

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Responding to Questions and Offering Supports for School Staff

*The information below is informational and does not constitute legal advice. Each individual case is different, and advice may vary depending on the situation.*

### 1. What is hate speech?

“Hate speech is speech that offends, threatens, or insults groups, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or other traits.” A group in this context means your affinity group, for example: Chinese, Spanish-speaker, Muslim, Black, gay/lesbian/transgender, etc.

### 2. How do I confront hate speech at school?

These three readily available resources can provide you with easy tools to confront hate speech.

- University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education's Howard Stevenson indicates that “there has been a spike in racial and ethnic intimidation and harassment since the presidential election. Many of these incidents are happening at K-12 schools.” Dr. Stevenson offers advice for how educators can protect their students and care for themselves.”  
<http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook/how-confront-hate-speech-school>
- The Southern Poverty Law Center: <http://www.splcenter.org> is a civil rights organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. They are currently also monitoring reports of racial harassment and intimidation in the wake of the presidential election, provide resources related to fighting hate. They are also the umbrella organization under which resources for teachers/educators are provided through Teaching Tolerance ([www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)).
- The Anti-Defamation League: <http://www.adl.org>. The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Now one of the nation's premier civil rights/human relations agency, ADL fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights for all.

### 3. Is hate speech the same thing as a hate crime?

No. "A hate crime is an act motivated by prejudice or bias. To be a hate crime, the act must be criminal - not a mere expression of an intolerant opinion. Certain offenses become hate crimes because of what motivated the criminal act. When certain crimes are committed because of a victim's real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry a hate crime has been committed in Pennsylvania."

### 4. What should I do if I witness, hear of, or become a victim of a hate crime?

Call 911 immediately.

### 5. What can I do if there are incidents of hate speech, bias, prejudice, or violence against someone in my school?

The School District of Philadelphia has policies that protect our community.

- Policy 102 Multiracial-Multicultural-Gender Education was developed “to foster knowledge about and respect for those of all races, ethnic groups, social classes, genders, religions, disabilities, sexual orientations (perceived or known) and gender identities (perceived or known).”

- Policy 252 Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students was developed “to ensure safety, equity, and justice for all students regardless of gender identity or gender expression so that they can reach their fullest human and intellectual potential.”
- Policy 248 Harassment. This policy clearly defines harassment as unwelcome verbal, written, graphic and/or physical conduct that is related to one’s gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation, (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and/or political opinion. Harassment is:
  - threatening or harassing, intimidating or physically assaulting another student
  - writing graffiti containing offensive language which is derogatory to others
  - making derogatory jokes or name-calling or slurs directed at others
  - negative stereotypes or hostile acts which are derogatory to others
  - written or graphic material containing comments or stereotypes which are either posted, circulated or are written or printed on clothing which are derogatory to others

Harassment should be immediately reported to the school principal or designee, or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches and administrators. Any staff member who receives such a report shall immediately notify the principal or designee. And if the behavior continues or if the school does not take action, students or parents/guardians should report the incident to the district’s hotline at 215-400-SAFE.

- Policy 249 Bullying/Cyberbullying is the result of the School Reform Commission recognizing the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment at school. Bullying can be exhibited by an intentional physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:
  - 1. Substantial interference with a student’s education.
  - 2. Creation of a threatening and hostile learning environment.
  - 3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

1. It is intentional or deliberate aggressive behavior or harm doing, and
2. It is carried out repeatedly over time, and
3. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g. one (1) person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker or socially more powerful). Bullying takes many forms and can include a variety of behaviors.

As defined in this policy, bullying refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:

1. Physical – touching, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone.
2. Verbal –name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossiping, and spreading rumors.
3. Nonverbal – threatening, intimidation, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyber bullying (bullying that occurs by use of electronic or communication devices through means of social networking, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, tweets, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or web sites).

The policy also defines school setting, by indicating that it means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, in transit to and from school or at any off-site activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

#### **6. Where can I find information about diversity?**

There are many websites, books, organizations and individuals available to help. The following is a short list, but we are developing a toolkit for educators that will have a comprehensive list.

- Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org/>. Teaching Tolerance has resources related to talking with students about the post-election, working with children on issues related to inclusiveness and standing up to bias.
- Multicultural Toolkit: <http://www.awesomelibrary.org/multiculturaltoolkit.html>  
This toolkit contains research on the collaboration styles of various ethnic and cultural groups. It offers resources that discuss barriers to cross-cultural collaboration and provide methods for assessing and improving communication patterns and cultural competence. Resources include: Stages of Intercultural Sensitivity, How to Use Comparisons of Cultural Patterns, Communication Patterns and Assumptions, Summary of Normative Communication Styles and Values, and Ten Myths That Prevent Collaboration Across Cultures.
- Center for Applied Linguistics: <http://www.cal.org/>. The Center for Applied Linguistics is a private, non-profit organization based in Washington DC. The mission of CAL is to provide culturally sensitive resources related to language and culture in order to improve communication techniques. Their work aims to enhance language education, resolve culture-related conflicts, conduct research that fuses language with culture, and provide resources that demonstrate the importance of cultural understanding in communication. The site includes information related to adult ESL, bilingual education, immigrant education, heritage languages, sheltered instruction, and other topics that promote cultural competence in education.

