
CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM in Our Schools

A Toolkit for Parents of Jewish K-12 Students



CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM in Our Schools

A Toolkit for Parents of Jewish K-12 Students

As the parent of a Jewish K-12 student, you may be concerned about the experience of Jewish students in the current landscape, and whether your child's school is fully including Jewish students and effectively addressing antisemitism. **This toolkit offers steps you can take as the parent of a Jewish K-12 student to engage constructively with your child's school to make impactful change.**

Accurate education, clear and enforced policies, and constructive parent engagement are keys to improving school environments for Jewish students. [AJC's Center for Education Advocacy](#)¹ includes a team of experienced educators and content experts who work in partnership with parents, students, and educators to increase their awareness and understanding of the Jewish community, as well as to advocate for educational policies and frameworks that will build school cultures that are resilient against rising Jewish hate.

As key stakeholders, parents play a critical role in school communities. We encourage parents to forge collaborative and collegial relationships with administrators and teachers, offering to serve as partners and trusted resources whenever possible. Parents can seed change in their children's schools by following the recommendations in this toolkit and sharing resources from American Jewish Committee (AJC).

AJC is here to help. Please contact education@ajc.org so that we can support you and your child's school.

1| [AJC.org/CEA](https://ajc.org/CEA)

Offer to Help

Introduce yourself to, and foster open lines of communication with, administrators at your child's school, as well as your child's teachers. Make sure administrators know how challenging this moment is for many American Jews, with antisemitism increasing at an alarming pace. Let them know how important it is to prioritize Jewish students' emotional well-being and physical safety, just as they would for all other students.

Reach Out Early

Introduce yourself at the start of the school year, before issues surface or an incident occurs. A relationship built in advance means administrators and teachers already know you and your concerns when a difficult moment arises, rather than meeting you for the first time in the middle of one.

Identify Partners Across the School

Administrators and teachers aren't the only allies worth cultivating. School counselors, student support staff, and existing parent affinity groups can all be valuable partners in advocating for Jewish students. Reach out and introduce yourself.

Offer to Be a Resource

Let the school know you're available to help, and offer to connect them with AJC's education experts, who can work directly with your school providing workshops, curricular guidance, and other support designed to help create a school environment that welcomes all students and is free from discrimination. AJC has developed [action plans for confronting antisemitism and guidance documents for school leaders](#)². Knowing which ones apply to your school, and when to share them, makes you a powerful advocate. See the full list at the end of this toolkit.

Encourage Learning

Offer AJC Resources and Educational Workshops

Ask the school to provide educational programming about antisemitism for your school community. While antisemitism shares some features of other forms of hate, it is also unique. Understanding antisemitism, both historically and today, is a critical first step for effectively addressing this issue in school communities. [AJC education experts offer presentations for administrators, faculty, students and/or parents](#)³. We are happy to meet with administrators who oversee school culture to discuss tailoring a program.

Inquire About Curriculum

Including Jewish history and literature in school curricula humanizes Jews, offers students an understanding of how Jews and Jewish thought have influenced human civilization, and allows students of all backgrounds to see the diversity, resilience, connectivity, and creativity of the Jewish people, both over time and today. **Ask your school where study of the Jewish experience currently exists in the curriculum.** AJC's [Guidance for K-12 Schools to Ensure the Jewish Experience is Included Across the Curriculum](#)⁴ provides key questions and enduring understandings about the Jewish people, and is an invaluable resource for educators as they consider and embark upon a curriculum audit process.

The following are key points for your conversation with school administrators about curriculum:

- Studying the history of the Jewish people, including – *but not exclusively* – the Holocaust and antisemitism, is critical to ensuring an informed citizenry.
 - Antisemitism did not originate with the Nazis, nor did it end after World War II. Quality Holocaust education should include antisemitism's historical roots and its evolution over time so that students understand how to recognize contemporary manifestations of the world's oldest hate.
 - Best practices in Holocaust education include teaching about the centuries-old, robust, and creative European Jewish civilization that was destroyed, as well as Jewish resistance to Nazi terror.
- Social Studies classes should include lessons that explore the experiences, contributions, and challenges faced by the Jewish people throughout history and today.
- English Language Arts (ELA) classes should include literature by Jews about the Jewish experience, including the American Jewish experience. School libraries should include age-appropriate books that highlight Jewish experiences, people, and holidays.
 - Organizations like the [Jewish Book Council](#)⁵ provide in-depth information about Jewish literature for all ages.
- Educators must understand the Jewish connection to Israel, both historically and today. Education about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be rooted in facts and primary sources, and should include diverse narratives and experiences. AJC can recommend respected and responsible

