Count me in!

A resource to support ESL students with refugee experience in schools

Government of South Australia
Department of Education and Children’s Services
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Acknowledgments

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Foreword

Teachers, school leaders and support staff recognise that young people do not learn in a vacuum.

Their social, cultural and economic experiences, mental and physical health all help to shape their abilities and capacity to develop skills, knowledge and values.

The South Australian Government is investing in education because we recognise that quality education and care is at the heart of every child’s opportunities in life.

However, it is your professionalism, skills and commitment that can really make a difference, especially for those children who are vulnerable because of difficult and traumatic life experiences.

Count Me In offers you practical strategies, ideas, advice and contacts to help you support children who have experienced life as a refugee.

I am delighted the South Australian Government has assisted by funding the production of Count me in!

I trust it will enable you to help more young people to achieve their best and contribute as valued members of our multicultural community.

Jane Lomax-Smith
Minister for Education and Children’s Services
Minister for Tourism
Minister for the City of Adelaide
This resource supports a whole school response to students with refugee experience who have exited New Arrivals Program (NAP) centres and are now at mainstream schools.

It is recommended that all staff in schools receiving students with refugee experience (school leaders and counsellors; learning area, English as a Second Language (ESL) and home group teachers; and support staff) familiarise themselves with this resource, beginning with section 2: Refugee experience, which contains refugee stories.

At the end of sections 5 to 8 are questions that can be used to support schools in evaluating how effectively they are meeting the needs of students with refugee experience and identifying possible areas for improvement.

The following acronyms are used in this book:

- ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- ARA: Australian Refugee Association
- BSSO: Bilingual school support officer
- CLO: Community liaison officer
- DIMA: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
- ESL: English as a Second Language
- MRC: Migrant Resource Centre
- NAP: New Arrivals Program
- PPV: Permanent Protection Visa
- SACE: South Australian Certificate of Education
- SACSA: South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability
- SHP: Special Humanitarian Program
- SSABSA: Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
- STTARS: Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service
- TPV: Temporary Protection Visa
- VFST: Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture
- VSCP: Victorian Settlement Planning Committee
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Introduction

Australia has always been a multicultural country and today is one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2006; Council for Multicultural Australia, 2005). Many Australians have come here as refugees and migrants seeking safety and the opportunity to build a new life for themselves and their families. According to the 2001 census, 43 per cent of our population was born overseas or had one parent born overseas. In addition, migration to Australia is increasing at a rate of one migrant every 4 minutes and 11 seconds (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Here in South Australia, the number of new arrivals, including refugees and migrants, has increased by 33 per cent in the last 10 years (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). The cultural mix in South Australia includes new arrivals from: Afghanistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Rwanda, Iran, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Serbia, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, Congo, Bosnia, Burundi, China, Myanmar/Burma, Congo, Somalia.

Within these countries there are many different ethnic and language groups adding further to the cultural and linguistic diversity of new arrivals.

Although most schools have had experience with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, many will not have worked with students with refugee experience. This resource makes some generalisations about the experiences, culture, language, levels of education and resettlement experiences of these students, but each student should be treated as an individual with their own unique story.

Students who arrive as refugee entrants cease being refugees on arrival and should be referred to as students with refugee experience. This term means that they are included in Australian society and places responsibility on the host to provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Working with students with refugee experience is enriching and fulfilling: they bring with them a wealth of life skills, understanding and different perspectives. It can also be challenging. In order to meet the challenges and support students to acquire a good education, all staff need an understanding of their backgrounds and the possible impact of trauma on their learning.

Many students with refugee experience have suffered trauma and have witnessed or been direct victims of torture. Many have spent years in refugee camps, after fleeing or experiencing forced displacement from their homeland due to war or conflict. Their
education in their country of origin may have been very disrupted and education facilities in refugee camps are generally limited: ‘schools are one of the first casualties of war’ (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1992, p.23). Because of these experiences and the many transitions these children and young people have undergone, their capacity for learning will be affected.

The challenges which await them on arrival may include an unfamiliar social system, in which they need to find housing, medical facilities, employment or income support and education. They may experience alienation, anxiety, malnutrition and the complexities and interconnections of low socioeconomic status and poor health. They may have problems with literacy and numeracy. In addition to such practical challenges, coming from systems which may have been oppressive they will also need to develop trust and a feeling of safety in a new cultural context.

This book is presented within the *DECS Learner Wellbeing Framework* (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2006). It aims to strengthen the capacity of schools to provide transition and ongoing support to students with refugee experience. It does so by providing strategies and resources for developing:

- inclusive curriculum and pedagogy
- learning environments
- policies and procedures
- partnerships with parents, the community and useful agencies.
Refugee Experiences

Definition

A refugee is defined by the United Nations Convention as someone who has left their country of origin and cannot return to it ‘owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’ (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1992). Governments may be the persecutor, or they may be unable or unwilling to protect their citizens. A refugee differs from a migrant in that migrants choose to leave their country of origin to seek residence in another country and may return if they wish.

In Australia’s migration program, refugees are a specific category of humanitarian entrants (see Appendix 5). Australia has both an offshore and onshore program for processing humanitarian entrants. Humanitarian entrants include permanent and temporary visa categories. Permanent humanitarian entrants include both those defined as refugees and special humanitarian entrants. Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants share many of the characteristics of refugees but have a sponsor in Australia who has agreed to assist them to settle here.

A small number of people arrive in Australia each year on a temporary visa (for example a visitor visa) or without valid entry documentation and seek the protection of the Australian Government under the terms of the United Nations Refugee Convention. If they seek such protection they are called asylum seekers and may hold a bridging visa while their applications are under review. People arriving without valid documentation are subject to a period of mandatory detention, from which they are released on a three-year Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) if the government recognises their status as refugees. People arriving with valid documentation live in the community and are eligible for permanent protection if they are deemed to be refugees and granted Permanent Protection Visas (PPV).

Under the Australian Government’s program, South Australia received 1519 humanitarian entrants in 2004-05, with 55 per cent under the age of 18. The countries from which humanitarian entrants originate are ever changing. In 2004-05 nearly half of all refugees who arrived here were Sudanese, with a large group from Afghanistan and Iran, and further groups from Sierra Leone, the Congo, Liberia and Iraq (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2005).
A series of transitions

Before arriving in the mainstream classroom, students with refugee experience will have had a series of transitions, almost beyond the comprehension and imagination of their Australian peers. The first of these is forced displacement from their homeland as they flee conflict, war or persecution because of their ethnic group or religion or both. They will have experienced separation or loss of their homes, friends and, in some cases, family. The flight to a refugee camp or a country of asylum is a journey marked with danger and the fear of an uncertain future.

People who have spent time in refugee camps will have experienced poor hygiene, meagre food supplies and poorly resourced medical facilities. Their access to educational resources will have been limited. Many refugees live in refugee camps for years and a number of young people arriving in Australia were born in a camp. Some flee their homeland only to find that the camp they sought refuge in, because of changing political circumstances, is a source of danger from which they had to flee again. Thus for some, their journey may have included more than one refugee camp in more than one country.

Life in Australia presents another huge transition with the ongoing challenges of a new cultural environment, language and social practices. There are practical difficulties to cope with, including accessing health services, housing, employment or income support and education.

The first transition into South Australian schooling is usually into a New Arrivals Program (NAP) centre where students may stay for up to two years before a further transition into a mainstream school.

For students with refugee experience the changes for them in social, emotional, physical and intellectual development

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Diagram 1

WELLBEING

- Experienced trauma
- Pre-departure difficulties
- Arrived in Australia
- Difficulty in adjusting to new cultural context
- Changing social values resulting in family breakdown
- Apprehension about the future
- Concern for family in home country
- Financial concerns
- Months or Years
- Settled in the community
- Future possibilities clearer
- Learned that they will come to Australia

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are compounded by trauma and the series of transitions they experience. In some cases this may result in extended periods in which they are below a state of wellbeing as shown in Diagram 1.

**The impact of trauma on development and wellbeing**

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc, in *School’s in for Refugees* (2004, pp.29–33), describes the impact of the trauma experienced by people with refugee experience.

They may have been subjected to or have witnessed horrifying and traumatic events including:

- war, bombing or shelling
- destruction of homes and schools
- violent death or injury of family or friends
- separation from family members
- sudden disappearances of family members or friends
- physical injury and limited medical attention
- deprivation of food, safe water and other resources essential for survival
- fear of discovery or arrest
- arrest, detention or torture
- forced conscription into armies or militias
- rape or sexual assault.

All will have experienced some degree of loss of home, place and culture, as well as the profound losses of parents, siblings, friends and significant others through death or separation.

The impact of pre-arrival and settlement experiences will depend on the:

- nature and extent of exposure to traumatic events
- age of the child at the time of maximum disruption to life
- degree to which the family has remained intact
- quality of the post–trauma environment and opportunities for recovery.

For some refugee children and their families, the settlement stage may see the development of psychological problems requiring ‘one-to-one’ professional intervention.
Anxiety and fear

Anxiety and fear typically persist in a new country well after actual or threatened violence has ended. Difficulties with concentration and memory, as well as disturbed sleep patterns, can impair the ability to learn and acquire new skills. Exploration through play, mastering new situations and the taking in of new information can also be inhibited. This is particularly problematic when adjusting to an unfamiliar and new environment.

Re-experiencing traumatic events

Re-experiencing the trauma is a characteristic reaction to traumatic events. This often occurs at night in the form of nightmares or during the day in the form of flashbacks and memories. Everyday stimuli can also trigger reminders of traumatic events. Common triggers are people in uniform, sirens, fireworks, sudden loud noises, and authoritarian and threatening behaviour.

People who have felt insecure for long periods may have learnt strategies for self-preservation. Their refugee experience may have taught them that certain physical gestures, facial expression or tone of voice are precursors to violence. Following their resettlement they may still be constantly scanning their environment for these signs. As well as distracting them it can lead them to misinterpreting certain behaviours of a teacher or students as potentially violent so the student may react aggressively or violently as a way of protecting themselves.

Traumatic experiences can cause overwhelming anxiety and the student may cope by 'shutting down' through numbing of feelings, restricting the amount of information from the outside world, and detachment from people and things. Shutting down can also manifest as social withdrawal, avoiding stimulation, looking blank and displaying limited imaginative activity. These mechanisms are a way for the mind to cope with fear but rarely operate all the time. There may be fluctuations in emotions and behaviours, reflecting periods of intense anxiety alternating with periods of withdrawal and emotional numbing. With the pressure of anxiety and tension (which cannot be controlled) the student may become highly irritable, unable to tolerate frustration, resulting in reduced control over impulsive and aggressive behaviour.

Connections with people

Connection with others is usually dramatically altered as a result of trauma and dislocation. A fundamental cause of disconnection is the loss of others and prolonged isolation and separation from important figures such as parents or other important caregivers. This may be compounded or mitigated by the receptivity of the new environment, and the quality of nurturing and emotional support available. The age of a child or young person at the time of loss greatly influences the effects of that loss.
As Rutter notes,

‘in general, younger children seem to suffer the most adverse effects, while older children (especially those who had a previous history of family warmth and affection) often possess internal resources which help them better cope with the stress of family separation’


Prolonged separation from parents at a young age interferes with the future development of relationships. A fundamental internal sense of security is destroyed unless a new permanent and nurturing relationship is fostered with a protective adult. Without such a new relationship, the child is at high risk of difficulties throughout life. The capacity to form close, trusting relationships and sociable peer relationships can be affected in various ways.

**Impact of isolation and separation**

Some children develop a pattern of anxious attachment in which they remain fearful of losing people who are important to them. This can manifest as clinging behaviour and/or jealousy. Anger is harboured when the attachment figure is unavailable but may not be expressed for fear of rejection. Other children develop an overly self-sufficient style of relating and avoid close relationships. When developed early in life, such independence can interfere with the capacity to form mature relationships later on. It can easily be misunderstood as a healthy reaction because the child is self-reliant. Another pattern that develops is that of compulsive care-giving, where personal needs are denied in order to look after others. Again, this can appear as a healthy reaction because the child is helpful and accommodating, but this is at the expense of his or her own needs being met. It is also a form of relating that can easily be taken advantage of by others.

**Self-concept**

Throughout childhood, the sense of self and self-concept evolve, with identity formation being one of the central developmental tasks of adolescence. There are many different theoretical understandings of the self but most share the view that the self functions as an inner map of the person and their relationship to others and the world. The map can be of varying complexity, and consist of attributes and expectations, which can be predominantly negative or positive in value. Self concept will have been influenced by experiences of acceptance and/or rejection, approval and/or disapproval. It will continue to be affected by the family’s expectations of how they will perform at school. Some children and young people may experience unrealistic pressure to succeed, while others may not experience any support from home to be successful at school.
Perceptions of the world

Refugee and settlement experiences can also profoundly affect children’s perceptions of a secure world, notions of good and bad, and their sense of a future. The belief that home or community is a safe place can be destroyed. As Van der Kolk states, ‘the essence of psychological trauma is the loss of faith that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe place to retreat within or outside of oneself to deal with frightening emotions or experiences’ (Van der Kolk, 1987 in Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 2004). Loss of safety also means a loss of trust in others to provide protection (Raundalen, 1997 in Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 2004). Raundalen has emphasised that should parents be unable to protect their children from danger, the children may feel betrayed.