#### **7. What is Islamophobia?**

“Islamophobia is fear or hatred of Islam and Muslims. It has existed for centuries, but has become more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. This phenomenon promotes and perpetuates anti-Muslim stereotyping, discrimination, harassment, and even violence. It negatively impacts the participation of American Muslims in public life.”

#### **8. Are there organizations in the area that advocates for and educates the community about Muslims?**

Yes, one of the best resources in the area is the Council on American-Islamic Relations: <http://www.cair.com>. “CAIR's vision is to be a leading advocate for justice and mutual understanding. CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. CAIR has a department to monitor and combat Islamophobia, tracks sources and incidents of Islamophobia across the country, and produces factsheets to debunk false information that has been spread about Islam and Muslims.”

#### **9. Where can I find information and examples of best and promising practices about working and living with refugees and Muslims?**

There is an excellent organization called Welcoming America. They have compiled excellent resources and developed a document titled *Neighbors Together: Promising Practices to Strengthen Relations with Refugees and Muslims*.

You can access them by going to [www.welcomingamerica.org](http://www.welcomingamerica.org)

**10. What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee?**

Yes. “A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.”

An immigrant is a person who has chosen to leave his/her country of origin to settle in another country.

**11. Are all immigrants “illegal”?**

No, not all immigrants are undocumented.

**12. What is the difference between an undocumented and an “illegal”?**

The correct term for someone who has entered without permission/inspection is undocumented. The term illegal is dehumanizing.

**13. Can undocumented students attend school?**

Yes. Undocumented students have the right to a free public education. In 1982 the U.S. Supreme Court in the famous case of Plyler vs. Doe guaranteed the right of undocumented children to attend school.

**14. Can college-bound undocumented students apply to FAFSA?**

No. Plyler vs. Doe does not guarantee college-bound undocumented students the right to a post-secondary education. Undocumented students cannot receive federal financial aid. Yet, different states have different laws about undocumented students.

**15. Where can students get financial aid?**

There are five states that offer financial aid (not federal aid) to undocumented students: California, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, and Washington. In Pennsylvania different universities and colleges have different rules. In many of the colleges and universities in Pennsylvania, undocumented students are allowed to enroll, but they have to pay the tuition rates assigned to international students.

**16. Are there any states that allow undocumented students to attend colleges and universities and also pay in-state-tuition?**

Yes. There are twenty states that do it: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Yet, there are some differences among these states. “Some offer in-state tuition regardless of status—California, Hawaii, New Mexico, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington all have such policies, for the most part only requiring that a student attend a state high school for 2 or 3 years. Other states link tuition benefits to receiving DACA—Arizona, Alabama, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Virginia have enacted policies permitting DACA grantees to establish residency for tuition purposes and receive some tuition benefits.”

**17. What about financial aid? Are there any states that allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid?**

Yes. “At least six states—California, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington—currently allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid.”

**18. Are there any states where there is a prohibition of undocumented students receiving in-state tuition rates?**

Yes. “Three states—Arizona, Georgia and Indiana—specifically prohibit in-state tuition rates for undocumented students.”

**19. Are there states that ban undocumented students from attending college even if they pay out of pocket?**

Yes. There are three states that ban undocumented students from enrolling in universities and colleges: South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia.

**20. How can I best support and encourage my students to pursue an education if they cannot get financial aid?**

There are a number of organizations that have designated scholarships specifically for undocumented students. Some of these are:

[www.thedream.us](http://www.thedream.us)

[www.salef.org](http://www.salef.org)

[www.maldef.org](http://www.maldef.org)

[www.latinocollegedollars.org](http://www.latinocollegedollars.org)

[www.unitedwedream.org](http://www.unitedwedream.org)

[www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org](http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org)

**21. What is DACA?**

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. DACA came as a response to Congress not passing the Dream Act, which would have given “lawful resident status” to undocumented individuals who arrived to the U.S. as minors. On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama signed an executive order that specifically target certain people “who came to the United States as children and meet several guidelines” who “may request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. They are also eligible for work authorization. Deferred action is a use of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period of time. Deferred action does not provide lawful status.” DACA is not a law.

