BDSIP | HELPING STUDENTS SHINE

GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS

# COMBATING ANTISEMITISM IN SCHOOLS

Practical actions school leaders can take now, drawn from the Independent Review of Antisemitism in Schools and Colleges in England (October 2026).

UNDERSTAND RESPOND REPORT SUPPORT TEACH DISCUSS PROTECT LEAD

BDSIP School Improvement & Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

# What schools should do first

Make antisemitism visible in everyday practice: train staff to recognise it, make it easy to report, record it distinctly, support those affected, and teach about Jewish life as well as antisemitism.

A one-off assembly, a policy statement or sanctions alone will not deliver the coherent, whole-school response the review calls for. This guidance applies to every school, including those with few or no known Jewish pupils or staff. The review is clear that antisemitism arises in those settings too, often through stereotypes, conspiracy theories and harmful narratives that circulate online.

**1 in 5**

young people reported witnessing or experiencing antisemitism, rising to almost 3 in 5 among Jewish respondents.

**~ Half**

of UCAS applicants who witnessed or experienced antisemitism did not report it to their school or college.

**9%**

of professionals said they had been offered training specifically focused on antisemitism.

Source: Independent review, executive summary and pp. 44 and 51. Survey of over 5,000 UCAS applicants and a national call for evidence (587 responses).

## How to use this guide

- Start with the eight action areas on the next page and the first-term action plan.
- Each section ends with a **review basis** line giving recommendation numbers and the review's printed page numbers. PDF viewer page numbers are one higher.
- Labels show the status of each action:

  **DIRECT** addressed to schools or school employers in the review.

  **SUGGESTED** a practical step translating the review's findings, or its recommendations to national bodies, into school practice.

  **BDSIP** local practice and resources for Barking & Dagenham schools.

**READ THIS FIRST**

This is a practical summary, not statutory guidance or legal advice.

The review proposes changes to national guidance, training and inspection. Those proposals are **not yet requirements** and should not be presented to staff as if they were.

Continue to follow current statutory guidance, and seek appropriate advice on complex cases.

AT A GLANCE

# Eight areas for action

Each area is a section of this guide. Start with the first four: they close the gaps the review found most often.

01
### Build shared understanding
Train all staff to recognise antisemitism, including when it appears as a joke, a conspiracy theory or political commentary.

02
### Respond to harm, not only bullying
Act on one-off and online incidents. Decide whether a behaviour response, a safeguarding response, or both, is needed.

03
### Make reporting easy and recording specific
Offer peer and anonymous reporting routes and give antisemitism its own recording category.

04
### Support those affected
Pair consequences with pastoral support, follow-up and education for the pupil responsible.

05
### Teach Jewish life, not only the Holocaust
Plan a coherent sequence covering Judaism, Holocaust history, contemporary antisemitism and media literacy, using the B&D RE resources you already have.

06
### Handle difficult discussions fairly
Challenge antisemitism while upholding political impartiality and lawful debate.

07
### Protect staff
Make expectations explicit in the staff code of conduct and act promptly on incidents against staff.

08
### Lead and oversee
Give a senior lead ownership, give governors useful oversight, and know where to get external support.

> **The review's verdict: commitment across schools is strong, but understanding, confidence and consistency vary. These eight areas are where that inconsistency shows most.**

01 · UNDERSTANDING

# Build a shared understanding across the whole staff

Staff must recognise antisemitism even when it is presented as a joke, a conspiracy theory or political commentary.

Most professionals say they feel confident, yet the review found that this confidence does not consistently translate into good outcomes for Jewish pupils and staff. The gap is greatest where antisemitism is indirect, coded or bound up with wider political discussion.

## What to do

- **SUGGESTED** Consider adopting the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition**, with its accompanying examples, as a shared reference point. Couple adoption with discussion and training rather than treating it as a badge of compliance.
- **SUGGESTED** Include antisemitism explicitly in safeguarding, equality and anti-racism training. Cover leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and trustees, with induction and refreshers proportionate to role.
- **SUGGESTED** Use realistic scenarios: stereotypes about wealth or power; conspiracy claims about Jewish control; Holocaust denial or distortion; accusations of divided loyalty; online memes; and holding Jewish pupils or staff responsible for the actions of the Israeli government.
- **SUGGESTED** Explain that Jewish identity may be religious, ethnic, cultural or a combination. Jewish people are diverse and do not share a single political viewpoint.
- **SUGGESTED** Give staff a clear route to seek advice when language or context is unfamiliar. Uncertainty is a reason to investigate, not to ignore a concern.

