

Immigration Guidance for Teachers

Every child has the right to compulsory education, and the right to be in school. Immigration status does not affect this.

How to respond if an immigration issue arises:

- **Don't give advice.** Immigration advice is highly regulated and you must not give any advice about a person's immigration status unless you are qualified. Arrange for the child or parent to contact an advice service or lawyer, or tell them who they can contact. Coram provides free legal advice on the Migrant Children's Project advice line: mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk / **020 7636 8505** (Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 12pm). You can also contact this line yourself if you are unsure what to do.
- Be aware that this is a **very sensitive** issue and treat any information you have as **confidential**. You **do not have a duty to report** the child or their family to the Home Office, police or any other authority.
- **Look out for signs** of pupils having immigration issues, such as not being able to travel, not getting free school meals when they otherwise appear eligible, feeling uncomfortable talking about passports, or suddenly abandoning hopes of going to university.
- **Don't ignore the issue** – the child has disclosed something that could seriously impact their welfare and affect their future.

The basics

Just because a child was born in the UK does not mean that she or he is British. If a child in your school is not a British citizen, there are many different kinds of status that they could have – some children are undocumented, which means they have no legal status at all. Immigration status has **no impact** on a child's right to compulsory school education.

A child or young person needs good advice so that their immigration issues can be addressed **as early as possible** – waiting could cause serious problems later on. The first step is to see or speak to a qualified, competent **legal adviser**.

Useful contacts

Migrant Children's Project free advice line (Coram Children's Legal Centre): 020 7636 8505 (Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 12pm), mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk

The Law Society 'find a solicitor' website: <http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>

The Law Centres Network: <http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/i-am-looking-for-advice>

LawStuff - free legal information for young people online: <http://lawstuff.org.uk/not-from-the-uk/>