

Dear DCPS Community,

We have received a number of questions and heard concerns in recent weeks about what impact the election may have on our immigrant families, and as you may have seen, Mayor Bowser [recently reaffirmed](#) Washington, DC's status as a sanctuary city. All children in the United States have the right to a free public education, regardless of their race, ethnic background, religion, sex, language, family's income level, or immigration status. To support our shared vision for inclusive school environments, we are writing today with guidance that we encourage you to use and share so that there is no confusion about DC Public Schools' policies regarding immigrant students and families.

Can undocumented students enroll at a DC Public School (DCPS) school?

Yes. Children have a constitutionally protected right to equal access to education, regardless of their parents' immigration status or their own.

Will DCPS ask my student about his or her immigration status in the enrollment process?

No. DCPS does not inquire about any child's immigration status. Public school districts like DCPS have an obligation to enroll students regardless of their immigration status and without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Will DCPS share my immigration status with anyone?

No. As mentioned above, DCPS does not ask for information regarding any immigration status. If DCPS becomes aware that a child lacks immigration status, DCPS does not share that information.

Will my student be able to enroll at a DCPS school if he or she does not have proof of where he or she lives?

To be enrolled in DCPS, the parent or guardian must show certain original documents as proof of DC residency. *However, please keep in mind that "residency" for this purpose only refers to where the student lives, not their immigration status in the US.* If no documents are available to verify that the student lives in DC, DCPS has alternative documentation procedures to verify residency. For more information about DCPS enrollment policies, contact the DCPS Student Placement Office at (202) 939-2004.

Will this election impact how the District of Columbia treats immigration laws?

It's important to remember that the transition to the new administration will not take place until January 20, 2017, and even then, any new immigration laws would have to be passed by Congress. And as Mayor Muriel Bowser reaffirmed on November 17, [Washington, DC is a sanctuary city](#).

Where should I go if I am the victim of discrimination?

The District government, including DCPS, does not target people based on or collect information about immigration status. No agency, including our public safety agencies, will ever ask your immigration status. If this does happen, you should report it to the [District of Columbia Office of Human Rights](#) at 202-727-4559.

Where should I go if I need language access assistance?

The District government, including DCPS, provides free language interpreter services for people who need information in a language they understand when communicating with government. If you need language assistance, please inform the staff member what language you need help with and an interpreter will be called for you.

In addition, schools have a desktop display of the most common languages. You can point to the language on the Language Identification Desktop Display, and an interpreter will be called to assist you.

What should I do if I have questions about my immigration rights?

For questions about enrollment and DCPS policies, contact the DCPS Student Placement Office at (202) 939-2004 or the Language Acquisition Division at (202) 671-0750.

The Language Acquisition Division at DCPS is also sponsoring upcoming workshops led by local legal services providers to inform school communities about immigration rights. For more information about these workshops, including dates and locations, please contact the Language Acquisition Division at (202) 671-0750.

Families can also find immigration legal help on the Immigration Advocates Network's national directory of more than 950 free or low-cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states. The searchable directory can be found online at <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>.

For further information, or for legal questions and guidance beyond what DCPS can provide, we recommend contacting the [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#).