

Supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers

It is important to have knowledge and understanding of asylum seekers and refugees as you may find that some of your EAL pupils are from these backgrounds. Knowing the facts, figures and issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees will help you be empathic and effectively supportive these pupils in your school.

This module will take you through some of the issues facing young refugees and asylum seeker pupils. It will highlight you behaviours you should be aware of and suggest ways you can support these pupils in your classrooms and schools.



True or False?

Around 86% of refugees live in countries neighbouring their country of origin?

True - Also 85% of refugees are housed in developing countries

Pakistan is the biggest refugee hosting country in the world.

False – Turkey 3.7, Colombia 1.7, Pakistan 1.6 million

Most refugees in the world come from the Syrian Arab Republic.

True – 6.8 Million Venezuela 4.1, Afghanistan 2.6, South Sudan 2.2, Myanmar 1.1

In 2022 Asylum seekers receive £56.65 a week in the UK.

False – £39.63 They are housed, have free health care and children must attend school but are unable to work.

The UK is home to approx. 1% of the 26.4 million refugees, forcibly displaced across the world.

True.

Definitions.....

ASYLUM SEEKER

An asylum seeker is someone who has arrived in a country and asked for asylum. Until they receive a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee, they are known as an asylum seeker. In the UK, this means they do not have the same rights as a refugee or a British citizen would.

STATUS

Pre-settled status/Leave to remain – You can live and work in the UK but this expires after 5 years.

Settled status/Indefinite leave to remain - You can live and work in the UK as a settled person with no time constraints and are no longer under UK immigration control.

REFUGEE

A refugee is someone who: 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (Article 1, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

Asylum seeker pupils

- Please watch this video and make notes on the issues raised and faced by young people arriving as asylum seekers
- Discuss the issues raised

My Bright Kite "Freedom of Voice"
youth project presents

"I would like to be a dentist"



Task: What can you recall?

Can you list 10 issues that asylum seekers/refugees are facing?

- Confusing and different new environment
- Lack of English to communicate
- Missed schooling
- Trauma of journey
- Grieving
- Loss
- Living in foster care
- Lack of finances
- Fear of uncertain future
- Health issues

Can you list at least 5 behaviours or symptoms asylum seeker/refugee pupils may display as a result of what they are going through?

- Fear of authority
- PTSD
- Issues with diet and sleep
- Physical health issues
- Fight or flight behaviours
- Mental health issues

Refugee pupils

- Please watch this video and make notes on the issues raised and faced by young people arriving as refugees.
- Discuss the issues raised

My Bright Kite "Freedom of Voice"
youth project presents

"I would like to be an architect"



ISSUES RAISED

- Leaving old life behind
- Coping with a loved one in a different country
- Living through a war
- Unwelcoming environment in new country
- Lone parent coping in a new country
- Cultural differences
- New school environment
- Forming friendships

BEHAVIOURS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- PTSD
- Fight or flight behaviours
- Mental health issues
- Stress
- Isolated

How trauma can present in the classroom



Withdrawn
Depressed
Tearful & easily upset
Lack of engagement
Tired/falling asleep
Poor appearance & general health
High dependence on pastoral staff
Unprocessed trauma may come out at a later as language and insight develop
Lack of eye contact
Isolated
Disassociated
Guilt and shame



May appear ok but could have...
Low attendance
Struggle to make friends
Be reluctant to eat
Have stomach aches or headaches
Not have equipment & uniform
Problems doing home learning
Be nervous to ask questions in class
Be reluctance to work with others
A mistrust of authority
Problems concentrating



Drawn to the wrong friendship groups
Distractible and difficulties establishing behavior for learning
PTSD symptoms
Panic attacks
Stressed
Flight or fight reactions to situations
Flash backs/nightmares
Hypervigilance
Change in beliefs

