
CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM in Our Schools

A Toolkit for Jewish K-12 Students



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You have the power to help make your school a more welcoming place for yourself and other Jewish students. This toolkit will show you how to help your school understand Jewish culture and traditions, and how to speak up about antisemitism. It describes what your school has a responsibility to do, and how you can advocate for policies and programs that support Jewish students, including what steps you can take if you experience antisemitism in school.

Why Feeling Like You Belong Matters

Your school should be a place where every student—no matter their background, beliefs, or identity—can succeed both academically and socially while staying true to who they are. As a Jewish student, you should feel safe expressing your cultural and religious identity, see your experiences valued in school discussions, and know you're an important part of your school community. On the next couple pages, we've outlined ways you can advocate for Jewish belonging at your school.

Remember:

We at American Jewish Committee (AJC) have your back!

Reach out anytime at education@ajc.org.

How to Help Make Your School More Jewish-Inclusive

Help Jewish Students Connect With Each Other

We hear from Jewish students all the time about how meaningful it is to come together as a community to celebrate our heritage and support each other through tough times. When your school supports Jewish student groups, they're showing they care about Jewish belonging.

Start here: Does your school have a Jewish club like a Jewish Student Association (JSA) or Jewish Student Union (JSU)?

- **If yes:** Think about how the school could better support the group. What would you suggest?
- **If no:** Could you start one? Talk to your advisor about how to get one going.
- **If a formal club isn't possible:** What are some creative ways Jewish students could meet up? (Maybe before/after school? During lunch?)

Help Your School Learn About Jewish Life

Push for cultural, social, and [educational programs](#)¹ that teach your whole school about Jewish heritage and what it means to be Jewish. Here are some ideas:

- Ask your school to host an assembly about Jewish identity and antisemitism.
- Write an article for your school newspaper about something that matters to you as a Jewish student—whether that's antisemitism, Israel, or how Jewish students add value to your diverse school community.
- Organize a Hanukkah menorah lighting or student Shabbat dinner.
- Talk with your school librarian to make sure your library has good, current books by and about Jews.
- Make sure your school celebrates [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)² (JAHM) in May. This is a perfect time for Jewish student groups to lead programs that help classmates learn about Jewish people and our history in America. [Click here](#)³ and see below for some ideas!

Help Raise Awareness about Jewish Culture and Holidays

Share [AJC's Guide to Jewish Religion, Culture, and Holidays](#)⁴ with your principal, advisors, and teachers. It has a 5-year calendar so they can plan better around Jewish holidays, plus info about Jewish traditions and life cycle events. If your school includes religious holidays in its calendar, Jewish holidays should be there too.

- **Important:** Your school should respect your needs when Jewish holidays conflict with school events, tests, or assignments. "Ask for accommodations when you need them; put it in writing and give as much advance notice as you can."

Build Bridges Between Jewish Students and Others

- Work with other student clubs at your school to plan joint activities and projects.
- Push for a committee or task force to fight hate at school (including antisemitism) made up of students, administrators, and faculty from different backgrounds.

Make Sure Antisemitism Is Included in Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion Programs

You should get to participate in well-rounded belonging and inclusion programs that include [education about the Jewish community and antisemitism](#)⁵.

- If your school already has regular belonging and inclusion programs that don't include antisemitism and the Jewish experience, set a meeting with your principal to ask why and request that they be included. [Reach out to us](#)⁶ for help if you face pushback.
- Encourage your school to celebrate [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)⁷ in May with activities like:
 - Working with your librarian to display books by and about Jewish Americans.
 - Hosting a film festival (or screening) with a discussion afterwards.
 - Highlighting famous Jewish Americans during morning announcements or on bulletin boards.

If You Face Antisemitism at School

Report Incidents Right Away

If you experience or see discrimination or harassment, do your best to report it as soon as possible. According to [AJC's 2024 State of Antisemitism in America Report](#),⁸ 78% of Jewish Americans who experienced antisemitism didn't report it, and **if it isn't reported, it can't be addressed**. We know that reporting antisemitism can feel uncomfortable or even scary. Sometimes you might not be sure how to interpret what you experienced. It's important to discuss what you experienced with a trusted adult in your life so you can think about how best to proceed.

¹ [AJC.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms](#)

² [AJC.org/JAHM](#)

³ [AJC.org/JAHM](#)

⁴ [AJC.org/5YearCalendar](#)

⁵ [AJC.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms](#)

⁶ [education@ajc.org](#)

⁷ [AJC.org/JAHM](#)

⁸ [AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2024](#)

Tips for Reporting:

- Write down details including time, location, and witnesses.
- Save any related documentation like emails, screenshots, and photos.
- Talk to a trusted adult to discuss what occurred and how to proceed.
- Use your school's internal reporting process—there might be an online portal or a specific advisor or office that handles harassment and discrimination.