2| [AJC.org/EducationResources](https://ajc.org/EducationResources)

3| [AJC.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms](https://ajc.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms)

4| [AJC.org/Guidance/K-12JewishExperienceinCurriculum](https://ajc.org/Guidance/K-12JewishExperienceinCurriculum)

5| jewishbookcouncil.org

curricular providers, such as [ConnectED](#)⁶ and the [Institute for Curriculum Services \(ICS\)](#)⁷, to work with your child's school on educationally sound materials for teaching about the conflict.

School Belonging

Inquire how education about Jewish identity and antisemitism are included in your school's educational and professional learning philosophy. Encourage the school to recognize Jewish students and families as a unique group within the school community.

The following will help you open conversations with the school about Jewish belonging:

- Share [AJC's Guide to Jewish Religion and Culture](#)⁸, which includes a 5-year planning calendar, to help educators avoid scheduling conflicts with Jewish holidays, be aware of potential accommodations students may need, and learn about key Jewish cultural practices.
- If the school hosts a "cultural night" event/festival, be sure to share AJC's [Guidance on "Cultural Night" Programs](#)⁹ with administrators so they can plan and execute it in a way that's inclusive and respectful of everyone in your school community, including Jewish students and families.
- If the school usually celebrates national heritage months for various communities, encourage administrators to recognize [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)¹⁰ in May by planning in advance how they will [meaningfully integrate](#)¹¹ stories of American Jewish history, culture, and contributions into curriculum and programming. AJC partners with the [Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)¹² and with [Unpacked for Educators](#)¹³ to offer extensive resources for K-12 educational spaces.

Encourage Adoption and Enforcement of Policies

Identifying Antisemitism

Encourage administrators to consider adopting the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) Working Definition of Antisemitism](#)¹⁴ as an educational tool to help the school community understand contemporary antisemitism and to help guide policies. IHRA provides a clear and widely accepted framework for identifying antisemitism,

including contemporary examples of antizionist forms of antisemitism. The IHRA definition [makes clear](#)¹⁵ that criticism of Israeli policy is not antisemitic.

Social Media

Confirm that the school has clear social media policies that address the boundaries of acceptable behavior online for the entire school community—students, faculty, administration, and parents. Advocate that the school hold age-appropriate conversations about the healthy use of social media, including how to recognize misinformation and disinformation online. Together with your child/ren, look through our resource, [Helping Jewish Teens Engage Responsibly with Social Media](#)¹⁶.

Incident Reporting

Confirm that the school has a clear mechanism for reporting antisemitic incidents and a transparent process to follow for those who believe they have experienced or witnessed an antisemitic incident. This could include an online portal or a designated administrator. Schools should make clear to the community through their policies and procedures how such incidents will be investigated and addressed. If the school does not have clear reporting structures, or an incident requires further reporting to government, law enforcement, and/or social media companies, recommend to administrators that they consult AJC's resource - [Reporting Antisemitism to Federal Agencies, Law Enforcement, and Social Media Platforms](#)¹⁷. We also encourage you to review AJC's [Toolkit for Jewish K-12 Students](#)¹⁸ along with your child.

- If your child has experienced or witnessed an antisemitic incident, reporting is crucial. According to [AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2025 Report](#)¹⁹, 77% of Jewish Americans who experienced antisemitism didn't report it; however, reporting is key to ensuring that schools resolve individual incidents and understand how widespread issues may be.

Transparent Response

If an antisemitic incident occurs at school—or a significant event affects the school's Jewish community—review and share with your school leaders AJC's [Guidance and Checklist for Responding to Responding to Discrimination for K-12 Administrators](#)²⁰. As appropriate based on the situation and confirmed facts, parents

6| [connectededucation.org](#)

7| [icsresources.org](#)

8| [AJC.org/5YearCalendar](#)

9| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12CulturalNight](#)

10| [AJC.org/JAHM](#)

11| [AJC.org/news/guidance-for-meaningful-and-inclusive-implementation-for-k-12-schools](#)

12| [jewishamericanheritage.org](#)

13| [unpacked.education/jewish-american-heritage-month](#)

