

January 30, 2017

Dear Students and Families,

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the Mayor's Office are committed to protecting the right of every student in New York City to attend public school, regardless of immigration status. The United States Supreme Court has also recognized the importance of public education for all students, including undocumented students. Your child is our top priority, and we will do everything in our power to protect that right and ensure all students get a quality education.

We take pride in our diversity. Immigrant parents, students, principals, teachers and other staff are a part of what makes our schools, and New York City, the amazing, strong, vibrant places they are. Whether you or your family arrived 100 years or 100 days ago —you are New Yorkers— and we stand with you.

To help ensure that all children continue to learn in safe, nurturing environments, we are providing the following direction to the staff members at our schools:

As in the past, DOE staff will not ask about or keep a record of the immigration status of a student or family member. If you do share confidential information, including immigration status, about yourself or your family, it will be protected under the City's confidentiality policy and the Chancellor's Regulations.

DOE staff will not grant unlimited access to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Like all other law enforcement agencies, ICE is not permitted access to schools without proper legal authority. If ICE officers go to a school for immigration enforcement purposes, they will be referred to the principal who will take appropriate action.

DOE staff will not release student information unless required to by law.

Anyone in our schools seeking immigration legal services will be referred to ActionNYC. ActionNYC is a program that offers free, safe immigration legal help from trusted community organizations, in your communities and in your language.

All New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, can continue to access City services. Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/immigrants for more information from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Additionally, resources are available on the DOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/SupportingAllStudents.htm>. This area of our website will be expanded in the coming weeks.

School staff will ensure all students are in safe and supportive learning environments. The DOE's policy is to maintain safe and inclusive schools that are free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, gender (sex), or weight. Any incidents or concerns should be immediately reported to school staff, who will investigate and take swift action.

Thank you for entrusting your child's education to us. Nothing is more important than putting our 1.1 million students on the path to success.

Sincerely,



Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
NYC Department of Education



Nisha Agarwal
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



Frequently asked questions

Can undocumented children go to school in NYC?

Yes. Every child in New York City has a right to a public school education, regardless of immigration status. Children age 4 or turning 4 are eligible for Pre-K and all residents have the right to attend public school from age 5 until graduation or until the end of the school year when they turn 21. DOE employees will not ask about immigration status. If they do learn about immigration status, they must keep it confidential.

Can I visit my child's school if I am undocumented?

Yes. To visit a DOE school, you need to have an official form of photo identification. The DOE accepts IDNYC, the free municipal ID card issued by New York City to all New Yorkers. IDNYC does not collect immigration status information. You can sign up for a free IDNYC card at www.nyc.gov/idnyc.

I am not a U.S. citizen. Should I be worried about deportation?

Immigration law can be very complicated and every individual's case is different. If you are not sure about how recent immigration announcements affect your ability to stay and work lawfully in the U.S., you should speak to an immigration attorney to understand your options. Call 311 and say "ActionNYC" for an appointment for free, safe immigration legal help.

My family is from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, or Yemen. Should I be concerned about the President's ban on immigration from these countries?

Every child in New York City has a right to a public school education, regardless of national origin. The President's order does not change this. If you are concerned about how the President's order may affect your or your family members' ability to remain in the U.S. or travel, call 311 and say "ActionNYC" for an appointment for free, safe immigration legal help.

If you have a family member who is currently being detained at the airport or you know someone who is currently being detained and you need emergency help only, call 844-326-4940 to speak to a volunteer attorney now at JFK International Airport.

Does the City participate in immigration enforcement?

The City does not conduct immigration enforcement actions. The federal government handles immigration enforcement. The City's confidentiality policy, which protects immigration status and other confidential information, is meant to keep the City a safe and welcoming place for all residents, including undocumented immigrants.



Can I feel safe calling the police for help?

Yes. The NYPD does not ask about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses, or other people who ask for help. Anyone who has been the victim of a crime, including a hate crime, should contact the NYPD at 911 or to contact the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force directly, call (646) 610-5267.

Where can I get legal help about immigration?

Call 311 and say "ActionNYC" for an appointment for free, safe immigration legal help.

Beware of unlicensed immigration service providers who take advantage of their customers. Get help only from a trusted, licensed immigration attorney or accredited representative.

What kinds of city services are available to me and my family?

Most City services are available to all New Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants, like going to school or using the health care system or other services. City employees will not ask immigration status unless it is necessary to do their jobs. They must keep immigration status confidential.

- **IDNYC** – IDNYC is the City's identification card for all New Yorkers. IDNYC does not collect immigration status information. Make an appointment at www.nyc.gov/idnyc.
- **Health care**
 - Low-cost emergency and non-emergency health care is available to all at public hospitals and clinics and at other affordable clinics. Call 311 for more information.
 - NYC Well is a free, confidential connection to mental health care in more than 200 languages, any time of day. Call 1-888-NYC-Well, text WELL to 65173, or go to www.nyc.gov/nycwell
- **Child care** – Low-income families with children age 6 weeks through 12 years old can get free or low-cost child care. Call 311 for more information.
- **Emergency food and shelter** – Locations across NYC provide free food to people in need. The Homebase program can help residents avoid entering the shelter system. Call 311 for more information.

What should I do if I feel like my child or I have been the victim of discrimination or harassment?

New Yorkers have the right to be free from unlawful discrimination, retaliation, and harassment, in the workplace, housing and public places, including public schools. For more information or to report an incident, contact the Respect for All (RFA) liaison in a school, call 311, or call the NYC Commission on Human Rights hotline at (718) 722-3131.