### KEEP THE DISTINCTION CLEAR

The review recommends the IHRA definition as a practical educational reference, **not an exhaustive definition or a substitute for legal tests**. Context, intent and impact matter.

**Not in itself antisemitic**

Criticism of Israeli government policy, advocacy for Palestinian rights, criticism of Zionism, or a political position on the conflict.

**May be antisemitic**

Hostility, stereotyping or collective blame directed at Jewish people, double standards, or denying Jewish people rights afforded to others. A political framing does not excuse it.

**REVIEW BASIS** Recommendations 1 and 2 are directed to government; the school-level steps above implement their intent. Printed pp. 22 to 23 and 40 to 45.

02 · RESPONDING

# Respond to harm, not only repeated bullying

Do not wait for repeated incidents before acting. A one-off remark or online incident can still be antisemitic and harmful.

## What to do

- **SUGGESTED** Name antisemitism explicitly in behaviour, anti-bullying, safeguarding and online safety policies.
- **SUGGESTED** Make clear that incidents may need a behaviour response, a safeguarding response, or both. Not every incident meets a safeguarding threshold: assess seriousness, context, cumulative impact and wellbeing.
- **DIRECT** Ensure online safety policies, safeguarding policies and staff training cover the nature and risks of antisemitic content online, including conspiracy narratives, Holocaust distortion and memes.
- **SUGGESTED** Consider concerns beyond the school gate, such as online abuse and journeys to school, where they affect safety, wellbeing or participation.

## A practical response sequence

A suggested school procedure, not a sequence prescribed by the review.

1. **Stop the behaviour and establish safety.** Challenge it clearly and calmly. Follow emergency procedures if there is immediate danger.
2. **Listen and establish the facts.** Record what was said or done, the context and who was affected. Do not dismiss it as "banter" or politics before assessing it.
3. **Record and assess.** Use the antisemitism category and involve the DSL where harm or safeguarding risk may be present.
4. **Support the person affected.** Agree a named contact and follow-up, involving parents or carers as appropriate.
5. **Address the behaviour and its causes.** Proportionate consequences alongside education and support for the pupil responsible.
6. **Review whether it worked.** Check for recurrence, retaliation, wider peer-group issues and the pupil's wellbeing.

### PREVENT IS NOT THE DEFAULT RESPONSE

The review says Prevent becomes relevant only where there are signs of potential radicalisation into terrorism. Most incidents can be handled through existing behaviour and safeguarding processes. Follow current safeguarding and Prevent procedures, with appropriate advice, rather than assuming every incident warrants a referral.

**REVIEW BASIS** Direct Recommendation 4; findings and government-directed Recommendations 3, 5 and 8. Printed pp. 46 to 55.

03 · REPORTING & RECORDING

# Make reporting easy and recording specific

**DIRECT** Establish clear, accessible systems for reporting, recording and monitoring antisemitic incidents.

The review found that "low-level" incidents such as stereotypes, jokes and casual remarks are rarely reported, even though they made up 85% of the antisemitic incidents UCAS applicants witnessed. Pupils stay silent when they think nothing will happen, or fear being identified.

## Reporting

- Explain to pupils and families how to report, what happens next and where to go if they remain concerned. Use age-appropriate language.
- Support reports from witnesses and peers, not only those directly affected.
- Offer confidential routes and anonymous disclosures, explaining any limits to confidentiality.
- Signpost support services, including the **Community Security Trust (CST)**, which the review names.

## Recording

- Add a distinct **antisemitism** category. Do not bury incidents under generic "racism", "bullying" or "poor behaviour".
- Capture the nature of the prejudice and the type of incident: verbal abuse, a joke, graffiti, online content, intimidation.
- Record incidents without an identifiable victim too. Antisemitic graffiti or language still matters where no Jewish pupil is known to be present.

