

OPEN HEARTS , OPEN CLASSROOMS

10 SIMPLE ACTS

10 #SimpleActs
to welcome refugee
children into your
classroom



Why it is important?

The theme for Refugee Week, Community as a Superpower, draws on the power of community to create inclusive, welcoming environments for people seeking sanctuary and safety. It is part and parcel of the professional expectations of teachers to develop engaging learning environments where all learners can feel safe and experience a sense of belonging. This is particularly crucial in an increasingly hostile and divisive climate.

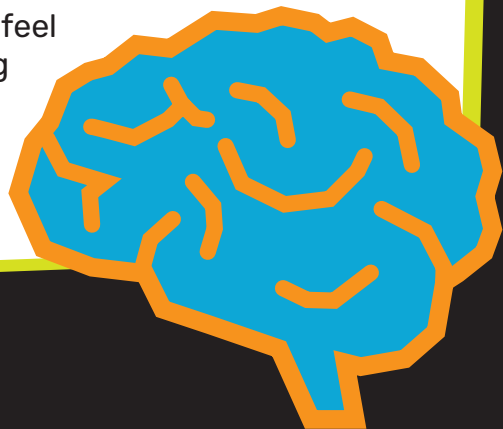
The NEU has teamed up with the **British Red Cross**, **A Day of Welcome** and the **International Rescue Committee** (IRC) to collate 10 of our top tips to support you in building a culture of welcome, belonging and solidarity in your school for those seeking sanctuary. The #SimpleActs suggested are adaptable and can be used for KS1- 4.



**1**

Learning a little goes a long way

When you learn of a new child arriving in your class, do a bit of research about their linguistic and cultural background. Become informed on the language/languages they speak, their religious background and a brief overview of the context they may have travelled from. This will allow you to prepare support, notify other pupils and gently incorporate your new learner into lessons, making them feel seen and celebrated. Doing so enables you to 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. It shows that you value their identity and cultural background. Mispronouncing a name repeatedly or changing it to make it easier for you to say, can make someone feel dismissed or unimportant. 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. Schooling looks so different in other countries and cultures, and this can cause confusion for parents. In Syria and many other countries, for example, the children do their learning from textbooks and parents may expect the same here. In Ukraine, it is standard for schools to have their own educational psychologist. Do parents know they need to apply for secondary school places when their child is in year 6? Navigating bureaucracy in a foreign country and in an additional language is difficult and families may need specific support. These welcome packs in English, Dari, Pashto and Ukrainian are brilliant: <https://www.reuk.org/welcome>

**4**

Bilingualism is a superpower

If your pupil speaks a language other than English, be sure to encourage them and their parents 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. Some parents may think that their child should only speak English now. Get in there early and make it clear that their home language is valued and crucially important.



5

Welcome the world every morning

Morning registration/form time is the perfect opportunity to celebrate and share the multilingualism of our communities and the wider country. Teach your pupils how to say 'good morning' in multiple languages. Even better if these are languages drawn from your class. Better still if the pupils do the teaching. This will help your new pupil feel seen and let them know that their language and heritage is valued and part of the community. Download our various 'Welcome' activities by registering here:

<https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/resources/a-day-of-welcome>

Good morning

Buen día

早上好

Bonjour

Καλημέρα

Bom dia

शुभ सवार

Dzień dobry

صبح بخیر

ਸੁਭ ਸਵੇਰ

Günaydın

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 can allow young people to make connections with others through the emotions we share. Include real stories in your teaching, and model using humanising language. Where possible use phrases like 'person seeking asylum' rather than 'asylum seeker'. This helps to highlight that their identity is not defined by their experience. Download our Understanding people's experience of migration teaching resources to explore real people's stories here:

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/understanding-peoples-experience-of-migration>



Be courageous, talk about migration

The topic of migration is very present in the media, so it's important we create safe spaces for young people to ask questions and have constructive conversations. As the facilitator, you can direct the tone and offer different perspectives, ensuring the safety of everyone in the room. You can utilise distancing techniques which mean young people don't feel pressured to share personal experiences. Through choice of language, for example:

"How might it feel..?" as opposed to "How would you feel..?"; or through the use of characters, such as this animation by the VOICES network:

<https://youtu.be/GrIZXmDC8TQ>



Make each day matter, with mindful moments

Engaging in mindfulness activities helps children and young people quieten their mind and focus attention on the task at hand. Mindfulness Moments Resource Cards provide activities that learners can use whenever they feel dysregulated. The A5 poster cards can be printed, laminated and displayed around school as a visual prompt and helpful reminder for staff to use with learners. These activities can be used with the whole class as a brain break, during transitions, or 1-1 with a learner who is dysregulated and needs support. Being mindful together will create mindful communities in school and beyond.

Mindfulness Moments Resource Cards:

www.rescue.org/uk/resource/mindfulness-moments-cards

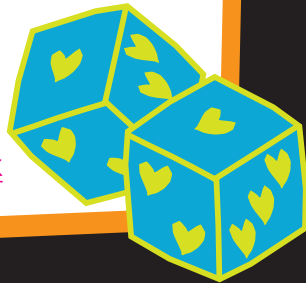


Before the bell do a little SEL

Children always remember the fun they have at school, but for educators there isn't enough time in the day. By including at least one of the activities from the IRC's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Games Bank, you can achieve two goals at once. SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The SEL Games Bank enables pupils to develop vital skills essential for all learners, whilst you have fun building your rapport with them.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Games Bank and 'SEL Games Bank':

www.rescue.org/uk/resource/social-emotional-learning-sel-games-bank



Hand in hand we stand

Creating a cohesive and inclusive classroom that welcomes students from all backgrounds and celebrates diversity is important. These two activities are a great starting point: incorporate 'identity mirror' activities like Building a Unifying Classroom and I am From Poems, which can be a healing activity. These allow pupils time to reflect on who they are and their cultural backgrounds. It also provides a learning opportunity for staff and students to get to know each other further, helping to form the foundations of healthy and meaningful relationships. Find the resources here <https://rescue.box.com/s/mopzjgywb1lfrewvmnqqqy5lfxkqsyd>.



If you are interested in learning more...

see the NEU's **Welcoming Refugee Children** toolkit on the website, developed in collaboration with teachers and pupils.
neu.org.uk/advice/equality/race-equality/welcoming-refugee-children

Hear the voices of refugee children and access our **refugee guides** on our website.
<https://neu.org.uk/latest/library/welcoming-refugee-children-your-school>

Looking for more **#SimpleActs** to engage your pupils?

Check out the **Refugee Week website** for a collaboration with The Moomins for the 80th anniversary.
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/https://refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/>