Children with refugee experience have left behind or have never developed a sense of place and belonging to a culture that would have provided them with a frame of reference through which to view the world and their future. Children whose recent life experience has been dominated by overwhelming violence and destruction and who may have witnessed the very darkest side of human existence, may struggle to conceive of a future that holds anything meaningful or positive for them. Garbarino and colleagues, who are recognised leaders in the field of the effects of violence on children, capture well the impact of violence and lack of support on children:

‘…in the developmental process, the child forms a picture or draws a map of the world and his or her place in it. As children draw these maps, they move forward on the paths they believe exist. If a child’s map of the world depicts people and places as hostile, and the child as an insignificant speck relegated to one small corner, we must expect troubled development of one sort or another: a life of suspicion, low self-esteem, self-denigration, and perhaps violence and rage. We can also expect a diminution of cognitive development and impediments to academic achievement and in-school behaviour.’


Shame and guilt

Even when nothing could have been done to change what happened, children imagine that they should have been able to do something; to the child, this is preferable to facing sheer
helplessness. Manifestations of guilt and shame include fantasies of revenge to repair damage done by self-destructive behaviour to expiate guilt, avoidance of others due to shame and an inability to participate in pleasurable activities. Shame can also lead to aggression or defiance towards others as a way to defend against aggressive feelings towards oneself. Children can also feel considerable guilt for having left family members and friends behind.

**Specific effects of the refugee experience on families**

Families play an important role in helping their children meet the developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence and in protecting them from the effects of adverse life events. However, the refugee experience can affect the capacity of families to carry out this role, particularly when parents or caregivers have been exposed to torture and other traumatic events and are experiencing associated mental health difficulties. The feeling of guilt for being unable to protect their children from terrible events may serve as a barrier to acknowledging any adverse effects.

Family relationships and roles are often drastically altered by the refugee experience. In many families, children will have lost a parent through death or separation. Others may be rejoining families after long separations. In some cases, young people may be living as household heads, as members of their extended family or friends, or as unaccompanied minors. Children and young people who have developed English language skills, often act as interpreters and negotiate with agencies such as Centrelink or the doctor on behalf of their parents.

**Unaccompanied young people**

A number of young people, 16 to 24 year olds, are arriving unaccompanied without family support and may be particularly at risk. They may have additional challenges in developing life skills and community connections which can impact on school attendance, engagement and retention.

‘Studies show that families who are well connected with the community are better able to meet their children’s needs.’


However, having recently arrived, refugee families often have limited access to the protective effects of social support in either the newly arrived or wider communities. Further, as a result of persecution in their countries of origin, parents may be fearful of people outside the family and hence may resist forming supportive social relationships or discourage their children from doing so. Some parents may also fear the consequences of their children’s
contact with a new culture, particularly if there is a divergence of values between it and their own. This may not only affect children’s abilities to make connections with their new culture, but also lead to intergenerational conflict and an overly harsh or overprotective approach to parenting.

Ongoing trauma

There can be ongoing trauma for families when the children are eager to be involved in and identified with the practices of the Australian community while parents continue to live within their traditional culture. Children sometimes develop English language skills ahead of their parents or caregiver, enabling them to have more power in the wider community. Some single mothers face additional difficulties in keeping the family ties strong, particularly with teenage children.

Teachers and other authority figures

The degree of approval or disapproval by figures in authority, namely parental figures, teachers and community leaders, is particularly critical in determining whether the self-concept is positive or negative and how differentiated it is. In a simple or undifferentiated view of self, the child may only value a limited set of attributes, making them vulnerable to failure and self-degradation should a particular attribute be judged negatively. Discrimination and racism are damaging to the development of self. When there is a comprehensive understanding of the background experiences of refugee children in the school and in the wider community, insensitive or racist treatment is diminished and the likelihood of children internalising simple and negative stereotypes is reduced.

The educational experience of students with refugee experience

Severely disrupted education and unfamiliarity with the style of teaching in Australia may mean that students may not be able to call on:

• first language literacy to support the acquisition of a new language
• social understanding of how to act in a classroom and the appropriate communication skills
• appropriate learning strategies to process content
• relevant cultural understandings to scaffold their learning
• relevant genre or writing skills
• topic-specific vocabularies for academic subjects
• literacy and numeracy skills necessary to access the curriculum.

Experience of trauma can affect students’ capacity to learn. They may experience:

• culture shock from being in a new country with unfamiliar systems
• difficulty in concentrating and focusing on learning
• lethargy and retention problems caused by poor sleep, nightmares and poor diet
• difficulties caused by factors such as malnutrition and deprivation
• sight and hearing problems.
The journey to Australia

Moses was born in a village in southern Sudan. There are many tribes in southern Sudan, and Moses’ tribe was Dinka. In southern Sudan, a civil war between the government troops of northern Sudan and the liberation armies caused the death and wounding of many people, and young boys were often taken away from their families and forced to fight. Moses’ older brother was taken by the army, and the family never heard from him again. Life was very hard in the rural area where Moses lived, and there was not much food.

Moses’ father had two wives, which was a tradition in Sudan. His father lived with his first wife and her two sons and three daughters. He visited Moses’ mother, his second wife, every other week, and Moses looked forward to him coming. Dinka people value their cows, and when Moses was quite small, his father bought him and his mother a cow, which Moses looked after and loved. Moses’ mother had lost her leg to a landmine, so from a young age Moses had to work hard to ensure that the two of them had sufficient food and wood for cooking. Even so, Moses loved his life in Sudan. Each day he roamed around the village, chatting with his many uncles, helping aunties to carry their heavy loads of wood, herding cows, fishing in the river, climbing trees and hunting with friends.

When Moses’ father visited, he would talk with other men in the village of his opposition to the northern government of Sudan, and Moses loved to sit behind him and listen to his elders’ conversations. Moses’ father had twice been imprisoned and tortured for speaking out against the government, and Moses knew to hide in the forest when soldiers visited their village to look for his father. One time, a young soldier had caught Moses and badly beaten him. He was lucky to survive, because on the same occasion his close friend was killed in front of him for resisting the soldier. Moses escaped when the soldier was called away, but Moses has never forgotten the image of the soldier shooting his friend.

When Moses was 10 years old, his father talked about his decision to leave Sudan for Kenya, as he feared being arrested a third time. Moses’ father and mother talked through the night about whether she could manage the journey to Kenya, which would entail much walking and hardship. By morning, they told Moses that they had reached the decision that Moses should go with his father, but that his mother would remain in the village with her sister. Moses was devastated at the thought of leaving her, his uncles and aunties, his cow and the life he loved.

Moses’ mother promised that she would somehow see him again in the future, and gave Moses one of her bracelets to remind him of her. When night came, Moses and his father collected the first wife, whom Moses called stepmother, and the family set off on the journey to Kenya.

The journey was long and difficult. Moses now had two half-brothers and three half-sisters, and had to get used to being in his new family. His stepmother was very kind to him, but he cried each night, thinking of his mother. As they journeyed, they slept in the forest during the day, and travelled at night, walking long distances. Once they were attacked and beaten by local villagers, and their saucepans were stolen. When they arrived in Kenya they had few belongings left, and they were exhausted and malnourished. One of the things that made Moses happy in these difficult times was that he had managed to hold onto his mother’s bracelet to remind him of her.

For the next five years, Moses lived in a refugee camp in Kenya. The camp itself was dangerous, with thousands of people living closely together. There was fighting between the many factions in the camp, there was only a little schooling, and Moses felt that he never had enough to eat because his food allowance was small and the food was not always fresh. He and other boys spent their days getting up to mischief. After five years in the refugee camp, the family were
Interviewed by Australian government officials, and accepted for resettlement in Australia. Moses and his family arrived in Adelaide when he was 15 years old. After his village life in Sudan and the refugee camp in Kenya, Adelaide was very strange, with high buildings and many fast cars travelling down broad, tarmacked roads. After life in the refugee camp, Moses had grown used to the separation from his mother, but he still missed her, and wore her bracelet as a reminder of happier days in Sudan. He soon realised that the health services in Australia were better than those in Sudan and that his mother could see doctors who would give her an artificial limb and help her to walk. He felt angry that his mother had not been able to accompany him, and hoped that she could join him when he was older.

At school in Australia

On arrival in Australia, Anglicare found Moses and his family a house that they could afford to rent, though it was too small for eight people—Moses and his two half-brothers had to sleep on the lounge floor. Many things in the house surprised Moses: that clean water came by turning a tap, that food was prepared on an electric stove. Moses often went out and walked around the streets, but was sad that he knew no-one and that he could not wander in and out of houses as he used to do in his village. He felt very isolated and alone, and was confused about who he was in this strange culture.

With his half-brothers and sisters, Moses attended a New Arrivals Program centre. He found it difficult to learn English, but there were at least a number of other Sudanese and refugees from other countries.

After eighteen months, he moved to a mainstream school where he entered Year 9. He found the classroom very restrictive. He couldn’t understand the teacher. In contrast to the New Arrivals Program, there were very few refugees in the school and he felt very alone and misunderstood. He hated the school. There were both boys and girls in the school, and they were treated as equals, whereas in Sudan, boys were regarded as more important. Studying was also difficult for Moses. He had experienced very little schooling in his life so far, and was not interested in reading and writing. He would much rather work on cars, because he was good at it. Teachers assumed that a student in secondary school had learnt reading and writing skills in primary school, and Moses was often in trouble for not concentrating and not doing his homework. Homework was difficult for Moses. There was little space at home for him to study, and the television was always on in the lounge room where he slept. His father spoke little English and his stepmother had never been to school to learn reading and writing. They did not understand the school system to discuss his problems with a teacher, nor could they help him with homework.

There were other problems at home too. Moses was having difficulty sleeping, partly because of the cramped and noisy conditions, but also because he had nightmares in which he saw his old friend being shot by the soldier. This reminded him of how bad the war was at home, and how much danger his mother was in. His father had also become very angry, beating the children when they annoyed him. His father often remembered the torture he had experienced in prison, and he was depressed because he had to leave Sudan. He also felt guilty because he had left Moses’ mother in dangerous conditions. All these problems made him feel angry and frustrated about his ability to change this situation.

As a result of his difficulties at home and school, Moses’ moods oscillated between anger and sadness, and he was unable to control his behaviour in the classroom, even though each day he resolved to concentrate hard. In Sudan, Dinka people were regarded as strong and proud,
but in Australia Moses felt looked down on by other children, who teased him because he was so different from them. He was in trouble for fighting back when he was teased, and was occasionally suspended from school. Moses began to stay away from school because it made him so angry, and he started to hang around the shopping centre, making friends with some boys there. They admired him for his strength and daredevil attitude, which encouraged Moses to miss school. One of the teachers at school noticed Moses’ difficulties, and he invited Moses to join the mechanics workshop he was running after school. From the first time he attended, Moses loved it and he did not want to go on with school any more. A community worker at the school told him about a mechanics course being run at the local TAFE, and Moses jumped at the idea. His father didn’t agree at first, but once the school explained that it could lead to an apprenticeship and potentially a job, he agreed to let Moses try it. The worker also linked Moses into an after-school support program (an English language course) to help improve his English and suggested that he talk with a counsellor to deal with the nightmares he was having. From that moment, Moses began to enjoy his life in Australia. He liked the way Australians took such delight in cars, and felt proud that he could fix them. He began to make friends with others who admired his skills and, for the first time since he left the village, he felt as though he belonged.


Refugee story – Radhia

The journey to Australia

Radhia is 11 years old and is in her final year of primary school in the western suburbs of Adelaide. She was born in Iraq, of a Shiite Muslim family. When she was growing up, Iraq was ruled by the Ba’athist Socialist party, which would not entertain any political opposition. Because of this, the human rights of Shiite Muslims were abused, and political activists were particularly at risk of detention, torture and even execution.

Until she was seven years old, Radhia lived in Baghdad with her mother, father and younger sister. She had a large extended family, and her grandmother and two uncles shared her house. Radhia’s father was a journalist, and her mother had trained as a science teacher, but stayed at home to look after the household after she was married. Radhia worked hard at school and had many friends.

When Radhia was seven years old, her father left for work one morning, and did not return. The family never heard from him again, and although work colleagues, family and friends searched, there was no trace of him. Talking about her father became taboo in Radhia’s household, as everyone was so upset by his absence. Radhia felt the family were trying to hide information about her father from her, and she heard her cousin whispering that he had been imprisoned, tortured and murdered, which made Radhia very unhappy. She found it difficult to smile any more. Radhia missed her father’s laughter, his affectionate nature and the stories he told her as they sat together in the courtyard of their large family home. He had passed his love of writing to Radhia, and the two of them had planned that Radhia would go to university when she was old enough, and learn to be a journalist like him. Radhia had written simple stories to share with her father and her teacher, and she received high marks for her work at school.

