

BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE CODE C29P: SUPPORT OF STUDENTS WITH A DETAINED PARENT

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Summary

Recent events have led to a great deal of concern in our community and in communities across the country concerning immigration status and the enforcement of immigration actions by designated authorities. In BSD, some of our students and their families are greatly impacted by these concerns, and indications that deportations will increase dramatically have created a climate of heightened fear and anxiety for some students and their families.

No written state or federal law mandates that school districts assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the enforcement of immigration laws. This procedure sets forth consistent responses to ensure that the needs of students are met in the event that a parent, caregiver, child, or family member is suddenly detained either by ICE or by the criminal justice system. Threats of legal action, and particularly of separation and deportation, against students and their families create severe emotional, psychological, and physical barriers to learning and education that can and should be allayed or reduced through support systems

Procedures

When a family has been affected by deportation, incarceration, and/or removal procedures:

- Notify the superintendent.
- Identify a trusted adult to speak with the student and the family (if they accept) to gather as much information as possible about their present needs.
- Notify the BSD Rapid Response Crisis Team by reaching out to the Superintendent or Director of Equity as needed for support.
- Assigned volunteers notify the District office about immediate needs such as food, shelter, etc.
- Emergency funds may be made available to the family as needed, including rent assistance for a limited period, and depending on emergency/donor funds availability.
- If the family does not yet have a lawyer, the District office can offer contacts for appropriate organizations and agencies for support.
- The student is assigned mental health support locally.

Communication with Staff

Once a school staff member becomes aware of a parental or caregiver detainment, they will immediately notify the school administrator and the school's point person, who will clarify who else must be notified internally; this may include counselors, Special Educators, EL teachers, multilingual liaisons, school-based Clinicians, and/or the teacher of record.

Information about a person's immigration status, or the detainment of a family member, is strictly prohibited from being shared. It should only be shared on a need-to-know basis with essential staff and should not be shared in “all staff” emails or staff meetings. This includes the request for proof of citizenship, US residence (other than local), or Social Security Number. (This information can only be shared if authorized directly by the superintendent.)

Teachers who provide direct, student-facing support should be notified in case the student is exhibiting behaviors that are different from baseline and need to provide students with additional support.

Communication with Families

- Receive information sensitively, avoiding probing questions.
- Document only what is necessary to support the student (not private immigration details).
- Connect with alternate caregivers (other parent, family member, or guardian) as needed.
- Share resources for **legal aid, housing, food, and emergency assistance**. (See below.)
- Ensure communication is responsive to the family's home languages using our [ticket system](#) as needed.
- Ensure records are stored securely and shared only with essential personnel.
- Provide ALL staff with **general strategies** (supportive language, trauma-informed approaches) without disclosing unnecessary personal details.

Immediate Student Support

- Ensure **basic needs** are met: check for safe transportation home, food access, homework support, and housing.
- Offer a **safe adult point of contact** at school (counselor, trusted teacher, mentor).
 - Ask the student who their trusted adult is and communicate to this adult that the student has identified them as a safe point of contact.
 - This adult should make a plan to connect with the student and create a safe space for them to go if they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed when at school.
- Monitor for sudden academic or behavioral changes and respond with empathy rather than punishment.
- Provide access to **school counseling** or connect with community mental health resources.
- Be flexible with deadlines, testing, and attendance.
- Consider connecting the student to **peer support groups** or affinity spaces if available.
- Hold regular, confidential staff check-ins about student progress and needs.
- Adjust supports over time, recognizing that challenges may emerge later.
- Maintain dignity and avoid stigmatization or deficit view thinking — ensure students are not singled out.
- If a student is to be separated from their guardian while enrolled in school, the BSD will deploy its institutional and legal resources to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and stability of the student, including but not limited to the referral of the student to non-governmental legal advocacy organizations, the consultation with our legal counsel as needed, monitoring of placement if removed from the community, and the protection of their physical integrity and basic human needs.
 - BSD will also take immediate proactive steps to encourage and guide families to initiate Guardianship Arrangements and Power of Attorney through legal aid organizations. This will allow the child to avoid DCF custody and be more likely to be reunited with their parent(s) in this country or another.

Additional Considerations

All school sites should designate a point person (*e.g., school counselor, social worker, or administrator*) to coordinate immediate responses, which include informing other “need to know” staff members and jump-starting wrap-around student supports.

If you witness the removal or attempted removal of a child or any other person within the premises, inform the administration immediately. Document it in writing immediately using the [Critical Incident Report](#).

Bus drivers are directed to communicate immediately with a member of the school's administration if immigration enforcement occurs at or near bus stops while on duty.

After school and extracurricular programs, off-campus activities and field trips happening in our premises, whether sponsored by the BSD or not, are to abide by the expectations laid out in this protocol.

School Records

No records will be kept of information that is not necessary for the appropriate registration of a pupil, such as immigration status.

No dissemination of records may take place outside existing FERPA procedures, and with the full knowledge of the Office of the Registrar and respective superintendent authorization.

Any request for information other than immigration status will be reviewed by the office of the superintendent if the request is made by a non-educational entity not allowed under FERPA or for purposes primarily related to immigration enforcement. The District will refuse all voluntary information sharing with immigration agents across all aspects of the District to the fullest extent possible under the law.

The District will not willingly enter into agreements with state or local law enforcement agencies, ICE, or any other federal agency for the enforcement of federal immigration law, except as required by law.

What to do if you're unsure

If you are not sure, please ask your principal or supervisor. There are BSD personnel who are committed to gathering (and, when appropriate, disseminating) accurate information to guide educators, inform and advise families, and ensure the safety of students. Please contact your principal first to check out the validity of anything you hear. For concerns regarding immigration detentions, you may also contact the Director of Programs for Multilingual Learners.

Please be careful and professional with regard to what you say and where you say it. Students see and hear what we do, and our own opinions and feelings impact them greatly. Our principal job is to encourage students to come to school, focus on their learning, and know that we want them to be successful here with us in BSD.

Clerical Information

<i>BSD Version:</i>	<i>BSD C29 Procedure 1</i>
<i>Date Adopted:</i>	<i>July 10, 2026</i>
<i>Legal Reference(s):</i>	<i>Use the same legal references linked in the POLICY (N/A if there are none)</i>
<i>Policy Reference:</i>	<i>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (C29)</i>

Additional Resources for Families with Detained Members

- [BSD Procedure for Encounters with Law Enforcement](#)
- [Fugee Family Home Page](#)
- [Fugee Family Resources](#)
- [Executive Orders and Implications: A Letter from the Vermont State Refugee Office](#)
- [Guidance for School Districts Related to Immigration Action - VT Agency of Education](#)
- [Vermont Language Justice Project](#)
- [National Newcomer Network - The Century Foundation](#)
- [The Asylum Process — Vermont Asylum Assistance Project](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: Resources for Ensuring Equal Access to Education for Immigrant Students | U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: Resources for Ensuring Equal Access to Education for Immigrant Students \(En Español\) | U.S. Department of Education](#)
- Vermont Language Justice Program ([CLICK HERE](#) for "Know your Rights" videos in various languages) and carry reminders of their rights in the form of "Red Cards" ([CLICK HERE](#) to find templates of red cards), as well as any pertinent documents.
- Migrant Justice | Justicia Migrante Vermont <https://migrantjustice.net/>
- [Vermont Legal Aid](#)
- [Vermont Migrant Education Program](#)