

## **Immigration Guidance for Staff and Families**

Ensuring a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all is a top priority in Hays CISD. We deeply value every student and their family as an essential part of our community, and we take pride in the richness and strength that our diversity brings to the district.

We recognize that recent events and national conversations may have a significant emotional impact on our students, families, and staff. These are not merely policy discussions for many in our community—*they are deeply personal matters that can cause feelings of uncertainty and concern.*

To support our campuses during this time, we have provided our staff with tools and resources to address sensitive topics with students and colleagues effectively. We have also created FAQs to assist families in understanding the district's approach to potential policy changes that could influence our schools.

As these discussions continue to unfold, we are closely monitoring any legal updates that could affect our students and schools. Our commitment to transparency, trust, and open communication remains steadfast. Above all, we are focused on ensuring the academic success, mental health, and overall well-being of our students.

By working together, we can ensure that students and families feel supported and prepared for any situation. For further guidance or resources, please reach out to your administration team, Human Resources, and/or Safety & Security if you have any further questions.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Regarding Immigration Status and School Policies

**For Student Support:**

<p><b>I am a Hays CISD parent. Does my or my child's immigration status affect their access to public education?</b></p>	<p>No. Undocumented children have the same right to attend Hays CISD schools as U.S. citizens and permanent residents. This right also applies to children of undocumented parents. Immigration status does not affect the district's obligation to provide a quality education to all students.</p>
<p><b>Does Hays CISD provide immigration information to federal immigration officials?</b></p>	<p>No. Hays CISD does not collect or share immigration documentation or information with federal immigration authorities.</p>
<p><b>Are federal agencies allowed to conduct enforcement activities at schools?</b></p>	<p>Yes, under certain conditions, federal law enforcement agencies may conduct activities at or near schools. This includes various federal agencies. However, since 2011, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had guidelines in place that discouraged Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and border patrol agents from conducting enforcement actions in "sensitive locations" such as schools, churches, and hospitals.</p> <p>As of January 21, 2025, DHS rescinded this guideline, removing the restriction on enforcement activities in these areas. Hays CISD is currently reviewing this policy change and its potential impact.</p>
<p><b>I have a student in Hays CISD, and I am worried they may face bullying or harassment due to national events. What can I do?</b></p>	<p>Hays CISD strictly prohibits any form of harassment, including bullying or discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected category. This includes harassment carried out through electronic communication (e.g., cyberbullying).</p> <p>If your child experiences harassment, student statement forms are available through any counselor or administrator or online at <a href="https://www.hayscisd.net/Bullying">https://www.hayscisd.net/Bullying</a>. Once a statement is submitted, the principal or their designee will address it promptly.</p>

<p><b>What if I or someone I know works for Hays CISD under a visa or employment authorization? Are our jobs at risk?</b></p>	<p>Hays CISD employs a diverse staff to serve its students and families effectively. Employees authorized to work in the U.S. are supported equally as part of the district. If you have questions or concerns regarding employment, the Human Resources (HR) team is available to provide assistance and review employment-related information.</p> <p>For further questions or concerns, please contact the Hays CISD Human Resource office at (512) 268-2141.</p>
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**For Staff Support:**

<p><b>I have been approached by Hays CISD families and staff members looking for information about immigration and support services. What resources are available?</b></p>	<p>Hays CISD also provides a range of resources for refugee students, immigrant students, and emergent bilingual students. For online resources, go to <a href="https://www.hayscisd.net/Page/562">https://www.hayscisd.net/Page/562</a>.</p> <p>Families can reach out to the district and/or the campus for assistance. Additionally, Hays CISD staff have access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for support.</p>
<p><b>I am a Hays CISD employee and would like to engage in political activities regarding national events. Is this allowed?</b></p>	<p>Yes, Hays CISD employees are allowed to participate in political activities on their own time, outside of work hours.</p>
<p><b>I teach for Hays CISD and believe that current events could make for meaningful classroom discussions. Can I address these topics in my lessons?</b></p>	<p>Yes, you may discuss how political activities develop and explore differing viewpoints in appropriate classes such as government, sociology, humanities, debate, or world cultures.</p> <p>When leading these discussions, it is important to ensure they remain balanced and respectful. Teachers should present multiple perspectives and avoid taking one side or giving the impression of bias. As district employees, it is essential to maintain neutrality while facilitating meaningful and respectful dialogue. There is a policy that outlines teaching controversial issues. See EMB(LOCAL) for guidance.. <a href="#">Hays CISD Policy EMB (LOCAL)</a></p>