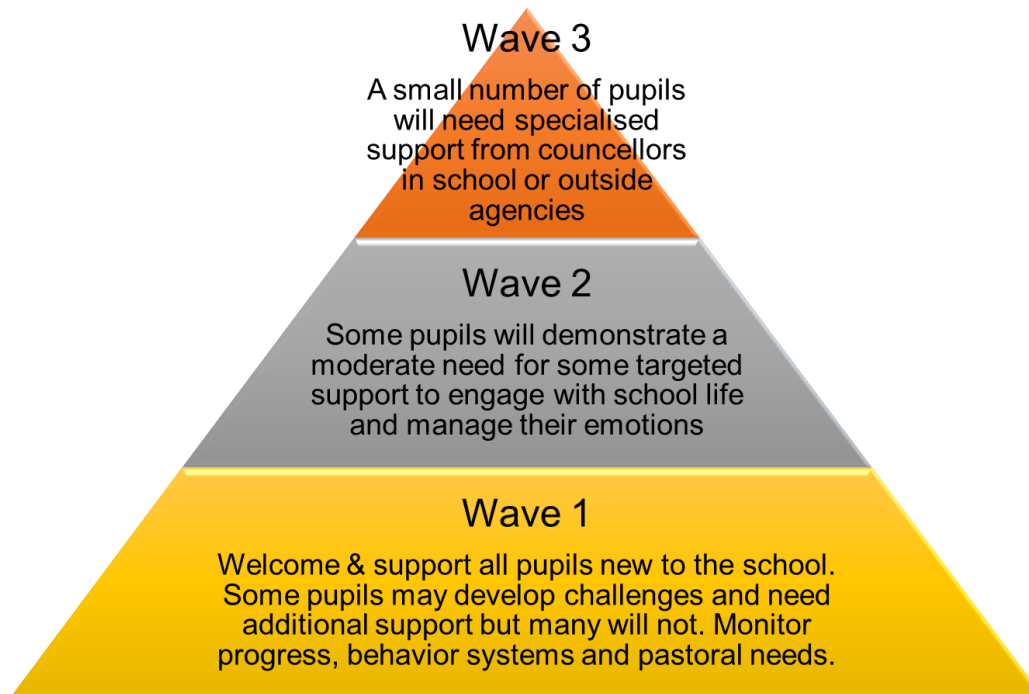


May be easily angered
Physical aggression with peers
Extreme views around war
Self harm
Bullying
Engagement in risky behavior
Struggles to regulate emotions
Sexualised behaviours

- Trauma is not always visible and presents in many different ways
- Some refugee and asylum seeker pupils will may not display any signs of trauma
- The effects of trauma can present a long time after an event
- Fostering open communication and good relationships are key

Supporting pupils with refugee trauma

UNIVERSAL OFFER AND INTERVENTIONS



IDEAS FOR SMALL GROUP OR 1-1 INTERVENTION

- Activities that build pupils sense of identity and belonging
- Building a positive self image
- Dealing with change
- Understanding and regulating feelings
- What are the different types of stress?
- Dealing with stress and trauma
- Ways to cope with stress
- Developing personal skills
- Support network of friends and adults

Task: Discuss...How supportive is your school ?

1. Are there systems in place to **identify** and **support** pupils from refugee and asylum seeker pupils in your school?
2. What can you do to make sure your school is a welcoming, supportive and inclusive place for refugees?
3. How can you educate staff and pupils about refugee and asylum issues?

Ways to ensure your school supports asylum seeker and refugee pupils...



- Ensure that full background information can be gathered from parents and carers. It helps to understand what pupils have been through from the beginning.
- Ensure parents can communicate with school and support with translation and transport to meetings if needed.
- Ensure pupils needs and background are communicated to all staff so they can support and have a greater understanding of needs. Be aware of topics or new items that may cause distress in schemes of learning.
- Ensure pupils have an older pupil with a similar background as a mentor as well as a buddy in their own year group.
- Be aware of financial barriers.
- Support with family with paperwork and communication with other agencies.
- Invite parents to coffee mornings or connect with families from same culture.
- Link with refugee charities and agencies to support mental health of pupils.
- Train staff to support with refugee trauma and deliver small group work.
- Have a safe place/time in school where pupils can drop in to discuss any issues they may have.
- Become a School of Sanctuary.
- Set up a sustainability uniform shop.
- Whole school training to raise awareness of refugee and asylum issues. Review curriculum to ensure refugee issues are covered and awareness is raised.
- Refugee Week activities and events .Raise money or collections for local refugee charities



Some ideas for you.....

Art projects... Sharing faith.... Community festival... Food from the Nations, Tea & Coffee from around the World... Coffee Mornings

Links to resources...



www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

www.refugeeweek.org.uk

www.unhrc.org

www.refugee-action.org.uk

www.refugeehome.uk

www.schools.cityofsanctuary.org

[IRC UK's Healing Classrooms | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

[Lawnswood School - English as an Additional Language](#) video links