**SUGGESTED MINIMUM RECORD**

Date and location · exact words or behaviour where possible · people involved · context and evidence · impact · immediate action · safeguarding assessment where relevant · support offered · findings · outcome · follow-up date. Handle personal information through existing data protection and information-sharing arrangements.

> **Low reporting is not proof of safety. An initial rise in reports may reflect greater trust or better recognition. As the review puts it, recording incidents is "a sign of a healthy organisation wanting to take action".**

**REVIEW BASIS** Direct Recommendation 7 (a) and (b), and discussion of reporting and recording. Printed pp. 50 to 53.

04 · SUPPORT

# Put support for those affected alongside consequences

Behaviour policies can focus too heavily on the perpetrator. Support should be proportionate to impact, and even one-off incidents can affect wellbeing and belonging.

### For the pupil affected

- **SUGGESTED** Ask what the pupil needs to feel safe and able to learn. Agree proportionate pastoral support and check back after the incident has passed.
- **SUGGESTED** Keep the pupil and family appropriately informed about action taken, while respecting others' confidentiality.
- **SUGGESTED** Look beyond the single event: repeated remarks can affect attendance, friendships, confidence and willingness to express Jewish identity.
- **SUGGESTED** Do not make support depend on proving that the incident was repeated or intended to harm.

### For the pupil responsible

- **SUGGESTED** Combine consequences with education and early intervention, including parent or carer engagement where appropriate.
- **SUGGESTED** Consider the motivation behind the behaviour. Antisemitic behaviour can be an early sign of exposure to harmful online content, extremist narratives or prejudice encountered elsewhere.

**SAFEGUARD THE PERSON HARMED**

Never require a pupil to explain Judaism, defend Israel or educate the person who targeted them. If restorative approaches are considered, assess safety and suitability first, and do not pressure the person harmed to take part.

**REVIEW BASIS** Findings on supporting victims and early intervention for perpetrators. Printed pp. 53 to 55. The safeguard above is an implementation suggestion, not a formal recommendation.

05 · CURRICULUM

# Teach Jewish life and contemporary antisemitism, not only the Holocaust

Plan a coherent learning sequence rather than relying on an annual event. Holocaust education is vital, but it should not be pupils' only encounter with Jewish people.

## What to do

- **SUGGESTED** Map where pupils learn about Jewish life, Judaism, historical antisemitism, the Holocaust and contemporary antisemitism. Identify gaps and repetition.
- **SUGGESTED** Present Judaism as a diverse, living tradition, not simply festivals and artefacts or a story of persecution. That includes the images you use (see next page).
- **SUGGESTED** Ensure Holocaust teaching treats antisemitism as a central explanatory factor. Check misconceptions, such as the belief that antisemitism ended in 1945.
- **DIRECT** Mark **Holocaust Memorial Day**, supported by secure historical understanding and linked to wider teaching.
- **DIRECT** Use tutor time, pastoral provision and wider learning opportunities to address contemporary antisemitism alongside other forms of prejudice.
- **SUGGESTED** Teach media literacy: who produced a claim, what evidence supports it, why it is shared and how algorithms amplify it.
- **SUGGESTED** Create meaningful encounters with contemporary Jewish life through synagogue visits, speakers, cultural engagement or school linking, using normal visitor and safeguarding checks.

**WHY IT MATTERS**

The review heard that some pupils leave Holocaust education believing antisemitism ended in 1945, or that Jews no longer exist.

Research cited by the review found a 15-year-old's social media feed served antisemitic conspiracy theories **within an hour** of use.

## Adapt by phase

### Primary

Concrete, age-appropriate learning about identity, fairness, kindness and Jewish life and festivals as part of a living community.

### Secondary

Historically secure Holocaust teaching, plus critical work on conspiracy narratives, collective blame, misinformation and how political issues are discussed fairly.

Phase adaptation is a suggestion, not a new curriculum requirement.

**REVIEW BASIS** Direct Recommendations 11(c) and 12(c); wider recommendations and findings under Recommendations 10 to 14. Printed pp. 56 to 69.

