

OPEN HEARTS , OPEN CLASSROOMS

10 SIMPLE ACTS

10 #SimpleActs to welcome refugee children into your classroom

Why it is important?

Community as a Superpower creates inclusive, welcoming environments for people seeking safety in our communities. As educators we seek to develop engaging learning environments in which all learners feel safe, cared for and a sense of belonging. This is crucial in an increasingly hostile and divisive climate. The NEU has teamed up with British Red Cross, A Day of Welcome and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to collate 10 top tips to support you in building a welcoming culture of belonging and solidarity in your school for children who have experienced displacement.

1

LEARNING A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

When you have a new arrival, research their linguistic and cultural background. Become informed on the language/s they speak, their religious background and a brief overview of the context they may have come from. Model a culturally sensitive approach for your colleagues and pupils.

2

SAY IT RIGHT!

Getting someone's name right is a sign of respect and recognition. Taking the time to learn the correct pronunciation goes a long way.

3

HELP PARENTS, HELP YOU

Share information with parents about the UK school system. Navigating bureaucracy in a foreign country and in an additional language is difficult and families may need specific support.

4

BILINGUALISM IS A SUPERPOWER

Encourage pupils and their parents who speak English as an additional language to maintain and strengthen their home language skills. This will help with their English language acquisition as well as preserving their cultural and family connections to their homeland.

5

WELCOME THE WORLD EVERY MORNING

Morning registration/form time is the perfect opportunity to celebrate and share the multilingualism of our communities. Teach your pupils how to greet in multiple languages. Better still if the pupils do the teaching.

6

TEACH PEOPLE-CENTRED STORIES

Empathy is the ability to imagine, understand and share the feelings or perspectives of others. Learning about other people's stories and highlighting things we have in common allows young people to make connections with others through the emotions we share. Model using humanising language, such as 'person seeking asylum' rather than 'asylum seeker'.

7

HAVE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS, TALK ABOUT MIGRATION

Migration is very present in the media, so it's important we create safe spaces for young people to question and have constructive conversations. Direct the tone and offer different perspectives, ensuring the safety of all in the room. Utilise distancing techniques which mean young people don't have to share personal experiences: for example, use "How might it feel...?" as opposed to "How would you feel...?"; or by using characters.

8

MAKE EACH DAY MATTER, WITH MINDFUL MOMENTS

Engaging in mindfulness activities helps children and young people quieten their mind and focus their attention. Being mindful together will create mindful communities in school and beyond.

9

BEFORE THE BELL DO A LITTLE S.E.L.

By including at least one of the activities from the IRC's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Games Bank, you can have fun and save time. The SEL Games Bank enables pupils to develop vital skills essential for all learners, whilst you can enjoy building your rapport with them.

10

HAND IN HAND WE STAND

Creating a cohesive and inclusive classroom that is welcoming to pupils from all backgrounds and celebrates diversity is important. Incorporate 'identity mirror' activities like 'Building a Unifying Classroom' and 'I am From' Poems, which can be a healing activity, allowing pupils time to reflect on who they are and their cultural backgrounds.