***[Name of School]***

**is proud to be an accredited**

**Refugee Welcome School 2021**

Our school has been recognised for its commitment to:

1. **A** **Refugee Welcome Plan:** to make sure those seeking sanctuary in our school and wider community experience a warm and generous welcome;
2. **A Refugee Awareness Plan:** to educate all of our pupils, staff and community on the issue of refugees and the importance of providing a welcome
3. **A Refugee Action Plan:** to participate in community campaigns that improve the lives of refugees in the UK.

Signed: Dated:

**Refugee Welcome School Support Pack**

1. Introduction
2. What is a Refugee Welcome School?
3. The History of Refugee Welcome Schools
4. Designing a Refugee Welcome Plan
5. Designing a Refugee Awareness Plan
6. Designing a Refugee Action Plan
7. Resources
8. **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in accrediting as a ‘Refugee Welcome School’.

There has never been a more important time for our schools to demonstrate their commitment to welcoming refugees.

The UK’s Homes for Ukraine scheme was set up as a response for the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which displaced around 7.4 million Ukranians. People who are fleeing Ukraine can seek sanctuary here and people who have no family ties to the UK can be sponsored by named individuals who can offer them a home, such as a spare room or unoccupied residential self-contained unit. According to the UNCR data, around 129,000 Ukranians have arrived in the UK , almost a third are under the age of 18 .

Moreover, the UK pledged to resettle more than 5,000 in 2021 and up to 20,000 Afghan nationals over the coming years, fleeing the Taliban after they took over the country in August 2021. This is in addition to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, which has already settled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK government, and their families.

Historically , the UK’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis meant that at least 20,000 refugees from that conflict have arrived here since 2020. Many have been resettled in communities that have never hosted refugees before. Every single resettled refugee have had a connection to a school, as only families were eligible for the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Programme. This meant that schools became crucial places of welcome, orientation and integration for refugee families. Schools also played a central role in the growing number of Community Sponsorship schemes around the country. This is all in addition to those families who have come seeking sanctuary through the asylum system. Your school can help refugees integrate into your local community, and help the community to welcome refugees.

Citizens UK developed the Refugee Welcome School concept with one of its member schools, Saint Gabriel’s College, a Church of England secondary school in South London in 2016. A further 35 schools soon expressed an interest in replicating the model. Now Citizens UK and NASUWT, the Teachers’ Union, have joined forces to promote Refugee Welcome Schools. We hope to grow a movement of pupils, teachers, school leaders, trade unionists and community organisers across the country working together to make our schools and communities places of welcome.

Good luck preparing your three plans – and we look forward to receiving your application for accreditation as a Refugee Welcome School!

The Revd Ellen Eames NASUWT   
Chaplain, Saint Gabriel’s College  
Member of Citizens UK

1. **What is a Refugee Welcome School?**

Refugee Welcome Schools is an accreditation scheme to recognise schools that have made a commitment to welcome refugees in their institution and community, educate all their pupils and staff about the importance of refugee protection over the course of a year, and participate in campaigns to improve the lives of refugees in the UK. The scheme is run by Citizens UK in partnership with the NASUWT.

In order to become a Refugee Welcome School, you must submit the forms below, which provide detail of a Refugee Welcome Plan, a Refugee Awareness Plan, and a Refugee Action Plan. Your application will be scrutinised by a Refugee Welcome Schools Panel, made up of teachers, educationalists, trades unionists, children and refugees themselves.

Accredited Refugee Welcome Schools are encouraged to display their accreditation certificate prominently, and are welcome to use the logo on materials. Accredited schools gain access to the Refugee Welcome Schools Network and additional resources.

We ask schools to resubmit their application each year. We reserve the right to rescind accreditation of institutions not meeting the criteria or otherwise bringing the Refugee Welcome Schools scheme into disrepute.

1. **History of Refugee Welcome Schools: Saint Gabriel’s**

14 and 15 year olds at Saint Gabriel’s College, a Church of England secondary school in South London, came up with the idea of Refugee Welcome Schools in 2015. In Refugee Week in 2016 they hosted a summit for twenty-five other interested schools.

Here, the students share their reflections on why Refugee Welcome Schools are important:

Amanda: In autumn 2015, the news was full of pictures of the Syrian refugees being forced to leave their homes and make terrifying journeys. So many refugees are just young people like us, and if we were in that situation, we would hope that someone would be willing to help. One of our school Christian values is ‘Service to Others’ – Jesus teaches us to help our neighbour. We decided that we wouldn’t just walk on past as people suffered but that we would do whatever we could.

Oliwia: Our school is a member of Citizens UK, a community organising movement that helps people to become leaders, work together and change things for the better. We felt that the refugee crisis was very important to us so we wanted to take action that would make a difference. We are an inclusive Christian school with students of different faiths, languages and cultures, so we are already quite good at welcoming students who arrive from other countries. We thought about what a young refugee would need if they came to our school, and that we could set an example for how refugees should be treated.