05 · CURRICULUM IN BARKING & DAGENHAM

# Use the RE support you already have

The review wants Judaism taught as a diverse, contemporary tradition, with real encounters with Jewish life. In Barking & Dagenham much of that groundwork is already in place. How well is your school using it?

**1** BDSIP **Check the images you use**

Across the curriculum, in RE, history and beyond, review the images used when teaching about Judaism or Jewish people. Jews should not always be presented as white, Hasidic Europeans.

ASK YOURSELVES ***Do our images show a diverse range of Jewish people, from different branches of Judaism and different nationalities, such as Ghanaian and Indian Jews, not only ultra-Orthodox Jews?***

Resource: **Inclusive Judaism image library**, The Jewish Museum London. Images from today's British Jewish community, free to download for the classroom.

**2** BDSIP **Map pupils' journey through Jewish life today**

Ask what pupils learn about Jewish people and their lives in the 21st century, and how that learning builds over time.

ASK YOURSELVES ***How well are we using the Agreed Syllabus units of work, and do they add up to a coherent journey from EYFS onwards?***

Resource: **RE Agreed Syllabus for Barking and Dagenham 2025**, with units of work from EYFS to KS5 for all B&D schools.

**3** BDSIP **Take pupils to synagogues and bring Jewish voices in**

The RE curriculum suggests many opportunities to visit synagogues and to invite Jewish speakers into lessons. Schools can access a database of people and places to visit through the Barking & Dagenham SACRE.

ASK YOURSELVES ***Are staff aware of the SACRE database, and how far is our school using it?***

Normal visitor and safeguarding checks still apply.

**4** BDSIP **Send RE leads to the termly network**

All RE leads in Barking & Dagenham schools have termly access to network meetings that model and share best practice.

ASK YOURSELVES ***Are our staff receiving regular training through these networks?***

Details: **BDSIP CPD & Conferences**.

**5** BDSIP **Use the RE Masterclass folder**

All RE leads have access to the RE Masterclass folder of recorded training from experts in their field, including many sessions on Judaism. It is a free CPD resource for all schools.

ASK YOURSELVES ***As a school, are we making use of it?***

**REVIEW BASIS** BDSIP local recommendations supporting the review's Recommendations 2(b), 10, 13 and 14 on training, a coherent whole-school approach, Judaism in RE and engagement with Jewish communities. Printed pp. 45, 57, 69 and 72.

06 · DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

# Equip staff to handle difficult discussions fairly

The review found a "chilling effect": some staff avoid important conversations for fear of complaints, and some leaders restrict discussion altogether.

## In the classroom

- **SUGGESTED** Set discussion ground rules: use evidence, distinguish people from governments, avoid collective blame, challenge discriminatory language.
- **SUGGESTED** Prepare agreed responses to significant global events so staff are not left to improvise without leadership support.
- **SUGGESTED** Uphold political impartiality while challenging antisemitism. **Challenging racism is not a political issue** and does not require a balanced presentation.

## Political expression

- **DIRECT** Review policies on political symbols, flags, slogans, staff dress, uniform and displays. Consider the **time, place and manner**, alongside your legal duties on political impartiality.
- **SUGGESTED** Apply principles consistently across comparable political issues. The review does **not** recommend blanket bans on all lawful political expression.
- **SUGGESTED** Seek advice before imposing restrictions or making contested disciplinary decisions. Discomfort alone does not establish harassment or justify a restriction.

**BDSIP TOP TIP**

**Always assume there is a Jewish pupil in the class, even if there isn't, and a Jewish teacher in the staff room. Then ask yourself:**

- Is what I am saying, or allowing another pupil or adult to say, likely to make them feel uncomfortable?
- Am I challenging views and opinions that sound factual, but are in effect feelings?

**A SUGGESTED STAFF RESPONSE**

> ***"We can discuss and criticise governments and political ideas. We cannot blame or target Jewish people for a government's actions. Let's look at the specific claim and the evidence."***

Suggested wording, not a quotation from the review.