14| [AJC.org/WorkingDefinition](#)

15| [AJC.org/WorkingDefinitionQuestionsAnswered](#)

16| [AJC.org/SocialMediaTeenGuide](#)

17| [AJC.org/ReportingAntisemitism](#)

18| [AJC.org/ToolkitHighSchoolStudents](#)

19| [AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2024](#)

20| [AJC.org/K12ChecklistFollowingDiscriminationIncidents](#)

should advocate for the administration to issue an unequivocal statement of support for Jewish students, condemn the antisemitic incident, and articulate the school's next steps to stop the discrimination, address harm, and prevent recurrence. Note that many schools have adopted a policy of institutional neutrality, meaning they will not issue statements about global or other events that don't directly affect the school community.

Walkouts / Protests

If an anti-Israel protest or walkout is planned or takes place at your child's school, it is important that you speak with administrators immediately about what such events can mean for Jewish students. See AJC's [Guidance for Handling Student Protests and Walkouts](#)²¹.

Keep Lines of Communication Open

Communication is Key

Give your child space to ask questions and express their feelings. Help them feel heard and validated, and understand that they may see situations in school differently than you do. Carefully balance keeping a watchful eye on the thriving of your child in school and allowing your child to build resilience and self-advocacy skills.

School leaders and educators should be receptive to hearing the concerns and solutions presented by students. You can guide your child in communicating appropriately and effectively with administrators and teachers. While certain circumstances warrant (or even necessitate) parent advocacy over that of students, nurturing young people's leadership and advocacy skills in age—and situation—appropriate ways builds capability and self-confidence in ways that will continue to pay dividends.

- Student advocacy could be as simple—and impactful—as your child giving their teacher and principal a copy of [AJC's 5-Year Calendar](#)²² at the beginning of the school year and sharing which dates they will be absent to observe Jewish holidays.

Mental Health

If your child is dealing with anxiety or fears about antisemitism, and/or has been the target of antisemitism, reach out to mental health professionals who can help give your child the support they need. Start with your child's school, which should be able to offer support through advisors or staff mental health professionals, as well as through school policies and procedures. You can also seek counseling and other supportive resources through private mental health professionals or by contacting a local Jewish organization.

Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT)²³

Parents often ask how they can help their teens build confidence in navigating today's challenges. Leaders for Tomorrow was designed specifically to do that. **LFT is AJC's premier education, advocacy, and leadership development 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. Applications are open every summer and close in early fall. **Encourage your teen to apply! For more information, reach out to LFT@ajc.org.**

Jewish Parent Affinity Groups

Building connections with other Jewish parents in your school community creates valuable opportunities for mutual support and advocacy. A Jewish parent affinity group can help foster a sense of belonging for your family while working collectively to promote policies that enhance Jewish safety and inclusion. These groups also serve as bridges to other parent communities in the school, facilitating meaningful dialogue and strengthening the broader school environment for all families. If your child's school already has a Jewish parent affinity group, consider getting involved. If not, explore the possibility of starting one with school leadership. When collaborating as a Jewish parent group, maintain a respectful and constructive tone in all communications with school administration. Focus on offering specific, actionable recommendations that will improve both safety and the overall learning climate for Jewish students and the wider school community.

21| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12StudentProtests](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12StudentProtests)

22| [AJC.org/5YearCalendar](https://www.ajc.org/5YearCalendar)

23| [AJC.org/LFT](https://www.ajc.org/LFT)

Resources to Share and Learn More

To Share with Schools

Partnering with school leadership helps parents build a school community resilient against antisemitism. Many of the resources below are available for download from AJC's [Education Resource Hub](#) and can be printed and personally handed to administrators and teachers. This in-person “touchpoint,” with appropriate follow up, builds trust and is an effective way to advocate for your Jewish students.