After Radhia’s father disappeared, life changed for the worse. The police often came to their house to interrogate Radhia’s uncles about her father’s absence, and Radhia witnessed them beating her favourite uncle. Radhia hated the feeling of fear in the family whenever the
police visited. Now that her father was no longer the family’s breadwinner, Radhia’s mother had returned to teaching, and grandmother looked after the household. Radhia loved her grandmother, who talked about her village life as a little girl. One evening, the police visited the house and arrested Radhia’s two uncles. During the night, Radhia’s mother packed her and her sister into a truck that was going to Iran. Radhia had no time to say goodbye to her beloved grandmother and friends, and cried to go home as they drove. Her mother tried to comfort her, explaining that it was unsafe to stay in their home, and that she had been able to organise transport to Iraq by gradually selling her gold jewellery during the last year and paying bribes to Iranian officials.

Over the next year, Radhia, her sister and her mother lived in a refugee centre in Iran, where 5000 people lived in crowded conditions. Her mother struggled to provide food and safety for the family, often relying on the generosity of others to survive. There was limited schooling for Radhia and her sister in the refugee centre, though their mother was able to tutor them. In desperation, her mother wrote to an old colleague of her husband who had fled to Australia a few years before, and he agreed to sponsor them to come to Australia. Gaining a visa to come to Australia was a difficult and complicated process for the family, but at last they arrived to find their friend waiting at Adelaide airport. On the bus from the airport, Radhia thought the country very odd. Colours and smells were different; traffic was fast and regulated. People were dressed differently from those in Iraq and Iran, and she saw women and girls of her age with bare legs, arms and heads.

The family moved into their friend’s small flat, but after three days, they all realised that there was not enough space and Radhia’s mother was uncomfortable in a flat with a single man. Radhia, her sister and mother moved to another flat. There, Radhia’s mother was told that her daughters should attend a New Arrivals Program, a language centre for students to learn English, and within a week of arriving in Australia, Radhia and her sister had started school.

At school in Australia

The New Arrivals Program had other Iraqi girls and boys, so Radhia did not feel so alone. There was a bilingual school support officer who often used to talk to her, make her feel welcome and help her to understand her school work. She stayed in the program for three terms before exiting to her local primary school.

Radhia was bewildered by school in Australia. In Iraq, the children sat in rows and were quiet and obedient to the teacher, who was respected as the source of knowledge for the students. In Australia, the classroom seemed noisy and chaotic, and there was a different style of teaching and learning. The students were encouraged to ask questions and challenge the teacher’s words. Worse, although Radhia had studied hard in the New Arrivals Program, she could not yet speak well or write in English, and could not pursue her old enjoyment of writing stories to share with her teacher. At home, Radhia wrote stories in Arabic about her life in Iraq, remembering her father, her grandmother, her friends and her uncles, all of whom she missed terribly. Her mother wanted to help Radhia and her sister with their homework, but she was prevented by her own lack of English and knowledge of Australian schooling. Radhia often had stomach pains and had to miss school and stay home with her mother, but the doctor could not find anything wrong with her. Radhia despaired of learning English, making Australian friends, and of ever achieving her father’s dreams of university and a career. Her teacher noticed that Radhia often looked sad, that she never smiled, and that she was shy in the classroom.
Radhia also had problems socially. The Australian lifestyle was very different from that in Iraq, and she felt that she would never find Australian friends and fit in with their way of life. At home in Iraq, her family had a large house, a car, good clothes, books and a comfortable lifestyle. In Australia, the family had second-hand furniture, clothes and books. They received money from Centrelink, but never had any to spare for the new clothes that Radhia longed for. For the three terms she spent at the New Arrivals Program centre, some other students in her class also wore a scarf, but when she moved into the mainstream school, there were fewer girls who dressed like her. She felt different from other girls of her age, and this made her feel lonely and isolated. She did not have a sense of belonging in Australia, and she felt it was not her place.

Radhia’s mother was also saddened by her life in Australia. She herself was having to learn English, and could not pursue her teaching career. She had some casual work in a factory where her husband’s colleague worked, but she had few friends and felt very isolated. With sole responsibility for her daughters, she became overprotective, and tried to keep them indoors at all times. Radhia’s mother had never lost her fear of the police knocking on the door, and the family often stayed at home because she was fearful of walking in the streets where she may see a policeman. Because her mother often lay on her bed and cried with loneliness, Radhia increasingly took on the responsibility of housework and care of her younger sister. Radhia became very withdrawn, and her teachers worried about her ability to study. Radhia’s mother slowly made some friends amongst the women at the local mosque.

There had been so many changes in Radhia’s life, and she often sat and dreamed of all the things that had seemed so stable at home in Iraq. She thought of the many cultural and family celebrations there had been, when she had danced and sung with friends and relatives. She missed the sense of belonging that these celebrations had brought. In thinking of her friends in Iraq, she wanted to write to them, but feared that receiving a letter from Australia would place them in danger. She felt guilty that they were still living with the fear of persecution, and that they could not enjoy the peace that Australia offered.

At Radhia’s new school, there was a homework program to help students like herself. There, the woman who helped with her English recognised Radhia’s interest in maths. She encouraged her to make use of the computers at the homework program and the maths tutor who attended every second week. After a year, the women encouraged her to enter a maths competition within the school. To Radhia’s pleasure, she won a prize, and her confidence in her own abilities began to increase. Her English was improving, and she began to see that she might still be able to fulfil her father’s dream of going to university. She began to make friends who had similar interests to her, and was thrilled to be invited to a birthday celebration of an Australian friend. Radhia’s successes encouraged her mother to relax into her new country, and she was pleased to think that she and her children could live in safety, and hope for a stable and secure future in Australia.


Key questions

What school-based strategies are used in these stories to support the students?

Think about the students with refugee experience at your school. Do you know whether their experiences are similar or different from those described above?

How might you find out?

What sensitivities will you need when seeking information?
Understanding students with refugee experience using the Essential Learnings

The Essential Learnings in the SACSA Framework provide us with a useful framework for understanding students with refugee experience and acknowledge the experiences and strengths they bring to the educational context.

**Communication**

This involves knowledge, to varying extents, of language systems other than English, including:

- the ability to read and write in home or community language(s)
- vocabulary for many concepts, already developed in at least one language
- access to an oral and or literary tradition in a language other than English
- the ability to learn in a second and possibly a third language
- the ability to translate and interpret from one language to another
- deeper understandings of how different languages work in communicating ideas
- greater understandings of cross-cultural communication issues, such as differences in value and meaning placed on stress, intonation, volume, eye contact, personal distance
- the ability to negotiate linguistic and conceptual situations far beyond their years when mediating between their parents and schools, doctors, government agencies.

**Thinking**

Given that diverse cultures perceive reality differently, having access to more than one perspective and more than one language means these students may have a broader world view with the potential to develop:

- the ability to accommodate a variety of views
- flexibility in thinking processes
- ways of seeing differently, for example, different ways of organising, categorising, valuing
- increased creativity, both verbally and in other creative forms of expression
- increased problem-solving abilities.
Interdependence

Experiences that shape these students may give them broader personal knowledge and experience of the globally interdependent world in which we live, including:

- experiences of community living or travelling in rural, village and city areas
- understanding of seasons and climates and the interrelatedness of weather and housing, food, clothing, industry etc
- varying experiences of family households, such as extended families or families made up of children alone
- appreciation of the role of technology in maintaining connections with family members around the globe
- deeper understandings of differences in political, religious and education systems and their interrelatedness with daily life,
- understanding of the value placed on community rather than the individual and cooperation versus competition
- differing cultural norms for expressing interdependence, such as giving each other answers, finishing someone else’s work, or boys holding hands with other boys
- experiences of survival such as looking after themselves first and foremost, in situations where sharing what little they had may have meant not escaping or not surviving.

Identity

For an individual who is part of a minority group, attempting to find a place in a mainstream educational setting can give students a heightened sense of identity, including:

- a deeper understanding of what it means to have multiple identities
- greater awareness of differences and similarities in and across groups, for example in family and community cultural practices
- confusion about identity when a family has lived away from their country of origin (eg in a refugee camp) and their home culture is weakened, forcing its members to adopt a ‘camp culture’ for survival
- varying ways of identifying with a cultural group, such as through skills in the music, dance, crafts and cuisine of their particular culture
- experiences in more than one way of living, eating, communicating, worshipping and an understanding of how these contribute to the shaping of their identity
- skills in operating across cultures—dealing often successfully with different and sometimes conflicting values and practices
an increased awareness of the choices they make in shaping their identity as individuals and as group members

greater awareness of and sensitivity to issues of stereotyping of individuals within groups.

**Futures**

For students with refugee experience there are factors which influence their ability to create their preferred future, including:

- migration—reasons, costs and benefits
- the impacts of war, religious and racial persecution, dislocation, poverty and famine, and their effects
- experiences of trauma which may impact negatively on their view of the future, perhaps leaving them feeling that they can not escape their past
- deep inner strength and resilience and a greater understanding of personal values, aims and priorities
- experiences of varying degrees of personal freedom of speech
- high levels of optimism, belief in and desire for a new beginning with increased possibilities created by their move to a new country.
Educational Provision for Students with Refugee Experience

The New Arrivals Program

The New Arrivals Program (NAP) provides specialist support for the English language and settlement needs of non-English speaking background students on arrival. Students of refugee and migrant experience are encouraged to enrol in a NAP centre prior to enrolling in a mainstream school.

New Arrivals Program centres are located throughout the Adelaide metropolitan area and in some regional areas. The program caters for primary, secondary and adult students in primary, secondary and adult re-entry NAP centres. (For more information and locations go to: www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL).

NAP provides an opportunity to learn English intensively across areas of the curriculum in relatively small classes. It supports students’ transition into mainstream schooling through its curriculum and through both formal and informal transition processes (see Section 6).

Diagram 2
Students with refugee experience will make enormous progress during their time in a NAP, but even after two years, some will still be many years behind their peer age group in mainstream schools.

Mainstream schools

In continuing to provide education for students with refugee experience, mainstream schools may need to adapt their practices or adopt new ones. This resource uses the DECS Learner Wellbeing Framework to structure a whole school response. Its emphasis is on schools becoming safe and caring, places where all students, staff, parents and community members have a sense of belonging and are treated as valued individuals. This is supportive of there being no discrimination, prejudice or harassment towards people of diverse cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds. This is entirely consistent with the kind of environment which students with refugee experience require.

Research shows that students with minimal educational experience require ten years of specialist support to acquire the competence of a native English speaker. Garcia, 2000.
Whole School Approach to Wellbeing

A whole school commitment to wellbeing provides a supportive environment for learning. The whole school approach within the DECS Learner Wellbeing Framework has three levels:

- universal care for all learners
- additional support for individuals or groups
- tailored intervention for learners requiring individualised support.

Each of these layers has four areas of practice. For schools responding to students with refugee experience, these can be described as:

- a learning environment which values cultural diversity, which is supportive and understanding of refugee experiences and which promotes positive relationships
- curriculum and pedagogy which are inclusive and provide specific support for developing English language literacy skills
- policies and procedures which support transition, enrolment and ongoing support, including the use of translators and interpreters when required
- partnerships which are fostered with parents, communities and outside agencies.

These four areas interact and are interdependent; what is learned through the curriculum will be practised
in the learning environment, supported by partnerships with family and other agencies and made explicit in the policies and practices of the site. (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007)

The whole school approach is represented in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4

A whole school approach to wellbeing

- Learning environment
- Inclusive curriculum and pedagogy
- Policies and procedures
- Partnerships

Staff wellbeing

Promoting inclusivity

Using interpreters and translators, BSSOs and CLOs

Behaviour management

ESL support

Monitoring student progress and identifying and implementing intervention requirements

Professional learning for staff

SACE and career pathways

Assessment and reporting

Using the ESL Scope and Scales

Explicit teaching of English language

Culturally inclusive curriculum and use of multicultural resources

Partnerships with agencies

Partnerships with parents and communities

Partnerships with Community Liaison Officers (CLOs)

Transition, orientation and enrolment procedures

Count me in!
The learning environment

A learning environment which supports the wellbeing of students of refugee experience will affirm diversity, encourage an inclusive cultural environment and promote harmony.

This section provides guidelines and strategies for:

• promoting inclusivity
• countering racism
• professional learning
• staff wellbeing.

Promoting inclusivity

The degree to which the schooling experience validates students is central to their wellbeing, their sense of belonging and their success in learning. This can happen in a number of ways.

Acknowledging diversity

• Find out about and create opportunities for families and students to share their experiences, cultural practices, languages skills, interests, knowledge and capabilities, for example an African choir.

• Invite parents or members of the community with refugee experience to participate in school programs, for example as story tellers, or oral history sources, in art, craft, cooking, dancing or sport activities.

• Support first language maintenance and development, whether at school, ethnic schools or after-hours specialist schools of languages.

• Create a positive environment for students, BSSOs and other staff in using their first language.

• Employ BSSOs and staff of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

• Publish and display work done in languages other than English (together with an English translation).

• Where appropriate adapt the school dress, behaviour codes and routines to cater for religious and cultural practices, for example the hijab, fasting during Ramadan.
• Make culturally appropriate food available in the school canteen and at catered school functions, for example halal sausages for Year 7/8 transition day.

• Create a quiet prayer or relaxation space.

