Talking Points for Conversations with Families in Distress or Fear of ICE

More Resources: Project Dignity & Belonging Webpage

Purpose: To approach families with compassion, clarity, and actionable support when they are afraid to send their children to school due to immigration enforcement concerns.

Start with Compassion and Safety

- *"We understand this is a frightening and uncertain time for many families."*
- *"Your safety and dignity matter to us deeply."*
- *Our school is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all students—regardless of immigration status"*
- *"We are here to listen, support, and work together with you."*

Reinforce School's Role and Protections

- *"Schools are considered sensitive locations, and immigration enforcement actions are discouraged here under federal guidance."*
- *"We do not ask for or share immigration status. Your family's information is confidential."*
- *"Oregon law (ORS 659.850) requires that schools provide equal access to education and a learning environment free from discrimination or fear."*

Offer Support and Resources

- *"You have the right to keep your child enrolled and supported at school."*
- *"We can connect you with community organizations that offer legal help, Know Your Rights training, and emotional support."*
- *"If you're ever unsure or afraid, please reach out to us directly before making any decisions about your child's attendance."*

Template Letters for Communicating with Families in Distress

1. General Letter of Support

Subject: You Are Not Alone – Support for Our Families

Dear [Family Name or “Families”],

We know that this is a time of fear and uncertainty for many in our community. Please know that your family is not alone. Our school is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all students—regardless of immigration status.

We will never ask for or share your immigration information. We are here to support you and connect you with trusted resources for legal guidance, counseling, and more. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to [liaison name or school counselor] at [phone/email] if you need anything or just want to talk.

In solidarity and care,
[Your Name]
[Title/School/District]

2. Student-Specific Letter When Child is Kept Home

Subject: Your Child’s Safety and Belonging at [School Name]

Dear [Family Name],

We noticed that [Student’s Name] has not been at school recently, and we want to check in with care and support. If your family is experiencing fear due to immigration concerns, please know that Our school is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all students—regardless of immigration status". We do not collect or share immigration status, and your child has every right to learn in peace.

If you would like to speak confidentially, we are here for you. We can connect you to legal support, counseling resources, and trusted community partners. Please don’t hesitate to contact us at [Contact Info].

With care and respect,
[Your Name]
[Title/School/District]

Muestras de Cartas para Comunicarse con Familias Durante Tiempos de Dificultad

1. Carta General de Apoyo

Tema: No Estas Solo – Apoyo a Nuestras Familias

Estimado/a (Nombre de la familia o “Familias”)

Sabemos que este es un memento de miedo e incertidumbre

Sabemos que este es un momento de miedo e incertidumbre para muchos en nuestra comunidad. Sepan que su familia no está sola. Nuestra escuela se compromete a crear un entorno seguro, acogedor y de apoyo para todos los estudiantes, independientemente de su estatus migratorio.

3. Letter to Share Community Resources

Subject: Resources for Families: Know Your Rights, Mental Health & Legal Aid

Dear Families,

In these challenging times, we want to ensure you have access to tools and resources that may help support your family’s well-being and peace of mind. We’ve compiled a list of services available to undocumented and immigrant families, including:

- **Know Your Rights** guides
- **Mental health support** for youth and families
- **Legal aid and community referrals**

Please reach out to [Staff Contact] for a confidential conversation or to receive materials in your preferred language. Our school is here for you.

With respect and commitment,
[Your Name]
[Title/School/District]

High Desert
Education Service District