

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



## Keeping DC Schools Safe for All Families and Students

### REMEMEBER THAT DC SCHOOLS ARE *EVERYONE'S* SCHOOLS.

- **All students have a constitutional right to public education.** DCPS and our DC public charter schools welcome schoolchildren and their families, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. We know that our city is safest and strongest when our children are at school, learning their lessons and preparing for their futures. Opening our schools to all is not only a DC value, but also protected by a Supreme Court case – *Plyler v. Doe* – that said *all* students have a constitutional right to public education, regardless of immigration status.
- **Your citizenship and immigration information – and your children’s information – will not be requested or shared.** School officials will not ask families to share information regarding their citizenship or immigration status. If a family’s immigration information is shared with school officials, DCPS does not record such information in the file containing the student’s education record. Further, federal and District privacy laws generally protect students’ education records from disclosure absent parental consent. DCPS keeps this information confidential to the greatest extent possible. Disclosing students’ and families’ private information would violate *our* commitment to making all students feel safe and included.
- **Keep contact information updated.** Now, more than ever, it is important that your children’s Emergency Forms are complete and accurate. As parents or guardians, you should include contact information for people who can take care of your children if you are detained. At home, consider having your children memorize some of these numbers. Remember that information from school Emergency Forms will not be shared with federal authorities, except where such sharing is required by law.
- **Consider making a backup plan.** Although we hope that no problems arise, advance preparation never hurts. If you are worried, consider making a backup plan. Ask an immigrant rights or legal organization about empowering someone else – a relative or friend – to watch your children if you face detention or deportation. Discuss whether you would wish your children to remain here, in the United States, or whether you would want your children going with you.
- **There is little chance that ICE will enter school property.** Under current federal policy, ICE treats schools as “sensitive areas” where arrests, interviews, searches, or surveillance activities will not generally occur. ICE permits these actions in schools only under limited circumstances, such as imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm.

### NEVER FORGET YOUR RIGHTS.

- **Remember that all students are entitled to disability and other benefits *without regard to legal status*.** All students are entitled to school lunches, school breakfasts, special education and other educational services, whether or not they have documentation. Once a student enters a schoolhouse, the laws make no distinction based on immigration status.
- **You enjoy language access at government proceedings.** Regardless of your immigration status, you have the right to understand governmental proceedings. If you need a translator or a translation at *any* governmental agency, including at a parent-teacher conference or meeting about your student’s individualized education plan, don’t hesitate to ask. Translations and interpretation are your rights – not just if you interact with District police or courts, but also if you have an interaction with ICE or federal immigration officials.
- **Remember your rights when interacting with federal immigration or ICE officials.** If you want guidance on what you should do if you are detained or confronted by a federal immigration and/or ICE official, consider attending a Know Your Rights training hosted by a DC legal services or immigration organization, such as those funded by the Immigrant Justice Legal Services (IJLS) grant program. If you need help finding a training or organization, ask your school officials or see the list of IJLS grantees that will be listed on the Mayor’s Office of African Affairs website, the Mayor’s Office of Latino Affairs website and the Mayor’s Office of Asian and Pacific Islanders website.

**CONTINUE USING CITY SERVICES WITHOUT FEAR.**

- **MPD will not ask you about citizenship or residency status.** The Metropolitan Police Department has a longstanding policy that strictly prohibits officers from demanding citizenship or residency status as a way of determining whether an individual has violated immigration laws. This means that you should feel comfortable calling 911, approaching a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officer or reporting a crime. Be mindful, though, that DC only controls the actions of MPD officers. Feel safe about calling 911. If you are on the street, consider looking for the MPD logo.
- **Inside and outside of school, continue using government services without fear.** No matter your status, you can report crimes against you, and MPD officers will protect you. You can call for an ambulance, call 911 and 311, visit senior centers, use public pools, ride the subway or buses, use hospital services and enter government offices, and District government will *not* ask for your immigration status. This is your government, too.
- **The District will not stop providing driver’s licenses to undocumented applicants.** The District’s program of Limited Purpose driver licenses is a national model for promoting community safety, economic productivity and equal protection for undocumented Americans. It’s a vital part of the District’s identity and economy. We think that it’s better if people can get licenses and auto insurance than go without identification.