intercom outside the door and explain why they are visiting before they are allowed inside.
- Only certain authorized staff members can open the doors. Students will not open the doors for anyone, at any time.
- Cien Aguas will only release your children to the people you have authorized in our system.

This may take a few extra minutes when you visit. Thank you for your patience: every one of these steps is there to keep your children safe.

If an Immigration Agent Comes to School

They will not be allowed inside without a warrant signed by a federal judge. Our staff will ask to see the warrant, notify the administration right away, call our lawyer, and follow our protocol to protect students. An administrative ICE warrant, signed by an ICE officer and not by a judge, does not require us to let them in.

Update Your Emergency Information in Synergy ParentVue Today

This is the most important thing you can do right now. If there is ever a day when you cannot pick up your children, we need to be able to reach someone you trust.

- Make sure your phone numbers and address are current.
- Add at least two or three emergency contacts who can pick up your children.
- You can do this in **ParentVue**, or call or stop by the office, and Margarita will be glad to help you.

Know Your Rights

- You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to answer questions about your immigration status or where you were born.
- You do not have to open the door of your home to immigration agents unless they have a warrant signed by a judge. You can ask them to show it through a window or slide it under the door.
- Do not sign any document you do not understand without first speaking with a lawyer.
- If you or a family member is detained, you have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- Memorize or always carry the phone number of a lawyer and a trusted family member.

Make Your Family Preparedness Plan Today

Preparing is one way to protect your children. We encourage you to take these steps as a family:

- Choose a trusted person who can care for your children if you cannot, and add them as an emergency contact at school.
- Consider signing a power of attorney so that person can make decisions for your children. We are working to host free power of attorney workshops with the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center and will share dates soon.
- Keep important documents in a safe place: birth certificates, passports, immigration papers, and medical and school records. Make sure someone you trust knows where they are.
- Talk with your children, calmly and in a way that fits their age, about who would pick them up in an emergency.
- New Mexico family safety plan, in English and Spanish, with a planning guide and a workbook you can fill out: Family Preparedness Toolkit (NMILC)
- Step by step guide: Family Preparedness Plan (ILRC)

If a Family Member Is Detained

- To find someone who has been detained, use the ICE Online Detainee Locator or call **1-888-351-4024**. You will need their full name, country of birth, and date of birth, or their A number if they have one.
- Contact one of the legal organizations below as soon as possible.
- Let us know at school. We will help make sure your children are with the person you chose.
- Resources for families of people in detention: Freedom for Immigrants

Legal and Community Support

Several of these organizations offer free or low cost services.

Community Organizations

- **New Mexico Immigrant Law Center**: free legal services for immigrant families. **(505) 247-1023** nmilc.org
- **El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos**: an immigrant led organization that defends the rights of our families. **(505) 246-1627** elcentronm.org
- **Somos Un Pueblo Unido**: an immigrant and worker rights organization in New Mexico. **(505) 424-7832** somosunpueblounido.org
- **Catholic Charities of Albuquerque**: support services for immigrants and families. ccasfnm.org
- **City of Albuquerque Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)**: connects families with city resources. **(505) 768-3040** OIRA@cabq.gov

Immigration Attorneys

- **Rebecca Kitson Law**: **(505) 508-4015** rkitsonlaw.com
- **Vrapi Weeks Immigration Attorneys**: 5931 Jefferson St NE Ste A, Albuquerque. **(505) 466-5600** vrapiweeks.com

More Resources

- Directory of legal services near Albuquerque (Immigration Advocates Network)
- Your rights: ACLU, Immigrants' Rights

We Are Here

If your family needs support, if your children need someone to talk to, or if you simply need a safe place, we are here. Call the office or come talk with me. You know your children best, and you have the strength to prepare and care for your family. You are not alone.

In solidarity and with care,



Velia Cortalano
Executive Director, Cien Aguas International School