Know Your Rights

Different laws and policies apply depending on whether your school is public or private, your location, and other factors. In some situations, it might be helpful to speak with an attorney or an organization that helps students who have experienced discrimination or hate. If you need legal advice, [we can help](#)⁹ connect you and your parent(s) to the right people. Here are some basics:

In Public K-12 Schools:

- Federal law protects students from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
- This includes protection for Jewish and/or Israeli students against harassment due to perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or citizenship/residency in a country with a dominant religion.
- Schools must address any discrimination or harassment they know about by taking prompt and effective steps to stop it, fix any harm, and prevent future incidents.
- Federal law also protects you from retaliation for reporting discrimination, participating in investigations, or advocating for your rights.
- You can also [file a complaint](#)¹⁰ with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

In Independent K-12 Schools:

- School policies should protect students against discrimination and harassment.
- Codes of conduct should clearly outline what constitutes discrimination and harassment and how to report an incident.
- Schools often update codes of conduct to deal with new circumstances, so if your school's code of conduct is missing something, talk to your parent/guardian about addressing it with your school.

Keep Learning and Sharing

Level Up Your Advocacy Skills!

[Leaders for Tomorrow \(LFT\)](#)¹¹ is AJC's premier leadership program that empowers Jewish high school students to build confident Jewish identities, effectively combat antisemitism, and advocate for the Jewish people and Israel. LFT gives Jewish teens the knowledge and network to handle challenges in high school and on their future college campus. With access to our network of over 3,500 alumni, LFT students continue supporting each other as they bring their advocacy skills into the halls of government and their local communities. Applications are open every summer and close in early fall. Interested? Reach out to LFT@ajc.org.

Share AJC Resources

AJC provides [resources, action plans, and guidance](#)¹² that you, your parents, and teachers can trust. Share the links below with administrators and teachers. Even better, print out the PDFs (download from the webpage for each resource) and hand them over in person—doing so is a great way to advocate with school leaders! If there's guidance you're looking for, and we don't appear to have it, [let us know](#)!¹³

- [AJC's Guide to Jewish Religion, Culture, and Holidays](#)¹⁴: Brief descriptions of denominations, holiday traditions, and life cycle events; the [5-year calendar](#)¹⁵ makes it an indispensable resource for administrators and teachers.
- AJC's [Translate Hate](#)¹⁶: Glossary of antisemitic terms, tropes, themes, and memes, from the internet to pop culture—essential for identifying, exposing, and reporting antisemitism.
- AJC's [Guide to Recognizing When Anti-Israel Actions Become Antisemitic](#)¹⁷: Specific examples and explanations of how contemporary manifestations are connected to historic tropes.
- AJC's [Guide for Jewish Teens on Engaging with Social Media](#)¹⁸: Ways to stay safe online, plus accounts worth following.
- AJC's [Educational Programs for Middle and High School Spaces](#)¹⁹: Programs covering Jewish people, identity, history, Israel, Zionism, and antisemitism.
- AJC's [Action Plan for Independent School Administrators](#)²⁰ and [Action Plan for K-12 Public School Administrators](#)²¹: Comprehensive guides to help confront antisemitism in schools.

**Find all these materials (and more!) on
[AJC's Campus Resource Hub](#)²².**

⁹ education@ajc.org

¹⁰ www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/file-complaint

¹¹ AJC.org/LFT

¹² AJC.org/CampusResources

¹³ education@ajc.org

¹⁴ AJC.org/Culture

¹⁵ AJC.org/5YearCalendar

¹⁶ AJC.org/TranslateHate

¹⁷ AJC.org/Anti-Israel-Antisemitism

¹⁸ AJC.org/news/suggestions-for-speaking-about-social-media-with-your-students

¹⁹ AJC.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms

²⁰ AJC.org/IndependentSchoolAdminActionPlan

²¹ AJC.org/PublicSchoolAdministratorsActionPlan

²² AJC.org/CampusResources

[American Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#)²³ is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York and more than 75 offices, institutes, and international Jewish community partnerships worldwide, AJC's mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world.

[AJC's Center for Education Advocacy \(CEA\)](#)²⁴ fosters academic environments that are inclusive of Jews and Jewish identity and refuse to allow the normalization of antisemitism in any form. Our [team](#)²⁵ of experienced educators provides strategic guidance and nuanced educational programs, and builds trusted relationships to work alongside higher education and K-12 institutions, educators, students, and parents to ensure schools prioritize critical thinking, viewpoint diversity, and fact-based inquiry—all values that strengthen civic society and democracy for the long term.

²³ [AJC.org](#)

²⁴ [AJC.org/CEA](#)

²⁵ education@ajc.org