Megan: We came up with the idea of becoming a “Refugee Welcome School”, so that we can play our part in responding to the crisis and be ready to give refugees who arrive here the support they need. We worked with our Citizens UK organiser to design a “Refugee Welcome School” commitment. Schools that sign up to this promise to teach all their pupils about refugees, and provide a welcome to refugee students including English language support, a school “buddy” and welcome activities. Schools all over the country signed up to the initiative which is incredibly exciting.

Crystal: Being a Refugees Welcome School also means using our public voice and organising with our local community to support refugee resettlement. We can’t just wait for the government to sort everything out - we would be waiting for ever! For example, despite the government’s promise to resettle 20,000 people, by October 2015 very few refugees had arrived. We took part in the “1000 Before Christmas” vigil outside the Houses of Parliament. I had never spoken in public before, but that day I spoke to a crowd of 1000 people about Refugee Welcome Schools and the fact that we are ready to resettle refugees – so the government should be too. One week later Prime Minister Cameron announced that Britain would resettle 1000 refugees by Christmas – which we did! We also worked with local faith groups to convince our council, Lambeth, to agree to resettle 20 families. Working together with other people can really make things change for the better.

Danielle: In Refugee Week we hosted a summit for Refugee Welcome Schools. 25 primary and secondary schools are attending from all over the country: 100 young people with their teachers. They included Christians, Muslims, atheists – everyone! We can’t believe that our idea has come so far. The summit was an amazing opportunity to share ideas and good practice, think about further action we can take, and celebrate the work that schools and young people can do to support refugees. We hope that many more schools will become Refugee Welcome Schools so together we can really make a difference.

1. **Designing a Refugee Welcome Plan**

Think about the systems and processes you will put in place to make refugee pupils and their families welcome in your community. For example:

* A buddy system for all newly-arrived refugee pupils;
* Considering parents of refugees for Teaching Assistant or other staff roles;
* Hosting a welcome celebration and engaging the wider community.

1. **Designing a Refugee Awareness Plan**

Think about how you can make sure all pupils and staff are educated about the importance of welcoming refugees over the course of a year. For example:

* Using Refugee Week as an opportunity to theme assemblies for every pupil;
* Assign a class to make posters about welcoming refugees for display in the school;
* Identify parts of the curriculum within which pupils could learn about refugee protection;
* Engage with staff to encourage participation among teachers and support staff.

1. **Designing a Refugee Action Plan**

Think about how your school can participate in community campaigns to improve the lives of refugees and those seeking sanctuary. For example:

* Run a ‘listening campaign’ to identify problems for refugees in your area;
* Campaign for refugees with teaching backgrounds/aspirations to be supported to develop their career;
* Join a local Citizens alliance, and support efforts to resettle more Syrian refugees, such as through Community Sponsorship.

1. **Application for Accreditation as a Refugee Welcome School**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of School** |  |
| **Local Authority** |  |
| **Headteacher** |  |
| **Refugee Welcome School Contact Name** |  |
| **Refugee Welcome School Contact Email** |  |
| **Refugee Welcome School Contact Phone** |  |
| **Refugee Welcome School Contact Address** |  |
| **Estimated Number of Pupils from a Refugee Background** |  |
| **Have you engaged teachers & support staff in developing this plan?** |  |
| **Do you have pupils:  a) resettled under any Ukrainian schemes;**  **b) resettled under any Afghan schemes;**  **c)resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme; d) community sponsorship?; e) unaccompanied minors under the Dubs’ Amendment?** |  |
| **Delete words in bold as appropriate:** | Our school has **NO / SOME / A LOT OF** experience of welcoming pupils from refugee backgrounds. |
| **Delete words in bold as appropriate:** | Our school **DOES** / **DOES NOT** have staff with specialist skills or experience in supporting pupils from refugee backgrounds |
| **Describe your Refugee Welcome Plan** | List here the practical steps your school will take and the systems you will put in place to ensure that refugee pupils and their families receive a warm and generous welcome in the school and the wider community. |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Describe your Refugee Awareness Plan** | List here how you will ensure all the staff and pupils at your school are educated about the importance of welcoming refugees, and how you will incorporate learning about refugees into the curriculum and broader life of the school. |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Describe your Refugee Action Plan** | List here how the school will engage with the wider community and refugee families to identify social injustices facing refugees in the UK and take action to campaign for change. |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | |

1. **Resources**

For more information or for advice on completing this application, contact Jess Maddocks, [refugee.welcomeschools@citizensuk.org](mailto:refugee.welcomeschools@citizensuk.org) or your local Citizens UK Community Organiser.