> **One parent told the review that when they raised their son being singled out for being Jewish, the head replied that the school was "not allowed to take sides". Impartiality never prevents a school from protecting a pupil from discrimination.**

**REVIEW BASIS** Direct Recommendation 16(a); findings supporting government-directed Recommendations 12(d) and 17. Printed pp. 65 to 67 and 77 to 84. Colleges operate under a different legal framework; this guide covers schools.

07 · STAFF

# Protect staff and make expectations explicit

Antisemitism directed at Jewish staff is harming wellbeing, confidence and retention. Around a third of Jewish teachers surveyed did not feel able to report incidents.

- **DIRECT** State in the **staff code of conduct** that antisemitic, and other religious or racial, harassment, abuse and discrimination are incompatible with professional conduct.
- **DIRECT** Identify, record, investigate and address incidents against staff promptly and appropriately, whether the source is a pupil, parent, colleague or third party. Include governors and trustees where relevant.
- **SUGGESTED** Make sure staff know how to report concerns and how to escalate them if the first response is inadequate or the concern involves their line manager.
- **SUGGESTED** Provide practical and wellbeing support. Do not frame the solution as the individual needing more resilience.
- **SUGGESTED** Do not assume Jewish colleagues hold particular views on Israel, or draw them into political discussions in ways others are not.
- **SUGGESTED** Apply fair investigation and HR procedures to allegations about staff. Do not assume every allegation is substantiated or that a particular sanction is automatic.

> ***"The very first question I was asked was 'do you want to take this forward informally, or formally'. As if an antisemitic incident should be handled informally."***
>
> Call for evidence respondent, quoted in the review, p. 85.

**REVIEW BASIS** Direct Recommendations 15(c) and 18. Printed pp. 73 to 77 and 84 to 86. Proposed changes to the national Teachers' Standards are separate government actions.

08 · LEADERSHIP

# Give leaders support and governors useful oversight

Strong, visible leadership sets what is expected. Leaders should not have to manage complaints, community pressure or organised campaigns in isolation.

- **SUGGESTED** Identify a **senior lead** to coordinate the response, working with the DSL, curriculum leaders and HR, within existing safeguarding arrangements.
- **SUGGESTED** Give governors or trustees a proportionate overview of patterns, response quality, training, and pupil and staff confidence, without unnecessary personal information.
- **SUGGESTED** Across a trust, compare recording and responses so recurring concerns do not stay isolated in separate schools.
- **SUGGESTED** Know your routes to local authority, safeguarding, community safety, specialist and legal support. Agree who manages communications during contentious incidents.
- **SUGGESTED** Base decisions on evidence, legal duties and pupils' interests, not campaign pressure or fear of complaints. Protect due process and avoid premature public conclusions.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR JEWISH SCHOOLS

Review travel and educational-visit risks with appropriate security specialists and partners. Make sure leaders have access to specialist advice, professional networks, mentoring and practical support for the additional workload.

The review's proposals for further security funding and national campaigns are not yet assurances that those resources are available to an individual school.

**REVIEW BASIS** Findings and recommendations on external pressures, security and accountability, especially Recommendations 20 to 27. Printed pp. 87 to 104. These largely address government, inspectorates and local authorities; the steps above are school-level applications.

ACTION PLAN

# A first-term action plan

Suggested timescales and owners, not deadlines set by the review. Adapt roles to your school's structure.

