

Learning about Refugees



Refugee Awareness and Education – A Safe Place of Welcome and Belonging

At **Coláiste Chúlainn**, we have long been proud to provide a safe place of refuge, welcome and belonging for students and families who have been forced to flee their home countries due to war, conflict and persecution. Whether welcoming students displaced by the war in Ukraine or those arriving from other conflict-affected countries across the world, our school has always strived to be a place where every student feels safe, supported, respected and valued.

As part of our **School of Sanctuary journey**, we recognise the importance of educating our entire school community about the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers. We believe that raising awareness, challenging stereotypes and developing empathy are essential to creating a truly inclusive school environment. It is important to us that the difficult journeys, challenges and sacrifices experienced by some of our students and their families are acknowledged, understood and respected.

Refugee awareness and education are embedded throughout our school curriculum, particularly in subjects such as English as an Additional Language (EAL), CSPE, SPHE and Religious Education. Through classroom discussions, human rights education, personal stories and activities exploring migration, displacement, identity and belonging, students develop a greater understanding of the realities faced by people seeking refuge and the importance of compassion, equality and solidarity.

One of the most powerful aspects of this education has been the opportunity for **our own students who have experienced life as refugees or lived in Direct Provision to voluntarily share their**





personal testimonies and experiences. By sharing their journeys with their peers, these students have helped bring real-life understanding to the issues explored in the classroom. Their stories have encouraged empathy, challenged misconceptions and reminded our school community of the courage, resilience and strength demonstrated by those forced to leave their homes behind.

We recognise that these experiences can be deeply personal and sensitive, and we are committed to ensuring that every student's story is treated with dignity, respect and understanding.

Our commitment goes beyond simply teaching about refugees. We aim to **create a school culture where students seeking sanctuary are not only welcomed but feel a genuine sense of belonging**, where their voices are heard, their cultures and identities are celebrated, and their experiences are respected.

This work reflects the core values of our **School of Sanctuary journey** and our school ethos of **“Success for All”**, reinforcing our belief that every young person, regardless of their background, nationality or circumstances, deserves the opportunity to feel safe, thrive and succeed within our school community.

