

Charlton Primary School (year 6)
officech@charlton.vale-academy.org

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7 March 2024

Dear Students,

Thank you for your recent letter to the Home Office enclosing a guide for refugees so that they can understand life in the UK. Your letter has been passed to the Direct Communications Unit and I have been asked to reply.

I was very interested to read your thoughts on what more the UK can do to help refugees around the world. We are always keen to hear from people who are interested in learning more about this really important topic. You might not be aware but the UK can already be proud that we provide protection for people who need it, for as long as it is needed. The most important message is that anyone who is in the UK and fears returning to their home country for certain reasons can seek protection in the UK. This is known as claiming asylum. Nobody is required to go back to a country if they would be subject to persecution or serious harm there. Every claim that is accepted into the UK asylum system is carefully considered.

In most cases, Home Office staff interview the person and listen carefully to what has happened to them, and then they review all of the evidence to understand why that person needs protection. Home Office staff receive lots of training and must follow the rules when making their decisions. Whilst their asylum claims and any appeals are being processed, we ensure that asylum seekers and their families who have no money or are homeless, can get support from the UK Government. The support provided includes free accommodation, paying some of their bills, and a weekly cash allowance to buy food, clothes and other things such as toiletries. Asylum seekers also have free access to healthcare through the NHS and their children under 18 have access to full-time education in the same way that you do. People who are then given protection (also known as refugee status) in the UK are also allowed to work, and can apply for Universal Credit if needed, have access to healthcare and education, and they can apply for certain family members to join them in the UK.

I hope that this response reassures you that the UK is offering protection to people who need it. Thank you once again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

**B Jugdaohsingh Direct
Communications Unit**

Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk