

Citizenship put on hold for 'no-handshake' Muslim boys

From [BBC](#)

The family of the two teenagers, who refused to shake their female teachers' hands for religious reasons, have had their application for citizenship suspended.

Shaking hands with the teacher before and after class is often standard practice in Switzerland.

A spokesperson for the local security authorities said that the office for migration in canton Basel Country would be speaking to family members individually, and that it was not unusual for an application to be suspended while additional information was gathered. The spokesperson said that the interview would be open-ended, and that the family's immigration status would only be decided based upon their answers to the questions posed during the interview process.

The 14- and 16-year old brothers are Muslim, and do not want to touch women in general, for religious reasons. The younger of the two said in a newspaper interview that he had discovered this rule in an internet sermon.

The head teacher of the school attended by the two boys arranged that they would not shake hands with any of the teachers. However, this led to a public outcry as news spread in the Swiss press, and justice minister Simonetta Sommaruga publicly criticised the decision, arguing that the handshakes are part of Swiss culture.

The decision to suspend the application process for citizenship and summon all family members for individual interviews was said to have been taken last week. It is not known how many of the children are applying to become Swiss,

along with their parents.

The boys' father is a Syrian imam who moved to Switzerland in 2001 and was granted asylum.

Basel's migration office was seeking more information about the circumstances under which the father's asylum request was approved, AFP news agency reported.