<p><b>I work for Hays CISD, and an outside group has asked me to distribute documents to my students. What resources, if any, can be provided to students?</b></p>	<p>District staff may not directly distribute non-school materials to students or send such information home. However, such outside resources, including literature, brochures, and pamphlets, may be made available at your campus on the table or bulletin board designated for non-school materials. However, remember that these materials must be submitted to the public information office for prior review in accordance with <a href="#">Hays CISD Board Policy GKDA (Local)</a>. If you have any questions, please contact the chief communication officer: <a href="mailto:tim.savoy@hayscisd.net">tim.savoy@hayscisd.net</a>.</p>
<p><b>What Should I Do If a Law Enforcement Officer Comes to a Hays CISD School?</b></p>	<p>If law enforcement officials, including ICE officers, come to the campus, they should be referred to the campus administrator. That administrator will consult with the district's chief of safety and security to verify the officer's credentials and evidence of legal authority to engage in law enforcement at a school, such as a written directive by an authorized superior, court action, or a signed warrant. School personnel are not permitted to interfere with lawful law enforcement activity. Doing so could subject yourself to possible arrest. Please notify the superintendent's office immediately if a law enforcement officer is attempting to access the campus and you believe they lack proper authority to do so.</p>
<p><b>What Should Be Done If a Student is in Crisis Due to a Parent or Guardian Being Deported or Incarcerated?</b></p>	<p>Hays CISD follows specific protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of students when their parent or guardian is unavailable to pick them up. Maintaining the student in a safe and supportive space while the steps below are taken should be a top priority for campus staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contacting Emergency Contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School administrators and/or counselors should attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other family members listed as emergency contacts.</li> <li>○ Prior to such incidents and/or any other crisis related incident it is always a best practice to ensure student files are up to date with individuals authorized to take temporary custody of the student.</li> <li>○ Make all reasonable efforts to reach someone authorized to take custody of the student and assure that you document all contact attempts and/or steps taken.</li> <li>○ Alternative Contact Methods: Collaborate with the student to identify alternative ways to reach family members or other authorized individuals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Involving Law Enforcement and Support Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If all contact attempts fail, the campus administrator should contact the Chief of Safety and Security.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Chief of Safety and Security will assist in locating family members or emergency contacts using the student's profile.</li> <li>○ If no authorized contacts are located, the police or campus administration should contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS).</li> </ul> <p>3. Supporting the Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ While waiting for TDFPS, campus counselors and/or any other mental health professional that is available should provide emotional support and review stress and anxiety management strategies with the student.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steps to Support the Student Upon Return to School:</b></p>	<p>1. Counseling Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Campus counselors and/or mental health professionals (if one is available to serve the campus) should provide individual or small group brief counseling or refer the student to other support services, such as Communities in Schools (CIS), TCHATT/Dell Medical, our <a href="#">Family Success Center</a> to be assisted with finding an appropriate counselling support service for the student and/or even for family referrals to other community partners.</li> </ul> <p>2. Developing a Safety Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work with the student to create an individual safety plan, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strategies for managing stress and anxiety at school.</li> <li>■ Identification of at least two supportive school staff members.</li> <li>■ Identification of at least two supportive adults outside of school.</li> <li>■ Provide a copy of the <a href="#">List to local Mental Health Resources</a>, access to our HCISD <a href="#">Community Mental Health Resource Guide</a>, and/or the link to the <a href="#">Hays County Resource Directory</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>These protocols ensure that the district provides the necessary support to students during difficult times while maintaining their safety and well-being. If you have any questions, please contact the Hays CISD Safety &amp; Security Office.</p>

<b>How Can I Support My Students in the Classroom?</b>	<p>Teachers play a key role in fostering safe, supportive learning environments where students can be supported academically, socially and emotionally to assure that all students can thrive. To assist in this effort, Hays CISD provides access to lessons and age-appropriate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) activities that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms, a great resource that is available to K-12th grade staff and students is through our comprehensive SEL and College &amp; Career Readiness platform ~<b>Schoolinks</b>, which can be accessed through the Classlink single sign-on.</p>
<b>Communicating with Students and Families</b>	<p>Teachers and staff are encouraged to address students' questions and concerns through the lens of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validating students' feelings and experiences.</li> <li>• Emphasizing that Hays CISD schools are safe and supportive spaces.</li> <li>• Referring students and families to support staff, such as counselors, on campus for additional assistance.</li> </ul> <p>If a student inquires about accessing additional support services, direct them to the principal, campus counselor, mental health professional and/or other campus-based mental health partners, like Communities In Schools (CIS) for guidance.</p>
<b>Can Teachers or Campus Staff Assist Families with Completing Documents?</b>	<p>It is strongly discouraged for teachers or campus staff to assist families with the completion of legal documents. Instead, families should be referred to the campus counselor. Hays CISD counseling staff can connect families with community organizations that provide help with legal matters or document completion.</p>
<b>Steps Families Can Take Now:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate a Trusted Adult: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parents/guardians should identify a trusted family member or adult who can pick up and care for their child in case the parent/guardian becomes unavailable due to arrest, detention, hospitalization, or other emergencies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update Emergency Contact Information:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Families should ensure that the Parent Portal contains accurate and up-to-date contact information for trusted adults and emergency contacts. Changes to emergency contacts must be made in person with the assistance of front office staff.</li><li>● Talk to Children:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss emergency plans with their children in an age-appropriate manner, so children understand what to do in the event of an emergency.</li></ul></li></ul>
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