AJC Guidance

- [Confronting Antisemitism: An Action Plan for Independent School Administrators](#)²⁴
- [Confronting Antisemitism: An Action Plan for Public School Administrators](#)²⁵
- [Guidance and Checklist for K-12 Schools on Responding to Discrimination Incidents](#)²⁶
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Evaluating Educational Programs About Antisemitism](#)²⁷
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Conducting a Curriculum Audit](#)²⁸
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on “Cultural Night” Programs](#)²⁹
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Selecting Guest Speakers](#)³⁰
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on the Anniversary of October 7](#)³¹
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Protests and Walkouts](#)³²
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Teaching About Elections](#)³³
- [Guidance for K-12 Schools on Inclusive December Activities](#)³⁴
- [The ABCs of Jewish Inclusion: A Quick Guide for K-12 Administrators](#)³⁵

AJC Resources

- [A Guide to Jewish Religion, Culture, Holiday Observances, and 5-Year Calendar](#)³⁶
- [A Guide to Who Are The Jewish People](#)³⁷
- [A Guide to Recognizing When Anti-Israel Actions Become Antisemitic](#)³⁸
- [AJC’s Translate Hate Glossary](#)³⁹
- [AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America 2025 Report](#)⁴⁰
- [Jewish American Heritage Month⁴¹; Education Toolkit for JAHM](#)⁴²
- [News Sources for Teaching Current Events in the Middle East](#)⁴³
- [AJC’s Educational Programs for Middle and High School Spaces](#)⁴⁴

For Parents and Jewish Teens

- [FAQs for Parents of K-12 Jewish Students](#)⁴⁵ presents scenarios parents and students may face and specific recommendations for steps to take.
- [Guidance on Reporting Antisemitism](#)⁴⁶ provides details on how to report to federal agencies, law enforcement, and social media companies.
- [Guidance for Jewish Teens on Engaging with Social Media](#)⁴⁷ offers recommendations for responsible behavior in online interactions.
- [Confronting Antisemitism: A Toolkit for Jewish K-12 Students](#)⁴⁸ suggests several ways for students to engage constructively within their school and among their peers.

AJC’s Center for Education Advocacy is here to support you. You can always reach us at education@ajc.org.

24| [AJC.org/ActionPlanK12IndependentSchools](https://www.ajc.org/ActionPlanK12IndependentSchools)

25| [AJC.org/ActionPlanK12PublicSchools](https://www.ajc.org/ActionPlanK12PublicSchools)

26| [AJC.org/K12ChecklistFollowingDiscriminationIncidents](https://www.ajc.org/K12ChecklistFollowingDiscriminationIncidents)

27| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12EvaluateAntisemitismPrograms](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12EvaluateAntisemitismPrograms)

28| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12CurriculumAudit](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12CurriculumAudit)

29| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12CulturalNight](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12CulturalNight)

30| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12SelectingGuestSpeakers](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12SelectingGuestSpeakers)

31| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12October7Anniversary](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12October7Anniversary)

32| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12StudentProtests](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12StudentProtests)

33| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12TeachingElections](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12TeachingElections)

34| [AJC.org/GuidanceK12DecemberActivities](https://www.ajc.org/GuidanceK12DecemberActivities)

35| [AJC.org/ABCs-Jewish-Inclusion](https://www.ajc.org/ABCs-Jewish-Inclusion)

36| [AJC.org/5YearCalendar](https://www.ajc.org/5YearCalendar)

37| [AJC.org/WhoAreTheJewishPeople](https://www.ajc.org/WhoAreTheJewishPeople)

38| [AJC.org/Anti-Israel-Antisemitism](https://www.ajc.org/Anti-Israel-Antisemitism)

39| [AJC.org/TranslateHate](https://www.ajc.org/TranslateHate)

40| [AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2025](https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2025)

41| [AJC.org/JAHM](https://www.ajc.org/JAHM)

42| [AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth/Education-Toolkit](https://www.ajc.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth/Education-Toolkit)

43| [AJC.org/CEA/NewsSourcesForTeachingMiddleEastCurrentEvents](https://www.ajc.org/CEA/NewsSourcesForTeachingMiddleEastCurrentEvents)

44| [AJC.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms](https://www.ajc.org/MiddleHighSchoolEducationalPrograms)

45| [AJC.org/FAQsK12Parents](https://www.ajc.org/FAQsK12Parents)

46| [AJC.org/ReportingAntisemitism](https://www.ajc.org/ReportingAntisemitism)

47| [AJC.org/SocialMediaTeenGuide](https://www.ajc.org/SocialMediaTeenGuide)

48| [AJC.org/ToolkitHighSchoolStudents](https://www.ajc.org/ToolkitHighSchoolStudents)

[American Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#)⁴⁹ 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 \(CEA\)](#)⁵⁰ fosters academic environments that are inclusive of Jews and Jewish identity and refuse to allow the normalization of antisemitism in any form. Our team 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.