**22. Who can apply to DACA?**

There are very strict guidelines that individuals must meet before applying to DACA:

- Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
- Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
- Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
- Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
- Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012;
- Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States;
- And, have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

**23. I would like to learn more about DACA. Where can teachers get some reliable information?**

An excellent resource for educators can be found in the American Federation of Teachers website: <http://www.aft.org/file/2109>

**24. Where can I get additional information about the *Dreamers* and DACA?**

You can go to [www.unitedwedream.org/dream-university/daca-toolbox](http://www.unitedwedream.org/dream-university/daca-toolbox)

**25. Are there any blogs written for/by undocumented students?**

Yes, My (Un)Documented Life: [www.mydocumentedlife.org](http://www.mydocumentedlife.org). “The mission at My(Un)Documented Life is to provide up-to-date information and resources to undocumented immigrants. [They] post scholarship opportunities that are open to undocumented students, strategies for navigating the educational system, information on how to apply for DACA/Advanced Parole, news on DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans), and much more. The site provides post-election news and what it means for undocumented community and the steps they can take to protect themselves.”

**26. What do I do if an undocumented student or family member shares his/her fear of deportation?**

The first thing is not to panic. There are resources, strategies, and community organizations ready to assist.

- **For Mexican students and families:** The Mexican government has launched a 24/7 hotline for Mexican residents that need support, emotional or otherwise, during the transition. *Estamos Contigo* Hotline: 1-877-632-6678. For consulate assistance and protection, or any matters of immigration, they can contact in the USA: 1-855-6395 and from Mexico: 001(520)6237874.
- **New Sanctuary Movement:** If anyone sees or is a victim of a raid in Philadelphia, they should call the emergency hotline: 267-333-9530.
- **The Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizen Coalition** has valuable information on what are the rights of undocumented individuals. For more information, go the following website: <http://www.paimmigrant.org/paisready#Raids>

**27. Can children get deported?**

Yes, children can get deported.

**28. Can my undocumented students, families and friends get deported immediately?**

No. “Individuals without status who are present in the U.S. have certain legal and constitutional rights. [They] have a right to a hearing and to have a judge review [their] case.”

**29. I would like to bring some speakers to address my school community. Where can I find speakers?**

This is a very short list, but the following organizations collaborate and advocate for immigrant’s rights.

- Juntos Philadelphia: <http://vamosjuntos.org/>. Juntos is a community-led, Latino immigrant organization in South Philadelphia fighting for “our human rights as workers, parents, youth, and immigrants. We believe that every human being has the right to a quality education and the freedom to live with dignity regardless of immigration status.”
- Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizens Coalition (PICC): <http://www.paimmigrant.org/> is a diverse group that brings together professionals, advocates and immigrant groups of different backgrounds to share information and resources, identify common problems, and advocate for solutions.
- Asian Americans United: [www.aaunited.org](http://www.aaunited.org). AAU has worked in Philadelphia’s Asian American communities and in broader multiracial coalitions around quality education, youth leadership, anti-Asian violence, immigrant rights, and folk arts and cultural maintenance.

- New Sanctuary Movement: <http://sanctuaryphiladelphia.org/>. The New Sanctuary Movement’s mission is to “work to end injustices against immigrants regardless of immigration status, express radical welcome for all, and ensure that values of dignity, justice, and hospitality are lived out in practice and upheld in policy.”

**30. Will Philadelphia continue to be a Sanctuary City?**

Yes, but it is now called 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment City. The new name still reflects the principles of a Sanctuary City, which prohibits almost all communication between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities. For more information, go to:

[http://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/20161111\\_Kenney\\_Philadelphia\\_stays\\_a\\_sanctuary\\_city\\_despite\\_Trump.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/20161111_Kenney_Philadelphia_stays_a_sanctuary_city_despite_Trump.html)

**31. Are there any Common Core-related texts that address diversity and inclusion?**

Yes. <http://perspectives.tolerance.org/central-text-anthology>. “At the heart of the *Perspectives* curriculum is the Central Text Anthology, a carefully curated collection of rigorous texts that exemplify anti-bias themes and meet the requirements of the Common Core State Standards. The texts encourage students to question common understandings, consider multiple viewpoints, analyze and critique power relationships, and act to change unfair and unequal conditions. In addition to written informational and literary texts, the Anthology includes multi-media texts (film clips, pod casts, interviews) and visual texts (cartoons, charts, photographs). Each text within the Anthology has been quantitatively analyzed for CCSS grade level and mapped to *Perspectives* themes and anti-bias standards.”

**32. My kindergartners and first graders have told me that they are afraid that their parents will be sent back to their countries. How can I help them relax?**

There is a great and fun website that our younger students can access for mindful exercises:

<https://app.gonoodle.com/channels/think-about-it/take-on-the-day?source=search>

**33. What resources can I use to understand the experience of my unaccompanied minors/migrants?**

You can access <http://nctsn.org/trauma-types/refugee-trauma/guidance-unaccompanied>. This website will provide you with greater awareness of the trauma experienced by unaccompanied minors/migrants.

**34. Is the School District of Philadelphia developing programs and services to inform students, families and staff on issues of diversity?**

Yes. We are organizing a community forum, professional development opportunities for staff, toolkits for families and staff, annotated bibliographies, an annotated list of community organizations, etc.