| WHEN | OWNER | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| **First two weeks** CLOSE IMMEDIATE GAPS | **Headteacher & DSL** | ☐ Check how a concern would be recognised, reported, assessed and followed up today. |
| | **DSL & systems lead** | ☐ Confirm a distinct antisemitism category and an accessible reporting route. |
| | **Senior leaders** | ☐ Brief staff on challenging incidents, safeguarding escalation and support for pupils and staff. |
| | **Pastoral lead** | ☐ Check that anyone affected by a known incident has support and a follow-up plan. |
| **By half-term** STRENGTHEN CONSISTENCY | **Training lead** | ☐ Arrange antisemitism-specific learning for staff and relevant governors or trustees. |
| | **Policy owners** | ☐ Review behaviour, safeguarding, online safety and staff conduct policies for gaps. |
| | **Curriculum leaders** | ☐ Map Jewish life, Holocaust learning, contemporary antisemitism and media literacy across the curriculum. |
| | **RE & history leads** | ☐ Review images of Jewish people used in teaching, drawing on the Inclusive Judaism image library. |
| | **RE lead** | ☐ Check use of the B&D Agreed Syllabus units, the SACRE visits database, the termly RE network and the RE Masterclass folder. |
| | **Headteacher** | ☐ Clarify how staff will be supported with controversial discussions and external complaints. |
| **End of term** TEST THE DIFFERENCE | **Pupil voice lead** | ☐ Check whether pupils know how to report and believe concerns will be taken seriously. |
| | **DSL & senior lead** | ☐ Review recurrence, cumulative harm, response times and whether support helped. |
| | **Governors / trustees** | ☐ Review evidence of implementation and agree the next priorities. |
| | **Curriculum lead** | ☐ Check pupil understanding, not simply whether teaching or an assembly took place. |

GOVERNANCE

# Questions governors should ask

1. Can staff identify contemporary antisemitism as well as overt abuse?
2. Can pupils, families and staff report without fear of being dismissed or targeted?
3. Can our records reveal patterns, including incidents without a named victim?
4. What support was offered, and do we know whether it helped?
5. Where do pupils learn about Jewish life beyond the Holocaust, and do our images show the diversity of Jewish people today?
6. Are we challenging prejudice while protecting lawful political discussion?

**WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**

Success is **not simply fewer recorded incidents**. Look for less repeated harm, stronger confidence in reporting, consistent responses and secure pupil understanding.

The review acknowledges limited evidence about which interventions measurably reduce antisemitism, so monitor impact rather than assuming that delivering an activity proves it worked.

SOURCES

# Recommendation map

Which of the review's 27 recommendations apply directly to schools, and which are national proposals still to be implemented.

| STATUS | REC. | WHAT IT ASKS | PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| DIRECT | **4** | Online safety and safeguarding policies and training cover antisemitic content online. | 48 |
| DIRECT | **7** | Clear, accessible systems for reporting, recording and monitoring, with a specific antisemitism category. | 53 |
| DIRECT | **11(c)** | All schools mark Holocaust Memorial Day, linked to wider teaching. | 61 |
| DIRECT | **12(c)** | Use tutor time, pastoral provision and wider learning to address contemporary antisemitism. | 67 |
| DIRECT | **15(c)** | Staff code of conduct names antisemitic harassment, abuse and discrimination. | 77 |
| DIRECT | **16(a)** | Consider the time, place and manner of political expression, uniform and staff dress. | 82 |
| DIRECT | **18** | Robust reporting, escalation and response to antisemitism against staff. | 86 |
| NATIONAL | **1–3, 5, 8–10** | IHRA encouragement, commissioned training, changes to KCSIE, behaviour guidance and Prevent advice, good practice guidance. | 43–57 |
| NATIONAL | **11(a–b), 12(a,b,d), 13–14** | Holocaust education review, citizenship, media literacy, RE and community engagement support. | 61–72 |
| NATIONAL | **15(a–b), 17, 19–27** | Teachers' Standards, impartiality guidance, unions, support service, security, transport, inspection and local oversight. | 77–104 |

## Primary source

Sir David Bell KCB DL, *Independent review: antisemitism in schools and colleges in England*, Department for Education, October 2026 (CP 1691). The executive summary lists all 27 recommendations on printed pp. 11 to 20.

## Local resources

- RE Agreed Syllabus for Barking and Dagenham 2025, BDSIP.
- Inclusive Judaism image library, The Jewish Museum London.
- BDSIP CPD & Conferences, including termly RE network meetings.
- The Barking & Dagenham SACRE database of people and places to visit, and the RE Masterclass folder, both available to B&D RE leads.

Prepared by BDSIP as a practical school-facing summary, November 2026. Suggested procedures, wording, roles and timescales are clearly distinguished from the review's formal recommendations. Implementation of national recommendations had not been confirmed at the time of writing.

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# Antisemitism should be neither normalised nor ignored.

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