• Build a range of resources to portray a diversity of people in positive, non-stereotypical roles.

• Build the range of student-made or commercial bilingual resources or resources in languages other than English.

• Display artwork around the school which reflects and celebrates the diversity of the school’s religious and cultural backgrounds.

• Put up signs around the school in the languages of the school community.

• Invite speakers to talk with students and staff about cultural awareness, multicultural perspectives and specific cultural profiles.

• Celebrate Cultural Diversity Celebrations (See Appendix 3).

• Respect students’ names by using correct pronunciation and correct spelling.

### A word about names

Phuoc Le Nguyen was called Le by his Year 1 teacher because she was worried about other students teasing him by distorting his name. She never asked him if it bothered him. ‘Le’ changed schools and presented himself once again as Phuoc Le Nguyen and his concerned teacher introduced him to the class: ‘I’d like to introduce you to our new student, Phoo.’

A Dutch background boy, Paol, raced home from school and his mother asked him what he had learnt at school. Paol told his mother that he had learnt to spell his name—’look, Paul’. The mother was angry and told him the teacher was wrong. She went to the school and told the teacher that, although she couldn’t speak or write English well, she knew the name she had given her son.

### Providing access and encouraging participation

• Ensure students with refugee experience have access to all programs, including those for students with high intellectual potential, students with disabilities and vocational education programs.

• Include the students in out-of-hours activities, eg sports and camps and provide support to access these activities, where necessary.
• Develop processes for parents and community members from a range of cultural backgrounds to participate in school activities and policy making (see Section 8).

• Ensure structures are in place for student decision making to include the voices of students with refugee experience.

• Involve students with refugee experience in classroom and school decision-making.

Countering racism

The Countering Racism Policy (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007) outlines the department’s commitment to respecting, valuing and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity and rejecting racism in all its forms. Racism is defined as:

‘...the dislike of, unfair treatment of, or harassment of another person or group of people on the basis of differences mainly due to nationality, ethnic origin, culture, colour or ancestry.

Racism usually involves a misuse of power, and is based on the belief that some people are superior to others because they belong to a particular ‘race’. It is often used to classify people on the basis of supposed physical and cultural differences derived from their common descent. However the term ‘race’ is a social construct having no biological basis.’

Department of Education and Children’s Services 2007b, p.2.

The statement also points out that racism is based on ‘fear, ignorance and stereotypes’ and discrimination may be direct or indirect. An aspect of this is racial harassment, which:

‘...can take many forms including, verbal abuse, electronically communicated material, graffiti, physical attacks on people or their property, exclusion from certain activities and the underestimation of a person’s ability and potential. At times it may result in violence, either as part of the racial harassment or in retaliation to it.

People who are subjected to racial discrimination and harassment are often reluctant to say what is happening. Silence and denial may perpetuate and exacerbate racism so that its effects are hidden, misunderstood or ignored.’

Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2007b, p.2.
The Countering Racism Policy emphasises that all educators have a responsibility to educate for positive attitudes to diversity and to implement curriculum and programs which critically examine and counter racism, bias, stereotypes, assumptions, prejudice and ethnocentrism.

All school staff are expected to work towards the following outcomes:

1. Racism in all its forms – individual, systemic, cultural, direct and indirect – is challenged and addressed.
2. Care, education and working environments for all children, students and their families, employees and volunteers are free from racism.
3. Cultural and linguistic diversity is affirmed and fostered in all care, education and working environments through employment practices, programs, curriculum and pedagogy.
4. The rights of individuals are protected and the effects of racism are redressed.

The SACSA website www.sacsa.sa.edu.au provides ideas for embedding multicultural education and countering racism across the curriculum.


Professional learning

Professional learning needs to be regarded as a whole school endeavour, structured to meet the needs of the school. Developing cultural understanding and awareness is essential for all school staff in supporting the learning and settlement of students with refugee experience and their families.

‘We give our staff a lot of professional development around culturally and linguistically diverse students and their backgrounds. Staff, particularly counsellors, attend conferences where they meet teachers from other schools and we get CLOs in to talk to staff.

Over recent years we have offered workshops in Middle Eastern or Muslim, Vietnamese, Aboriginal and African cultures, delivered by BSSOs, CLOs and teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The focus on all our professional development is to ensure it is a whole school focus.’

Woodville High School

‘Excellence in learning outcomes for children and students is reliant on quality, effective teachers. It is therefore important that teachers are provided with access to quality professional development and support so that they provide the highest quality of teaching.’

Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2005a, p.11.
Professional learning of appropriate teaching strategies and a scaffolded approach to literacy and English language development is also required to support teachers of students with refugee experience.

Professional learning to develop cultural understanding and awareness is available from community liaison officers (CLOs) and the multicultural education policy and program officer (see Appendix 8). Agencies (for example, STTARS, MRC, ARA) can also provide support, advice, resources and professional learning. Schools can access these by direct negotiation with the agencies (see Appendix 2).

Sustained professional development courses, including site-based courses, with a focus on literacy and English language development are available through the ESL Program. These include:

- Teaching ESL students in mainstream classrooms: language in learning across the curriculum
- ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner
- Language and Literacy: classroom application of functional grammar.

See Appendix 1 for further details.

ESL district service providers can assist schools with professional learning for both cultural awareness raising and English language development (see Appendix 8 for contact information).

Professional development is available to assist staff in dealing with the issues in this resource, Count me in! A resource to support ESL students with refugee experience in schools. Contact ESL district service providers for further details.

**Staff wellbeing**

It is important that school staff working with students with refugee experience work in a supportive environment. Staff may be challenged by:

- the enormity of the task of closing the gap between the students’ limited formal schooling and English literacy skills and their career aspirations
- disclosures of experiences of torture and trauma
- crisis or emergency situations.

In addition to providing for the educational requirements of students with refugee experience, schools need to put in place other strategies to support their wellbeing. This includes:

- having procedures for crisis situations and opportunities to debrief if crises occur
• encouraging team meetings, debriefing and mentoring
• developing protocols for referral (see Section 6) to ensure staff understand the boundaries of their role and where to refer problems
• monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures regularly and updating them where necessary.

Dealing with emotional reactions to traumatic events
Teachers may experience 'vicarious traumatisation' responses after hearing refugee stories. Common reactions include helplessness, guilt, anger, fear and avoidance. These reactions are normal and usually do not last long. If they do, counselling should be sought.

Frequently staff who work with people with refugee experience try to take on excessive responsibility, feeling the need to do something in order to overcome their own helplessness, wanting to protect the survivor, and trying to 'make things better'. Counsellors and members of the leadership team can support distressed staff members by encouraging them to:
• recognise the limits of their personal responsibility
• set realistic expectations
• develop an awareness of their own distress signals and take action
• communicate feelings with colleagues
• contain their reactions by identifying their personal level of comfort
• accept their feelings as normal
• set aside time for relaxation
• get help in managing their feelings.

Working in teams
Encouraging staff to work together in teams has many benefits. Teams can provide monitoring and mentoring to prevent any individual, for example, the ESL teacher, shouldering full responsibility, which can result in despair, disillusionment and eventual burnout. Working in teams also offers opportunities for debriefing. Teams can discuss and share strategies to bolster teachers’ confidence and skill in supporting students with refugee experience in the classroom.
Counselling support

Individual counselling is available through the DECS Employee Assistance Program. All DECS staff and immediate family members can access this service by ringing 1800 337 068 (toll free). The service is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from anywhere within Australia.

For further information, go to the DECS website and download this document at: www.decs.sa.gov.au/ohs

Professional learning and advice to schools on staff wellbeing is also available from the guidance officer, ESL and from agencies working with families with refugee experience (see Appendix 7 for DECS contact information and Appendix 2 for information on agencies).

Learning environment checklist

Use this checklist:

☐ to support staff dialogue
☐ for leadership to reflect on the responsiveness of the school
☐ to inform or survey staff
☐ to identify professional development needs.

Promoting inclusivity

How is the school promoting inclusivity?

How is the school working to counter racism?

What professional learning has been made available to staff to support their understanding of students with refugee experience?

How do we celebrate the richness of cultural diversity in the school?

How do we ensure that other students in the school are aware of the cultural dimensions of the lives of students with refugee experience?

To what degree are students with refugee experience involved in decision making?

What have we adapted to meet the specific identified needs of students with refugee experience? (Through food in the canteen, prayer rooms etc.)

Professional learning

Have the professional learning needs of staff been identified?

Have staff participated in professional development on cultural and interfaith understandings, countering racism and English language development?

Has professional development been organised around refugee experiences and issues?

Staff wellbeing

Do the school structures support staff by providing opportunities for team meetings for sharing and debriefing?

Are all staff aware of how to access counselling should they require it?
This section of the book contains advice on recommended procedures for:

- transition and orientation from the New Arrivals Programs to mainstream
- enrolment into mainstream schools
- monitoring student progress
- identifying intervention needs
- protocols for referral
- using bilingual school support officers (BSSOs)
- using community liaison officers (CLOs)
- using interpreting and translating services
- accessing ESL support
- behaviour management
- health support.

**Transition for students from the New Arrivals Program (NAP) into the mainstream**

Mainstream schools gain valuable information from NAP centres on prospective students, through exit reports and discussions. NAP centres provide information about country of origin, visa categories, language spoken at home and the level of the students’ prior schooling.

Mainstream schools have a vital role in ensuring that families and students with refugee experience feel included and experience positive transitions and success. The table on p.34 describes good practice and procedures to support a successful transition into mainstream schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should happen?</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAP centre will contact the school with names of prospective students</strong></td>
<td>Mainstream schools will be contacted by NAP centres with the names of students who wish to enrol. Find out their age, country of origin and background if possible—this will help you to match them with a student to act as a buddy during transition. Schools can designate a teacher or leadership person to be the contact person to assist the transition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Organise buddy system for visiting students** | A class friend or ‘buddy’ system supports the induction process. Buddies need to be given instructions on how to look after the new student, such as:  
  • greet the new student each morning and make them feel welcome and involved  
  • introduce them to other students and teachers, pronouncing the name correctly  
  • help them join in on activities  
  • show them around the school at break times, making sure they know about facilities and where to find resources  
  • in secondary school make sure they don’t get lost at lesson breaks. |
| **The NAP centre invites teachers to visit and meet students and their teachers** | Organise for a teacher to visit the NAP centre to meet the students and teachers. This is an opportunity to gain anecdotal information about students from their NAP teachers.                                                                                                                                 |
| **Increase the school community’s knowledge of new groups to join the school** | Organise professional learning related to the student’s countries of origin, cultural practices, previous educational experience and cross-cultural issues. The principal could address staff at this meeting to discuss transition.                                                                                                          |
| **Organise with the NAP centre for orientation visit** | Organise suitable times when students can make a two or three day orientation visit to your school. Organise for a BSSO to be available for the visit.                                                                                                                                                  |
| **Explore the feasibility of caregivers visiting the school during orientation visit** | Invite caregivers to be part of the orientation visit (see Section 8). This may need to be organised verbally with the help of the NAP, a BSSO, a CLO or an interpreter rather than by letter. Discuss with the NAP the need for CLOs, BSSOs or interpreters and transport and maybe arranging time off from English language lessons for caregivers. |
| **Orientation visit by students from NAP centre for two to three days** | Make sure that the principal, year level managers, home group, subject and ESL teachers will all be available to meet new students and caregivers. Allow students to attend classes with their buddies, but explain that they may not necessarily be taking the same subjects when they start at the school. You may need to discuss subject choices for the coming year. Discuss travel arrangements, including access to public transport. Explain where the student can find assistance of any sort. |
Enrolment in mainstream schools

‘Enrolment offers the opportunity for parents and caregivers to acquire the knowledge and skills for a positive and successful settlement.

If this is the first time that the parents have visited the school, show them around and, if more than one of their children is enrolling, make sure each of them knows where to find their siblings.

Be sensitive to the needs of parents and caregivers to attend the enrolment. For example, it may be necessary to arrange for parents’ transport and to ensure that the appointment does not conflict with their English language class.’

Ingle Farm Primary School

Enrolment is best conducted with individual families to ensure confidentiality is maintained and to foster stronger relationships between the family and the school. If students and their families arrive for enrolment without an appointment, make a future time if necessary and arrange for an interpreter if required. The following questions and strategies will assist schools in the enrolment process.

Do you need to make arrangements for parents or caregivers to attend?
Find out if caregivers are working or attending English lessons so that you can make arrangements with the employer or school/college for them to take time off to attend the enrolment interview. You may need to consider providing caregivers with bus tickets or taxi vouchers (see also Section 8 for establishing partnerships with parents).
**Do you need an interpreter/BSSO?**
Find out which language is spoken at home or ask families if they have a preferred language; then organise interpreters/BSSOs/CLOs if required. Using family friends or relatives as interpreters is not always recommended.

**Do you need to modify or adapt your current enrolment questionnaire?**
Without being intrusive, you may need to ask additional questions to determine the educational experiences of students (see the ‘Enrolment questionnaire’, below, and Section 6 on gathering information for staff). Explain to parents that, for educational reasons, some information may need to be shared with other members of staff. Ensure that they understand this and that they have no objection.

