

7th June 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you to inform you of an initiative we are excited and proud to be involved in and hoping to achieve in school.

At Balshaw's Church of England High School we are proud to be an inclusive community that values diversity, providing outstanding education for all children irrespective of their race, religion, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation knowing that they will succeed in our school as each child is unique in God's eyes. Every child is treated as an individual and given the nurture, care and many forms of support they need pastorally, socially, emotionally and academically to thrive and fulfil their own potential.

It is for this reason we are applying for a '**Schools of Sanctuary**' status, as we believe their values encompass our own Gospel Values of Love, Patience, Respect, Tolerance, Forgiveness and Trust in our caring school environment and we want to ensure all of our school community welcome everyone and provide a 'sanctuary' for many.

"**Schools of Sanctuary**" is an initiative to celebrate the good practice of schools who foster a culture of welcome and inclusion for all, especially asylum seeking and refugee families. The aim is to create a safe environment that includes everybody in a school, regardless of people's background, ethnicity, faith or gender. This initiative is driven by teachers, school staff, parents, governors and community groups. The Schools of Sanctuary network supports the thousands of young people seeking sanctuary in the UK, raising awareness of the issues facing people in the asylum system, challenging misconceptions and building social cohesion.

A lot of what we need to do to achieve and evidence "Sanctuary status" is already being done in school and is a natural part of our ethos, work and values. In the next year our "Schools of Sanctuary" work will focus on demonstrating and highlighting all that we do in school in order to raise the profile of our work.

We are launching our Schools of Sanctuary initiative this week in school and of course we want to keep parents fully up to date with our progress too. There will be updates throughout the year via the Headteacher's newsletter and there will be a number of events in school to mark Refugee Week 17-21st June including a whole school Act of Worship led by our Chaplain Luke Blakeley, a bake and cake sale led by the School Council as well as a literacy activity reflecting on the life and difficulties of Refugee children.

I hope you will join us in supporting our endeavours to become a Sanctuary school and we look forward as a school community to sharing our progress for the award with you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A. M Wilson
Deputy Headteacher

