

Oklahoma City Public Schools

What you need to know about immigration, discrimination, and your rights at OKCPS

In recent months, many OKCPS families have asked questions or expressed concerns about the possible impact the new presidential administration may have on them personally. At OKCPS, we strive to ensure that our schools are safe spaces where a student's race, ethnicity, religion, or immigration status do not create any barriers to that child's education. The purpose of this document is to address some questions OKCPS families may have regarding their immigration status and our commitment to protect students from discrimination and harassment.

Q: What impact does undocumented immigration status have on my child's education?

A: None. All children have a constitutional right to equal access to education regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents. That right cannot be taken away by a president, Congress, or the State of Oklahoma.

Q: Do OKCPS schools ask for information regarding a child's immigration status when he or she enrolls?

A: No. Public school districts like OKCPS are obligated to enroll students regardless of their immigration status and without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. (In *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982), the U.S. Supreme Court held that the U.S. Constitution guarantees all children – regardless of immigration status – equal access to a basic public education.)

Q: Would OKCPS ever share a student's immigration status with federal immigration officials?

A: No. We do not collect this information or share it. Also, it is important to know that on October 24, 2011, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a policy that prevents federal immigration enforcement actions at "sensitive locations" (which includes public schools), unless a specific exception exists. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement website indicates that this policy is still in effect (<https://www.ice.gov/ero/enforcement/sensitive-loc>).

Q: What does OKCPS do to ensure that no student or family is discriminated against or harassed because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin?

A: OKCPS policies prohibit discrimination or harassment of OKCPS students, families, or employees on the bases of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, and many other protected classes.

Q: What should I do if I feel like I have been the victim of discrimination or harassment?

A: Please report the behavior immediately to a teacher, school leader, supervisor, or OKCPS administration. Complaints and concerns can be filed using the procedures in OKCPS Regulation G-02-R1, which can be accessed at <http://www.okcps.org/cms/lib011/OK01913268/Centricity/domain/97/board%20policies/section%20g%20-%20personnel/G-02-R1-Civil%20Rights%20Complaint%20Procedures%20New.pdf>.

Both include instructions on how to report such behavior. We take these complaints very seriously in order to assure that our schools and offices continue to be safe spaces.

Q: What about if I am a DACA recipient?

A: On September 5, 2017, the U.S. Attorney General announced that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program would be phased out within six (6) months. If you are a recipient of DACA, consider reaching out to an immigration attorney now in order to determine if you have access to a better form of immigration status. Additional information can be found on the Immigrant Legal Resource Center website, <https://www.ilrc.org>.

Q: What should I do if I want to better understand my immigration rights?

A: Only immigration attorneys can provide you with accurate advice about immigration status and how you can pursue your legal rights. For your own protection, please do not seek the advice of *notarios* or others who are not licensed immigration attorneys.

There are several resources available that provide assistance in locating an immigration attorney. One of those resources is the American Immigration Lawyers Association at <http://www.aialawyer.org/> (English) or <http://www.aialawyer.com/spanish/default.aspx> (Spanish).