**What do families need to know in order to maximise the success of their children at the school?**
Enrolment provides an opportunity to provide further information about your school, for example attendance and absence procedures. Be sensitive to information overload—it may be more effective to arrange for bilingual support at other times such as information evenings, open days and parent-teacher interviews. CLOs can also be used to support families’ understanding about the school.

The following issues should be covered:
- uniform, fees and books which students might require, and any financial assistance that might be available
- daily routines, that is, the importance of breakfast before school, and any breakfast programs that might be available
- travel to school, recess and lunch breaks
- food that parents normally provide and information on the school canteen
- aspirations and expectations of parents and students and the available subject choices.

**How are decisions made about the placement of students into classes?**
When considering whether a student should be placed in a class consider the following questions:
- Is the teacher supported or skilled in working with students with refugee experience?
- Does a safe and supportive emotional environment exist in the classroom?
- Is there a welcoming physical environment?
During the enrolment process there is a need to be sensitive and non intrusive when enquiring about past experiences. The NAP Centre can provide useful information, however, further questions could include:

- What was the length of time, nature and context of the student’s past schooling?
- Did the student attend school in a refugee camp?
- Were there times when the student did not attend school?
- Can the student describe the subjects they learnt at school?
- What languages did they learn in?
- Has the student attended other schools since arriving in Australia?
- What is the student’s proficiency in their first and other languages?
- How long has the student been learning English?
- What language is spoken at home and how much is the student using English outside school?
- How does the student’s oral proficiency compare with their written?
- Is there any other information that parents consider may be important to the student’s happiness and learning?

Monitoring student progress

Once enrolled at the school, student progress should be monitored. This process is enhanced if relevant teachers can meet and discuss the student’s progress collaboratively. ESL teachers could be involved or at least informed of the outcomes of the discussions. Ideally these should be documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student.

These discussions can mean early identification of particular concerns about a student’s emotional state, their proficiency in English language, or possibly a learning difficulty. The teacher may then discuss the concern with the student and the parents or caregivers and this will invariably increase the teacher’s understanding of issues affecting the student.

Support structures to help the student socially, emotionally, or with their learning can then be put in place. It is important to continually review the range of possible support structures. This may lead to innovations such as a homework centre or after school hours activities.
Identifying students requiring intervention

Frequently children and young people will express their experiences of trauma through play, drama, artwork or by disclosing them through storytelling. Sometimes adults will respond by dismissing the trauma as being in the past and reassuring them that they are ‘all right’ now. While this response is understandable, the trauma sufferer may benefit more from an acknowledgment of the trauma and possibly referral to a counsellor.

The following behaviours may indicate that an individual has experienced torture or trauma:

• expresses hopelessness, cries or appears sad, never smiles, weeps or looks melancholic
• seems anxious, tense, restless, cannot concentrate, has memory difficulties
• seems fatigued, is withdrawn or hostile, participates little and seems to lack interest
• does not talk to others or leaves the room
• has blank spells or appears not to be ‘with it’
• displays very dependent ‘clinging behaviour’
• demonstrates cautious behaviour and is sensitive to any failure
• displays angry, aggressive, brusque, irritable or disruptive behaviour for no apparent reason
• queries excessively; challenges teachers’ knowledge or style; expresses hostility, demonstrates fierce self-reliance; rejects help.

Often teachers are concerned about discussing sensitive issues because they fear what may arise in discussion or that they are being intrusive. However, in order to determine whether a student requires referral, for example, it will be necessary to make time to talk with them and it may be necessary to work with a BSSO or interpreter.

Share observation

In a one-to-one setting, share with the student your observations about what you have noticed in the classroom, for example, ‘I have noticed that it seems difficult for you to concentrate in the classroom’. Ask students what might be troubling them.

If the student has self-disclosed, be an attentive and engaged listener, and affirm the student’s bravery in talking of the event. Teachers should carefully monitor disclosure, particularly if it occurs in a group context. It may be more appropriate to find a time to speak to the student alone or with a counsellor. Don’t avoid discussion. You might need to organise release time from your class schedule to continue the discussion.
Ask about the issue

If you have initiated the discussion because of emotional or behavioural concerns, ask if what you have noticed has anything to do with the tasks being set, other students' behaviour or what the teacher does. At this stage, the student might reveal their concern or indicate, in some way, such as saying they are fine, that they do not want to discuss it further. In this way, the student is given an opportunity to control the amount of disclosure.

Discuss

If they do wish to discuss their specific problems or refugee experiences, acknowledge the emotion generated, for example, ‘That must have been frightening/made you sad’; acknowledge that others would have felt similarly and that the memories of the event can still be distressing. Ask them if they are having any difficulty in sleeping or problems in concentration which may be connected to any bad experiences they had prior to arriving in Australia. Sensitive enquire whether their nutritional needs are being met.

Should they indicate directly or indirectly that they do not want to discuss it, let them know that other students in the past have shown similar behaviour. Even if the discussion goes no further, it is an opportunity to convey that there can be difficulties for the newly arrived in the classroom situation, especially if they have experienced previous hardships.

Determine whether the issue can be solved in the classroom or outside

Ask the student if there is anything that would make things easier in the classroom. Determine whether there are any immediate causes such as bullying or fear of disclosure which you could address. Tell the student that you are available if they wish to have further discussions. If it is not a problem that can be solved in the classroom, offer to arrange for them to speak to another person at school, such as the BSSO or a school counsellor. The counsellor may determine whether it is necessary to refer the student to Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Is the behaviour connected to a physical ailment?

Some students may not be interested in talking about difficulties but may be interested in knowing about medical or dental assistance. Whatever the response, you can enquire whether the student has a general practitioner to go to. Information could be provided if necessary about local dental and medical services. The behaviour you have noticed in the classroom may also be connected to clothing or shoe problems (for example, ill fitting, not sun safe or warm enough).
Could the behaviour be connected to experiences of torture and trauma?

If you suspect that your concerns are related to past experiences of torture and trauma, follow the school’s protocol on referral, assessment and counselling. If students are under 16 years of age it is necessary to gain parent/caregiver permission for all agencies.

Could the behaviour be as a result of a learning difficulty or disability?

Identification of learning difficulty or disability can be more difficult because of language and cultural problems. Information on assessing ESL students and identifying learning difficulties and emotional blocks is available at www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL under ‘Guidance’.

Behaviour management

Most students with refugee experience are keen to fit in and belong to the school community, wanting to learn the rules and do the right thing. However, some may not be familiar with the written and unwritten rules and expectations of schooling and Australian culture. They may also not be able to accurately interpret the cues or habits of the group nor understand the use of language that is appropriate for a particular situation. Behavioural practices and appropriate language use need to be taught explicitly and reinforced with many opportunities for practice provided.

School Behaviour Management Policies, expectations for student behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour should be consistent and fair to all students. Violent behaviour is not acceptable. To deal constructively with behaviour that causes concern however, schools need to examine the reasons why students behave in certain ways. In particular, schools need to understand how issues of settlement, language, and trauma may contribute to the behaviour.

For example, it is likely that students with refugee experience:

- have different educational backgrounds with differing behaviour codes and are accustomed to other forms of discipline
- will be confused by the new found freedom that exists in Australian schools
- are experiencing difficulties in settling into a new country
- have not developed trust and feelings of security with people in positions of authority
- are struggling with inconsistent messages about expectations of behaviour and behaviour management between school and home
• still do not have the English language skills to fully understand directions and instructions
• may misinterpret non-verbal communication
• may have difficulty in seeking further clarification and questioning decisions
• may display behaviour that has a different meaning in our culture
• are experiencing difficulties at school, either in the classroom or in the playground such as, lack of concentration, difficulty with problem solving
• may not understand how justice and fairness occurs in the practices of the teacher or school.

It is therefore vital that schools understand that students with refugee experience are in the process of learning about behaviour and that what is expected of them needs to be continually reinforced. They are learning that the ways of survival for them in refugee camps, where they may have learned to be aggressive to assert their position, are no longer appropriate.

It is essential to ensure that both students and their parents or caregivers have a good understanding of the expectations of the school and what is considered irresponsible behaviour. School rules need to be clear and well publicised; preferably in writing, photos or drawings. There needs to be clear verbal instructions with constant checking for understanding on issues about:

• school times
• bringing appropriate books to class
• uniform
• forms and diaries to be signed
• rules that are particularly culturally bound for example, school crossings, drivers licences, bus behaviour.

Students and their families experiencing language and cultural difficulties may also be assisted by CLOs and BSSOs. If problems arise it is best to deal with them by promoting open communication. Using BSSOs, CLOs or interpreting services can help clarify issues and give students time to think things through before responding. Students may benefit from writing in their own language or drawing a picture. When students with refugee experience are stressed, upset, angry or afraid they are more likely to revert to their first language and have more difficulty with English language skills.

Suspension and exclusion
Suspension and exclusion can cause further schooling disruption and feelings of rejection. These measures should be used only as a final option.
Referrals

Referrals to DECS personnel

Schools can refer (with parent permission if the student is under age) to their District Student Support and Disabilities Teams. Referrals are usually organised by special needs coordinators, ESL teachers, counsellors or members of the leadership team. Using the single referral process they can access the services of guidance officers, speech pathologists, disability coordinators and hearing impairment coordinators depending on the perceived student need.

DECS has guidance officers who provide an educational psychological service to school communities for all students. In partnership with schools and student services, they work to assist schools in their district to cater more effectively for the academic, social and emotional needs of students. Pre-referral processes vary from district to district. However, it is important that the school reports on what they have already done, for example, academic screening, special interventions for literacy, etc. It is important to clarify the reason for the referral.

If students need additional support and intervention from a guidance officer or an agency (see also Section 6), parental permission will be needed if they are under 18. Explain to parents that many students receive assistance from qualified workers to help them cope with stress. Many families will not be familiar with this approach, preferring instead to rely on traditional problem-solving channels, such as extended family and community leaders and they may not understand the role of school counsellors. Explain to students and families that the services provided through the school are confidential and free.

DECS also has an ESL guidance officer who provides a consultative service to other guidance officers and schools, working collaboratively with them in relation to individual students.

District student inclusion and wellbeing coordinators and interagency student behaviour management coordinators will support schools in helping to manage student behaviour issues. When making a referral it is important to document any strategies that have been tried, such as talking with the student counsellor, mentoring, or cross-age tutoring. Further information on this service is available at: www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/wellbeing

Referral to outside agencies

School protocols for referral to outside agencies should include:

• identifying students
• determining if permission is required from family members
• identifying roles and responsibilities of those involved in intervention
• contacting and providing outside agencies with relevant school information.

Needs-based ESL funding
When students with refugee experience exit from NAP they may still be many years behind their peers in mainstream schools and will require continued support to succeed.

Funding for students with English as a second language is allocated to schools on the basis of assessment of student’s language skills using the ESL Scales. Equity funding provides additional support for reducing educational disparities between different groups and for addressing barriers to participation in quality educational programs. ESL funding supports the development of English language proficiency for students who have English as a second language.

Generally students with refugee experience will have a large gap between their Scale and the ESL Scale required to access the curriculum. This will attract greater funding which can be used to support their transition into the school and provide ESL support.

ESL support is intended to improve students’ access to the curriculum and can be provided in the mainstream classroom or through face-to-face instruction. Joint planning between ESL and mainstream teachers maximises the impact of this support. Structures need to be put in place to make joint planning possible.

Further information on ESL allocations is available on the ESL website at: www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL

Bilingual school services officers
Schools should use bilingual school officers (BSSOs) to maximise the transition process and the likelihood of success for students of refugee experience. BSSOs work under the supervision of teachers and are not expected to assume the teacher role. Teachers need to allow time to liaise with BSSOs so that their time is used to best advantage.

BSSOs can support ESL students, teachers and school communities by:
• working with teachers in classrooms
• assisting students to develop their English language skills through their first language
• facilitating cross-cultural communication
• interpreting and translating
• assisting with excursions.

BSSOs can support the work of teachers by:
• helping teachers to introduce new concepts
• helping ESL students make links between acquired and new skills, language and knowledge
• supporting students to work in groups
• assisting students to become independent learners.

BSSOs are not responsible for managing student behaviour.

BSSOs have a duty of care for students and are familiar with the following policies:
• school discipline policy
• school behaviour management programs.

They can support teachers to build environments in which students behave responsibly. As cross-cultural communicators they are a valuable resource for teachers of ESL students. They can also help schools develop and enhance culturally inclusive administrative procedures, classroom practices and pedagogies. They may be called on to provide information to parents about school and system issues.

BSSOs’ language and cultural knowledge, their refugee or migration experiences and knowledge of their own ethnic group in the Australian setting also enable them to help teachers interpret or explain behavioural or educational challenges students may face.

The handbook *Bilingual School Services* (Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2004) and information about employing a BSSO together with an application form for employing BSSOs for occasional hours can be found on the ESL website at: www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL

**Community liaison officers**

Schools should use community liaison officers (CLOs) for African, Arabic, Bosnian, Cambodian (Khmer), Kurdish, Serbian, Vietnamese and Spanish speaking communities who work within the ESL program. Their liaison work differs from BSSOs: they bridge the gap between families, community organisations and parent groups and school leaders and teachers, school counsellors and guidance officers, school councils and government agencies.

CLOs contribute to improved outcomes for students with refugee experience by:
• developing understanding about students’ cultural backgrounds, for example, by providing cultural information to staff
• providing information about the Australian education system and curriculum policies to parents and caregivers
• working closely with school staff and external agencies
• supporting parent participation in school activities
• encouraging student retention at school
• providing information about subject choices, career pathways, employment opportunities and vocational programs
• working alongside counsellors, guidance officers and other DECS service providers.

A brochure on CLOs provides contact details for individual CLOs (see Appendix 7 for contact information) and is available at: www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL

Using interpreting and translating services

It is vital for the relationship between schools and the parents and caregivers of non-English speaking background that communication occurs in their language. In many instances this will require interpreters and translators.

Interpreters convert the spoken word and may be required at the enrolment process, for parent-teacher interviews and at other relevant times. Guidelines for the use of interpreters are in Appendix 4.

Translators convert the written word from one language to another. School notices, medical forms, or reports (for example guidance, speech pathology) may be translated to enhance communication to parents and caregivers.

Some standard departmental forms have been translated and are kept on file. For information about the availability of translated forms from the ESL Program, telephone 8226 4393. Information and processes for the use of interpreting and translation services are available on www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/pages/ESL.

School procedures for accessing interpreters and translators also need to be developed.

Health support planning

The Department of Education and Children’s Services’ Health Support Planning Guidelines outline the roles and responsibilities for educators in planning and supporting students with physical and psychological health care needs. They require all services to have a worksite policy that encompasses the use of health care and health support plans developed in partnership with families and health service providers, and for staff to have relevant information and training to support children in their care. The guidelines can be found on the Child Health and Education Support Services (chess) website www.chess.sa.edu.au, along with model policies, care and support forms and forms for making an online request for training.
Staff share responsibility with families and health professionals (such as doctors, nurses and therapists) for the safe health support of children. If a child needs individual health support, staff should request a health care plan from the child’s treating health professional to guide them.

Staff can seek general health information from agencies, but should not discuss individual child and family details with any service provider without the explicit permission of the parent, guardian or adult student. For further information about working with health professionals to plan individual care, working with health agencies and creating a safe, inclusive and health promoting learning environment, go to the Child Health and Education Support Services (chess) website at: www.chess.sa.edu.au
## Policies and procedures checklist

### Use this checklist:
- `[ ]` to support staff dialogue
- `[ ]` for leadership to reflect on the responsiveness of the school
- `[ ]` to inform or survey staff
- `[ ]` to identify professional development needs.

### Transition, orientation and enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the school have a relationship with feeder NAP centres to assist information flow at transition?</td>
<td>What is the school’s policy for maximising the success of transition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the school provide a welcoming environment for students and families with refugee experience on orientation days?</td>
<td>How does the school use bilingual support for students and families on the orientation days?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What procedures does the school have in place for sharing enrolment information with staff?</td>
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</tbody>
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### Monitoring student progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What structures are in place to assist teachers in collaboratively discussing students’ progress and identifying additional support structures?</td>
<td>What additional support structures, such as homework or after hours support are available to students?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Behaviour management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the school make its discipline policy explicit and understandable for students and parents with refugee experience?</td>
<td>What strategies are in place to minimise suspensions and exclusions?</td>
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</table>

### Referral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the school’s policy for engaging outside support agencies?</td>
<td>What is the school’s policy for requesting referrals for students with refugee experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all staff who work with students with refugee experience aware of how to identify students requiring intervention?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Resource staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for determining the need for BSSO hours, applying for them and monitoring their use?</td>
<td>Are the guidelines in the BSSO handbook being followed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the school policy for using translations and interpreters?</td>
<td>How do we ensure that key information and forms (such as consent forms) are accessible to parents and caregivers through the use of interpreting and translating services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are staff provided with advice on how best to use translators and interpreters?</td>
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</tbody>
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### ESL support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the school identified the level of need of its ESL learners and is it targeting ESL resources appropriately?</td>
<td>Does the school use its ESL staffing allocation by using ESL specialist staff and targeting ESL support to students with greatest needs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Health support

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How familiar are staff with the protocols of health support planning?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This section is intended to support teachers of students with refugee experience in the classroom and includes:

- culturally inclusive strategies
- English language development and the ESL Scope and Scales
- assessment and reporting
- child protection curriculum
- first language maintenance
- South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)
- vocational pathways.

**Multicultural education and the culturally inclusive classroom**

The *South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework*, (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2001) advocates for ‘powerful learning for all students’ in which ‘students explore the different knowledges, in all their diversity and complexity, that represent the lives, cultures and heritages of different groups’ (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2001, p.18).

The South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (SAMEAC) defines culture as:

‘Culture is not only the way we do things. It is also our attitudes, thoughts, expectations, goals and values. It is the rules of our society—the norms that tell us what is and what is not acceptable in that society. We learn these through complex patterns of socialisation, first from our parents who introduce us to the world of ideas and values, then at school and then from a whole range of people and institutions that affect our lives.’

We should be prepared to learn from other cultures, and never to accept that our way of doing things is necessarily the best way, just because that is the way to which we are accustomed.

Student Info Kit SAMEAC, 2003, p.2.

‘I am proud of being who I am. I bring with me the richness of my roots, the colours of my history, the brightness of my culture and the greatest gift of all—the gift of hope!’

The SACSA Framework affirms that multicultural education is a crucial part of the curriculum. Aboriginal and multicultural perspectives are embedded in all learning areas so that students learn about Australia’s rich multicultural history, the diversity of beliefs and practices within our society and how racism and the denial of human rights impoverishes and undermines our society.

Culturally inclusive education refers to the provision of supportive environments (see Section 5), equitable and inclusive approaches to decision making (see Sections 5 and 8), curriculum and pedagogy for all students and their families within the school community.

**Strategies for culturally inclusive content**

‘Culturally inclusive content’ is essential in developing a positive self-concept in students with refugee experience as well as in fostering positive attitudes among all students. It can be achieved across all learning areas. This means a curriculum which:

- all students can contribute to, be identified with, and engage in
- builds on the knowledge which all students bring to the classroom
- examines whether the content assumes cultural information which not all students may have
- ensures the dominant Anglo-Australian culture is as open to examination and discussion as any other
- treats all cultures as dynamic, responding to changing needs and circumstances
- provides portrayals of culturally and linguistically diverse people that are positive and non-stereotypical, for example, in books, films, posters
- focuses on shared values across cultures and how universal needs and rights are met in diverse cultures.

**Strategies for positive attitudes to cultural diversity**

- Make mutual respect and acceptable behaviour the basis of class interaction.
- Model the kind of interaction expected of students (listening, valuing other people’s contributions, cooperation, negotiating, compromising).
- Don’t expect students to be experts in their own cultural background or to be willing to share it. Students who have been in a refugee camp for a long time or who were born there have often lost connection with their original cultural identity.
A word of caution about sharing stories

An English teacher asked her students to share stories from their cultural background. The students responded by claiming they didn’t know any. In asking for this information the teacher was unwittingly asking students to make themselves vulnerable. They had learned long ago that such information is not generally valued and that it should be kept to themselves—so they are unwilling to share these stories.

Students with refugee experience need to be convinced that what they have to share will be valued and that it is safe to do so. An open and supportive classroom environment and much gentle persuasion may be required.

It also may be that the students do not know the stories. Different people participate in their cultures to different extents. The stories may not have been passed on—a legacy of the migration process. Migration often separates children from traditional story tellers, such as grandparents and elders. Migrant parents working long hours or doing shift work to establish families economically may be too tired to tell their children stories.

Where children have no effective command of their mother tongue, how can the stories be passed on? They could be encouraged to seek information from other community members or the teacher could invite these community members into the classroom.

Play

Recent trauma research shows that it is important for children to have the opportunity to express traumatic events and that they need the help of others to do so. For some students professional support is required. For all students the classroom environment is important in the healing process: through play, art, music, sport and telling stories students can explore their feelings.

Resources

The DECS Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (see Appendix 3) has print and video resources to:

- support students to gain an understanding of the refugee experience
- provide positive portrayals of culturally and linguistically diverse people
- support bilingual readers.

‘Through play children express their ideas and engage in exploration, imagination, experimentation and manipulation. It is through their exploratory, sensory, social, physical, constructive, imaginative, projective, role and dramatic play that children examine and refine learning in relation to environments and other people.’

SACSA, 2001
The SACSA website at: www.sacsa.sa.edu.au under Equity Cross-curriculum Perspectives, provides considerable support for implementing a culturally inclusive curriculum, together with a number of resources, including websites (Appendix 3 has a short list of available resources).

**English language development and the ESL Scope and Scales**

Students going into a new social context, need to learn the social practices of that context and this may involve new ways of perceiving the world. In a new school students with refugee experience are challenged to learn the practices of the classroom and other areas of the school.

The *ESL Scope and Scales* is the key document in supporting programming and assessing and reporting on the English language development of ESL students. The *ESL Scope and Scales*:

- highlights the language demands of the SACSA Framework
- provides teachers with a common language to talk about the language demands of the learning areas and to identify the language needs of students
- informs teachers’ programming and pedagogy to support students in achieving curriculum outcomes
- supports teachers in reporting on ESL students’ language and literacy development.

The 14 levels of the ESL Scales describe the language required for the increasing complexity of the mainstream curriculum across the year levels. The bigger the gap between the curriculum outcome and the students’ ESL Scale, the bigger the challenge for the student. The Scales inform teachers’ understandings about the explicit teaching of language required for students to demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum outcomes.

ESL district service providers and ESL teachers can support mainstream teachers to work with the *ESL Scope and Scales* and develop pedagogy which is supportive of English language development.

**Strategies for explicit language instruction**

A suggested sequence for reading tasks includes:

- pre-reading activities exploring the topic and cultural content
- using the structure of the text to predict the content and structure
- close reading for literal comprehension
- discussing the implied meanings.
A suggested sequence for writing tasks:

- Explore the topic, its cultural content.
- Connect with students’ existing knowledge of the topic.
- Support research about the topic with visual images for example, concept maps, tables, diagrams, videos.
- Model the genre required for the assessment task and make explicit the audience, purpose, structure and language features and establish assessment criteria.
- With the whole class jointly construct a text.
- Provide feedback to draft independent construction of the assessment task.
- Complete independent construction.

**Language activities**

- Place words on a continuum of everyday and technical language.
- Develop definitions of technical words which are key to a text.
- Explore meaning of idiomatic language that is crucial to the understanding of the topic.
- Deconstruct the structure of a text identifying the stages and language features.
- Explore the patterns of language use in the target text eg the degree of technicality, types of verbs, verb tense and sentence starters.

See Appendix 1 for details of a professional development course which will build teachers’ confidence in these skills.

ESL district service providers provide professional development in the use of the *ESL Scope and Scales* (see Appendix 8 for contact information). Further information about the *ESL Scope and Scales* can be found at: [www.sacsa.sa.edu.au](http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au)

A brochure explaining the *ESL Scope and Scales* is available for parents, caregivers and community leaders in English and in a number of community languages.

**Assessment and reporting**

Students with refugee experience need to learn about the genres required while gaining knowledge of learning areas. They also need to learn about assessment and reporting practices. Staff should make sure that students know:

- the way criteria are used to inform assessment
- the criteria being used for a task
- how to use the criteria to check their own work.
Teachers need to select assessment criteria that are entirely consistent with the skill development that has occurred during the teaching, learning and assessment program. For this to occur, assessment criteria need to be considered in planning a teaching, learning and assessment program. Feedback to students also needs to focus on successful achievement and improvement in relation to the criteria.

When reporting to students, parents and caregivers, schools and teachers will benefit from understanding the link between the ESL Scale and achievement of curriculum outcomes. The direct link between ESL Scales and SACSA Outcomes is particularly useful in interpreting a possible low grade. It also challenges schools and teachers to embed explicit teaching of language throughout the curriculum.

Schools may develop a process to help families with refugee experience understand student reports. This may involve an information session on reporting or the use of interpreters or BSSOs to explain their child’s report, or both.

Child Protection Curriculum

The introduction to each band of the Child Protection Curriculum has the section, Child Protection Curriculum for Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, which will help school staff understand protection issues relating to students with refugee experience.

First Language Maintenance and Development

Through a first language maintenance and development program schools can acknowledge the importance of the first language(s) of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The program fosters pride in the diversity of languages and cultures represented in the school and has a positive impact on students’ learning of and through English.

For more information about criteria for support and funding, contact a policy and program officer, Languages (see Appendix 7).

South Australian Certificate of Education

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) offers three ESL subjects, as a special measure for students who speak English as a second language or as an additional language or dialect, and whose English language is restricted. These are:

- Stage 1 English as a Second Language
- Stage 2 English as a Second Language
- Stage 2 English as a Second Language Studies.
There are eligibility requirements for these subjects. Students for whom English is a second language are eligible if they:

- have not had more than a total of five years of fulltime schooling where the medium of instruction was English, or
- have had more than five years of full-time schooling where the medium of instruction was English and whose knowledge of English is restricted (as assessed by the ESL Scope and Scales).


SACE also offers Stage 1 and Stage 2 SACE language subjects at the ‘background speakers level’ for students with a substantial linguistic and cultural background in the language. Students can complete these subjects through the school or the School of Languages (see Appendix 2 for contact information).

All SACE subjects delivered in English require explicit teaching of English language for students with refugee experience to be successful in SACE.

The ESL professional development courses support teachers to develop this pedagogy (see Appendix 1 for more information and contact information).

**Vocational pathways**

For some students with refugee experience, vocational education may be the most suitable pathway. This includes Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates in a range of industry areas, many of which are already delivered by schools or in partnership with other training organisations. Students may not understand the opportunities that vocational pathways can offer both for employment and also for further study.

Families and students with refugee experience may need to be supported to understand the range of options available post-school. Students and families may be focused on going to university. Career guidance needs to include the multiple options available, and the commitment that each option requires, so that students select appropriate and realistic pathways.
### Curriculum and Pedagogy Checklist

**Use of this checklist**
- [ ] to support staff dialogue
- [ ] for leadership to reflect on the responsiveness of the school
- [ ] to inform or survey staff
- [ ] to identify professional development needs.

**Assessment and Reporting**
- What assessment and reporting practices are in place to support families and students with refugee experience?

**Child Protection**
- How aware are staff of information in the Child Protection Curriculum introduction that relates to students with refugee experience?
- What training of staff and what school protocols have been established to respond to the needs of students and families with refugee experience?

**Curriculum Options and Career Pathways**
- What support is there for first language maintenance?
- What educational and post-school pathways have the school explored for and with students with refugee experience?

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**Culturally Inclusive Practices**
- How familiar are teachers with culturally inclusive strategies and to what degree are they being implemented?
- Does the school have a range of contemporary culturally inclusive resources?

**Explicit Teaching of English Language**
- How much explicit teaching of the English language occurs within all learning areas?
- How effective are teachers’ planning and pedagogy to support students success at school both socially and academically?
- What professional courses do the teachers need?
- How familiar are teachers with the ESL Scope and Scales and the significance of students’ ESL Scale?
Partnerships

This section contains advice on recommended procedures for establishing partnerships with:

- parents and caregivers
- local communities
- outside agencies.

**Partnerships with parents and caregivers**

Establishing good communication and relationships with parents and caregivers is vital for the educational success of students with refugee experience. Democratic decision-making in schools requires the input of all caregivers.

It may not, however, be easy for these parents and caregivers to become involved in the life of the school. They will probably have had very different experiences of education compared to the Australian system, including experiences of the relationships between teachers, students, parents and caregivers. They may not be aware that education in Australia is based on a partnership between schools and families and that any concerns or suggestions that they have can be raised with teachers or principals. In addition caregivers may not be able to express concerns or questions because they do not have sufficient familiarity with the system or because they are not comfortable expressing their concerns. They may also have difficulties with the English language. Some parents and caregivers may feel unable to support their children educationally or engage with schools because they do not yet have the skills or the emotional energy as they are coping with their own trauma.

Establishing a sense of trust on the first meeting between caregivers, students and the school is essential. Show parents and caregivers around the school remembering to:

- anticipate issues which might arise
- demonstrate active listening and a willingness to address concerns
- emphasise that parental involvement is encouraged and valued by the school
- use sensitivity to establish if there is someone in the family or the wider group who is literate and can understand and share written information

‘When my daughter started at primary school, the other parents welcomed us and were hungry for information about where we came from. They came across as friendly, warm, educated and willing to listen before they judged; that enabled us to integrate into our new community with ease.’

Ala, Jordanian/Greek (HREOC, 2005, p.65)
• use interpreters, BSSOs or CLOs as appropriate, but when you speak look at the people you are communicating with, not at the interpreter

• be sensitive and aware to cultural differences, such as body and eye contact or pointing to someone, which may have other connotations in different cultures

**If an interpreter is not used**

• Ensure you are understood, recognising that ‘yes’ or a nod may not always be adequate indicators of comprehension.

• Use plain English in your explanations, avoiding jargon, idioms, irony and satire, which can be misunderstood by people from other cultures.

**Over time schools can support parents and caregivers to develop an understanding of the system and school structures including:**

• the school and year level curriculum

• pedagogy (the emphasis on problem solving and first hand experience rather than didactic delivery); expertise of teachers; use of resources, such as visuals and the roles of BSSOs and CLOs

• strategies for helping children at home, homework centres or additional assistance that may be available

• any specific programs at the school, for example, Program Achieve

• how cultural diversity is acknowledged and celebrated within the school

• the school’s requirements, including attendance, punctuality, homework and use of the school diary as a communication tool between school and home

• school discipline policies with their focus on self responsibility and the abolition of corporal punishment in Australia

• assessment and reporting processes, exams, tests, written reports and oral interviews

• performances, excursions, sport programs, assemblies, open afternoons/nights

• support services including local agencies for addressing concerns that are not school-related for example, health.

Equally important is the role of the school in providing information about useful community resources, for example information about the role of Ethnic Schools and the School of Languages (see Appendix 8), sporting and other recreational groups.
When inviting families to school functions and information sessions, it may be necessary to phone parents beforehand to ensure invitations have been understood and to provide opportunities for parents to ask questions. Interpreters, BSSOs and CLOs may need to be used for this task. Some families may require assistance with transport, such as vouchers for taxis or bus fares. Childcare may need to be provided and meetings scheduled at convenient times. Refreshments may need to be religiously and culturally appropriate.

Some parents readily take up the opportunity to be involved in special events such as Harmony Day or Multicultural Week where they can demonstrate their skills, in music, cooking or dancing. It is, however important, not to make assumptions about parents’ willingness to share their cultural practices.

**Involving families with refugee experience in decision-making**

Although some families are keen to be involved in governing councils, there are a number of reasons why they might be reticent in volunteering for decision-making committees or voicing their concerns. For example, parents and caregivers:

- may not be used to being involved in the business of the school, which may be seen as the decision-making domain of the principal and teachers only
- may see school governance as complicated and threatening or beyond their capacity
- may feel their English skills are insufficient to participate in meaningful discussion.

Interpreting support or other initiatives are usually required to support the involvement of parents and caregivers of students with refugee experience.

**Parent Initiatives in Education Grants**

DECS has made available Parent Initiatives in Education grants to develop new initiatives for parent or caregiver involvement in schools, particularly for groups of parents who have not previously been well represented. Applications should be initiated by parents, although schools can assist in developing a program and writing the application. Further details can be found at: [www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlparents](http://www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlparents) under ‘Parent Initiatives Grants’.

**Partnerships with families and communities**

Community liaison officers (CLOs) provide a valuable link between families, community organisations and schools. As described in Section 6.9 they help parents to understand schooling in Australia and participate in school activities.
Schools could consider drawing on existing partnerships with local service organisations, sporting and youth groups. Music, the arts and sport provide cultural bridges and ways of forming new friendships. Frequently migrant and refugee families will be unaware of what is available in the community and they may be reluctant to make approaches.

There may need to be some sensitivity about introducing students to community groups and families need to be consulted.

**Partnerships with agencies**

Students with refugee experience may have complex issues to resolve and need extensive support, both in their education and in successfully settling into Australian society. Schools cannot and are not responsible for doing this on their own. Partnerships with agencies that specialise in working with refugees are therefore important.

There are a number of agencies which can provide support, advice and resources to assist schools and their students (see Appendix 2). All community youth-related services listed work with refugees. School staff who work with students with refugee experience need up-to-date information about outside agencies and workers in their locality who can provide advice and support. Agencies can provide support for:

- mental and physical health concerns
- the continuing effects of torture and trauma
- learning difficulties and problems with language acquisition
- violent, disruptive and confronting behaviour
- conflict in the home, with parents or guardians
- homelessness
- isolation and social disconnection.

‘We are working with a number of groups within the community to welcome our newly arrived Chinese families. Employers are assisting in organising car pooling between work and school until new arrivals are familiar with transport possibilities; Rotary Club are working with us on multicultural events; Lutheran Community Care are organising women’s lunches and language tuition through volunteers; and Project Abraham will hold a display and present talks in local schools on social inclusion.’

Murray Bridge High School
Partnerships checklist

**Use of this checklist**
- to support staff dialogue
- for leadership to reflect on the responsiveness of the school
- to inform or survey staff
- to identify professional development needs.

**Parent and caregiver partnerships**
How are parents and caregivers with refugee experience made to feel welcome and included on their first visit to the school?

How do we sustain the relationship with parents and caregivers?

How do we encourage and support families with refugee experience to become involved in school life and school decision-making?

How do we ensure that we deal with issues in ways that families with refugee experience will understand?

How are parents and caregivers with refugee experience supported to learn about school curriculum and support structures?

**Community partnerships**
What local sporting or youth groups exist in the community to increase outside school activities and extend friendships for our students with refugee experience?

How can we support our students to connect with these groups?

What sensitivity do we need about encouraging students to connect with outside groups?

How can we use relevant culturally and linguistically diverse knowledge and experiences found in the wider community?

**Partnerships with agencies**
Has the school initiated partnerships with appropriate agencies and disseminated up-to-date information for staff?

Are the protocols for the use of agencies clear to everyone?
Appendices
Appendix 1: Sustained ESL professional development courses

Teaching ESL students in mainstream classrooms: language in learning across the curriculum
This new course will replace the ESL in the Mainstream course in 2007. It consists of nine modules and focuses on the importance of language in the learning areas, with emphasis on a range of practical teaching and learning strategies. The course aims to increase teacher effectiveness in working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access the SACSA Framework. It also supports understanding and implementation of whole school inclusive practice and student wellbeing. Consistent with principles of constructivism and brain-based learning, the strategies and activities are relevant for all learners.

ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner
ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner is a professional development course for educators seeking to extend their skills and understanding in working with children aged from three to seven years from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. This eight-module course supports ESL learners to access the SACSA Framework. It extends teacher understandings and skills for supporting children in their first and second language development and in working with parents from language backgrounds other than English. It also supports understanding and implementation of whole school inclusive practice and student wellbeing. Consistent with principles of constructivism and brain-based learning, the strategies and activities are relevant for all learners.
Language and Literacy: classroom applications of functional grammar

The Language and Literacy course provides greater understanding of the language model which underpins the ESL Scope and Scales. This nine-module course provides all teachers with practical classroom applications that will develop the literacy and learning of their students, supporting learners to access the SACSA Framework.

Appendix 2: Agencies

There are a number of agencies and information sources which can be useful, including those that:

- provide support to people of refugee or migrant experience
- supply information for people of refugee or migrant experience.

## Agencies that provide support to people with refugee experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Support provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)</strong>&lt;br&gt;12 Hawker St&lt;br&gt;Bowden SA 5007&lt;br&gt;Tel: (08) 8346 5433&lt;br&gt;Fax: (08) 8346 5755&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:sttars@sttars.org.au">sttars@sttars.org.au</a>&lt;br&gt;Website: <a href="http://www.sttars.org.au">www.sttars.org.au</a></td>
<td>STTARS assists adults and children from a refugee or migrant background who have experienced torture or have been traumatised by the refugee experience.&lt;br&gt;STTARS provides individual and family counselling, support and advocacy, groups, remedial massage and other natural therapies. Education and training is available and provided by qualified and experienced practitioners.&lt;br&gt;STTARS can adapt and develop programs to suit the specific needs of organisations. To find out more, contact the Education and Training Coordinator on Tel: (08) 8346 5433.&lt;br&gt;STTARS can also provide a telephone interpreter for clients: call 131 450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia</strong>&lt;br&gt;59 King William St&lt;br&gt;Adelaide SA 5000&lt;br&gt;Tel: (08) 8223 3604&lt;br&gt;Fax: (08) 8217 9555&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:mrcsa@bigpond.com">mrcsa@bigpond.com</a>&lt;br&gt;Website: <a href="http://www.mrcsa.com.au">www.mrcsa.com.au</a>&lt;br&gt;Services also in Salisbury and regional centre.</td>
<td>Settlement services on arrival and ongoing for first five years in South Australia, including information and referral to other service agencies, mediation, client advocacy, crisis intervention, migration advice and consumer information. <strong>Youth Participation and Development Program</strong>&lt;br&gt;This program targets young refugees aged 15 to 25 years who are isolated and at risk and includes the:&lt;br&gt;- Youth Intervention and Support Program&lt;br&gt;- Young Refugees Network and Youth Reference Group&lt;br&gt;- Youth Conferencing and Workshop Activities&lt;br&gt;- Sport and Recreation Program&lt;br&gt;- Community Cultural Development Program including the ‘Snapshots of a New Life’ Touring Photographic Exhibition&lt;br&gt;- NEO Project with Radio Adelaide&lt;br&gt;- Business Skills Program with Thebarton Senior College and Young Australian Achievers&lt;br&gt;- Stronger Families Program</td>
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Agencies that provide support to people with refugee experience continued...

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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Support provided</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia</strong></td>
<td>• Mentor Marketplace Program&lt;br&gt;• JPET Young Refugees Employment and Training Program with Anglicare SA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Participation and Development Program for Women and Families</strong>&lt;br&gt;This program particularly targets isolated and housebound women and includes:&lt;br&gt;• Supporting Refugee Families Program with Parenting SA (Child and Youth Health)&lt;br&gt;• Refugee Women’s Network&lt;br&gt;• Middle Eastern Women’s Support Group with the Middle Eastern Communities Council of SA&lt;br&gt;• African Women’s Support Group with the African Communities Council of SA&lt;br&gt;• ‘Men’s Talk’ Training Program for men in African communities&lt;br&gt;• International Women’s Day celebrations&lt;br&gt;• Community Cultural Development Program for Women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant Health Services</strong></td>
<td>Medical and health services for people from different cultures. The service is mainly for those who are new to Australia or from small communities. This is a multilingual access centre which provides health care and referral services for people with limited English. It offers health assessment and screening, counselling, health education with appropriate language support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Market St&lt;br&gt;Adelaide SA 5000&lt;br&gt;Tel: (08) 8237 3900&lt;br&gt;Fax: (08) 82373949&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:jan.williams@health.sa.gov.au">jan.williams@health.sa.gov.au</a></td>
<td>Non-profit charitable organisation which provides advice, assistance, advocacy and practical support in the areas of settlement, migration, employment, community education and policy development, including:&lt;br&gt;• assistance with settlement for new arrivals&lt;br&gt;• counselling and advice&lt;br&gt;• community and cultural orientation&lt;br&gt;• household goods&lt;br&gt;• employment assistance&lt;br&gt;• emergency financial and material assistance&lt;br&gt;• proposer and family support&lt;br&gt;• assistance with reunification of families&lt;br&gt;• refugee youth support&lt;br&gt;• encouragement and assistance to refugees in maintaining their cultural traditions in emerging communities&lt;br&gt;• migration advice</td>
</tr>
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## Appendix 2 – Agencies

### Count me in!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Support provided</th>
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</table>
| **Australian Refugee Association** | • advice on common legal matters  
• public education and policy development. |
| **Red Cross**  
207-217 Wakefield St  
Adelaide SA 5000  
(GPO Box 2265  
Adelaide SA 5001)  
Tel: 8100 4500  
Fax: 8100 4501  
Email: redcross@sa.redcross.org.au  
Website: [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au) | **Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS)**  
Provides financial assistance and health care to eligible asylum seekers who have been waiting for six months or more for their Protection Visa applications to be finalised. Caseworkers assist people with health support, counselling, accommodation, material aid, education and legal referrals, and social support.  
**Tracing and refugee services**  
Part of the International Red Cross free tracing network operating in 181 countries to exchange family news, re-establish contact or clarify the fate of the missing. |
| **Legal Services Commission**  
82–98 Wakefield St  
Adelaide SA 5000  
(GPO Box 1718, Adelaide SA 5001)  
Tel: (08) 8463 3555  
Fax: (08) 8463 3599  
Tel advice: 1300 366 424  
Tollfree: 8363 3691  
Website: [www.lsc.sa.gov.au](http://www.lsc.sa.gov.au) | Immigration and refugee advice and assistance (preparing visa applications, legal submissions and other documents). Legal advice is free and interpreters can be provided. |
| **Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**  
**Northern services**  
c/- Women’s and Children’s Hospital  
72 King William Rd  
North Adelaide SA 5006  
Tel: (08) 8161 7389  
Fax: (08) 8161 7371  
Website: [www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au)  
**Southern services**  
c/- Flinders Medical Centre  
Bedford Park SA 5042  
Tel: (08) 8204 5412  
Fax: (08) 8204 5465  
Website: [www.flinders.sa.gov.au](http://www.flinders.sa.gov.au) | CAMHS deals with a wide range of emotional and behavioural problems using a multidisciplinary approach including:  
• community mental health care  
• early detection and early intervention services  
• counselling and other therapeutic services  
• inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care  
• school support teams  
• mental health education. |
Agencies that provide support to people with refugee experience continued...

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Support provided</th>
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| **Families SA Refugee Program** | The Refugee Program, in partnership with other agencies, provides a number of services to children and their carers to settle successfully into South Australian community life, including:  
  • one-on-one support services for wards  
  • case management for wards for 18 months or until 18 years of age  
  • settlement support and case management services to families with children under 18 years, who are released from detention on TPVs  
  • case coordination services to families with children under 18 years of age on Bridging Visas. |
| **Ethnic Schools Association of SA Inc.** | The Ethnic Schools Association of SA Inc represents 103 ethnic schools authorities teaching 49 different languages, including Amharic, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Mardi, Nuer and Somali.  
  A complete list of languages taught can be found on the website. |
| **School of Languages**         | The School of Languages is a specialist school which offers a wide range of languages after hours in Adelaide metropolitan school sites. Languages include Dinka, Swahili and Arabic at a range of levels. |
| **Muslim Women's Association**  | Provides cross-cultural consultancy services and settlement support. |
| **Lutheran Community Care**     | Support for refugees and the settlement process. Services include providing: emergency relief for families in need; courses and training and individual family counselling; financial counselling; home visiting for people requiring support. |
| **Anglicare SA**                | Evolution: a reintegration program for adolescents in the care system and other ‘at risk’ youth |
## Agencies that supply information for people of refugee or migrant experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Type of support provided</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Australian Refugee Association** | • encouragement and assistance to refugees in maintaining their cultural traditions in emerging communities  
• migration advice  
• advice on common legal matters  
• public education and policy development. |

## Further background on people with refugee experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of information provided</th>
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| www.fasstt.org.au  
www.foundationhouse.org.au  
www.survivorovic.org.au/Publications.htm#schools | Information on the impact of torture  
The Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture has a number of publications available for download (free registration is required first). In the ‘Publications’ section is:  
• A guide to working with young people who are refugees, including a year 7 pastoral care program called ‘Klassroom Kaleidoscope’. This can be downloaded in ‘Part 4: Group outlines.’  
• Background information on ‘Education and refugee students from Southern Sudan.’ |
Appendix 3: Resources to support understanding of the experiences of refugees

- **Our Stories**: Croydon High School and Adelaide Secondary School of English.

**Websites to visit**

- **DECS Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre**
  Website: [www.lmrc.sa.edu.au](http://www.lmrc.sa.edu.au)

- **Global Education Centre (SA)**
  Website: [www.global-education.asn.au](http://www.global-education.asn.au)

- **Migration Museum of South Australia**

- **Multicultural Education Committee (MEC)**
  Website: [www.mec.sa.edu.au](http://www.mec.sa.edu.au)

- **Equal Opportunity Commission SA**
  Website: [www.eo4schools.net.au](http://www.eo4schools.net.au)

- **Doctors Without Borders Virtual Refugee Camp**
  Website: [www.refugeecamp.org/refugeecamp.htm](http://www.refugeecamp.org/refugeecamp.htm)

- **Racism No Way**

- **Interfaith Education**
  Website: [www.amf.net.au/documents/amf_harmony.PDF](http://www.amf.net.au/documents/amf_harmony.PDF)
  [www.uri.org/kids/world.htm](http://www.uri.org/kids/world.htm)

- **Asia Education Foundation**
  Website: [www.asiaeducation.edu.au](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au)

- **Harmony Day**

- **Amnesty International**
  Website: [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)

- **Children out of Detention (Chilout)**
  Website: [www.chilout.org](http://www.chilout.org)

- **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission**
  Website: [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

- **Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**
  Website: [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

- **United Nations Human Rights Commission**
  Website: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
Appendix 4: Using interpreters and translators

The Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) provides the following advice on how to work with an interpreter:

• Plan your interview beforehand. Give general information to interpreters about the subject matter or nature of assignment to help them prepare.

• Organise an area where you can talk to the client in private, through the interpreter.

• Arrange optimum seating, that is in a triangle, circle, or as appropriate (such as the interpreter sitting offside and you facing the client).

• Allow extra time for the interview. As a general rule, double the time you normally allow for interviews without interpreters.

• When the interpreter arrives, let the interpreter introduce themself to you and the client. This is important—it removes barriers and helps build trust.

• Tell the client that what is discussed in the interview will remain confidential between you and the interpreter. This assurance is crucial.

• During the interview, speak directly to the client.

• Speak clearly and succinctly, and avoid jargon. If you have to use jargon, explain it.

• Let the interpreter control the length of each segment and arrange beforehand for them to signal you or the client when to stop. (Note: Spoken language interpreting is conducted in a consecutive fashion whereas sign language interpreting can be conducted simultaneously.)

• Always keep in mind that you are in control of the interview. Interpreters do not conduct the interview and do not do any written work, such as filling in forms or taking statements.

• Do not have private conversations that exclude clients with interpreters during the interview. Everything that is said during an interview must be interpreted.
• Do not request cultural information from the interpreter. Ask the client through the interpreter. Interpreters may assist of their own accord only when communication breaks down completely. *(Note: You may request cultural information from the interpreter prior to or after the interview but not in the presence of the client.)*

• Explain clearly when the interpreter seeks clarification.

• Debrief the interpreter if necessary, but only after the interview, not in the presence of your client.

• In a debriefing session, do not discuss case history. Only offer assistance if you consider the interpreter is affected by a particularly stressful situation.

• Generally, the client and interpreter leave at the same time.

Appendix 5: Humanitarian entrants visa categories

(accurate at time of publication)

**Offshore program:** offers resettlement as a means of protection and a durable solution for people overseas who need humanitarian assistance and who have no other option available to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent visas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugee</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>200 Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 In Country</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Humanitarian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>203 Emergency Rescue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>204 Woman at Risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugees</strong></td>
<td>Refugees are people subject to persecution in their home country who have been assessed as having a strong need for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Many do not have family or friends in Australia. The refugee visa categories entitle entrants to travel to Australia at the expense of the Australian Government and resettlement support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Humanitarian Program (SHP)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202 Global Special Humanitarian</td>
<td>SHP entrants are people outside their home country who have experienced substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights. SHP entrants have a proposer in Australia — a friend, relative or community organisation who has agreed to assist them settle in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 817, 860</td>
<td>Country specific refugee/humanitarian and permanent protection visas</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary visas</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Humanitarian Visa (THV)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>447 Secondary Movement Offshore Entry Temporary</td>
<td>These visas are for people who have bypassed or abandoned effective protection in their country of first asylum and for whom humanitarian entry to Australia is appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451 Secondary Movement Relocation Temporary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>070, 448, 449, 786</td>
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</table>
**Onshore program:** offers protection to people in Australia who have been found to be in need of protection under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of Refugees (Refugees Convention).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Visa Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Code</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permanent Protection Visa (PPV)</strong></td>
<td>866</td>
<td>Asylum seekers who have entered Australia lawfully on genuine documents and are found to be refugees and who meet character requirements are able to access a PPV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Protection Visa (TPV)</strong></td>
<td>785</td>
<td>Asylum seekers who entered mainland Australia unlawfully (without a valid visa or on fraudulent documents) and who are found to be refugees and who meet character requirements are granted a TPV, which gives them residence for three years in the first instance. TPV holders can apply for a further protection visa, which may be a permanent visa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Return Pending Visa (RPV)</strong></td>
<td>695</td>
<td>The Return Pending Visa (RPV) provides 18 months stay for former TPV and THV holders whose further protection visa applications are unsuccessful, to enable them to make orderly arrangements for departure. The Removal Pending Bridging Visa (RPBV) was introduced to enable the release, pending removal, of people in immigration detention who have been cooperating with efforts to remove them from Australia, but whose removal is not reasonably practicable at the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valuing and celebrating cultural diversity needs to be embedded across all aspects of school life and the curriculum. In addition, schools can participate in and celebrate special events such as:

- National Youth Week (March)
- Harmony Day—coincides with the UN day for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March)
- UN World Refugee Day (20 June)
- International Day of Peace (19 September)
- Refugee Week (October)
- Human Rights Day (10 December)
- religious celebrations such as Eid (the celebration that occurs for all Muslims to mark the end of Ramadan), Chinese New Year and Easter.

Each year Multicultural SA publishes the Multicultural Calendar which contains a complete list of special cultural and religious festivals, observances and celebrations. This is usually distributed to schools. Visit the website at: [www.multicultural.sa.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.sa.gov.au)

The Multicultural Education Committee (MEC) provides grants for the Schools in Community Festivals to promote and encourage cross-cultural interaction between communities and educational sites. Grants enable young people to participate and enjoy the cultural richness of various community festivals in South Australia. Further details and application forms can be found at the MEC website: [www.mec.sa.edu.au](http://www.mec.sa.edu.au)
Appendix 7: DECS contact information

To contact the following personnel telephone 8226 4393:

• Manager ESL programs
• ESL policy and program officer
• Community liaison officers
• Bilingual school service officers administration support
• Languages policy and program officer
• Multicultural and cultural inclusive policy and program officer
• Guidance officer, ESL
• ESL district service providers.

The ESL Program website also has contact information

DECS Curriculum website www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric is a link to all sections of DECS curriculum work.

Other contacts

• School of Languages tel: (08) 8354 0099
• Ethnic Schools tel: (08) 8226 1006


Department for Education and Children’s Services (1996a) Parents and Schools, DECS, Adelaide.


