



Resource Guide for Parents of K-12 Jewish Students to Address Antisemitism

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Antisemitism, one of the oldest hatreds in world history, is a historical shapeshifter. It may be overt and obvious, or subtle and more insidiously difficult to detect.

While local Jewish communal agencies – Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, ADL-Texoma, AJC-Dallas, StandWithUs, and others – work with schools to respond to incidents of antisemitism and to prevent antisemitism through proactive educational discourse, parents and caregivers are the front-line advocates for their children.

By being equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools, parents can engage with their child's school in ways that are effective, supportive, and empowering for the parent, the child, and the school to be both proactive and responsive in addressing antisemitism.

Encountering antisemitism in school can be shocking and upsetting for both students and their families. Parents may feel overwhelmed at the idea of confronting the discrimination while protecting their child. This guide is designed to help parents navigate these incidents.

In addition to this resource guide, information and resources can be found at www.JewishDallas.org/antisemitism.





Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas

Support and Counseling

The rise of antisemitism and hate has deeply affected Jewish families. Feelings of anxiety and grief are normal, especially when carrying the responsibility of caring for those you love. Taking care of ourselves and seeking support is essential. The Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas (JFS) is here to help, offering age-appropriate care for children, adults, and families. **Learn more at www.jfsdallas.org/our-door-is-open or scan the QR code to the right. You can also call (972) 437-9950.**



Reporting Incidents

It is important to report antisemitic incidents to formal agencies – local and national - ensuring both anecdotal stories and numbers are captured. Data collection helps to identify trends and ensure we have the facts and details necessary to support effective advocacy. Reporting an incident may also help in gaining access to support services, if this is something you are looking for.

- 1) Report the incident to your school and/or district. If you don't know where or how, search online with your school or district name and "incident report". For instance, "Plano ISD incident report".
- 2) Report the incident to the Anti-Defamation League at www.adl.org/report-incident or scan the QR code to the right.



If you'd like to speak with someone directly regarding an incident, please reach out to Alex Horn, ADL Texoma's Regional Director at ahorn@adl.org or Michelle Golan Friedman, the Jewish Federation's Director of Community Relations at mgolan@jewishdallas.org.

Step by Step Guide to Addressing Issues in School

Read the full guide before taking action.

How to Support Your Child

When your child tells you about experiencing discrimination at school, listen, and offer support. It's normal for you to feel upset, but it will be more reassuring to your child if you can keep emotions in check. Gather as much detail as you can and take notes for reference. Visit www.jewishdallas.org/antisemitism for further resources.

Who To Talk To

Contact these people, in the order below, to report an incident.* If you don't get a satisfactory response, escalate the issue to the next level. Contact information for all personnel listed below should be on your school website. (Check at the side or bottom of the home page.) If you can't find it, call the school office or your school district to ask. You don't have to identify yourself.

1. Your child's teacher.
2. Your school administrator (principal or vice principal): You are entitled to bypass the teacher and go directly to the principal. You may prefer this option if:

- you don't feel comfortable talking to the teacher
- the teacher is the source of the concern
- the issue doesn't involve the teacher or happened outside the class setting

While policies may vary slightly, school districts generally require principals to follow a set process when they learn about an incident of antisemitism or other discrimination. Ask your principal for more information.

3. Your School Board: School board members are elected and represent the local community. Depending on your district, one of them may be specifically designated as your school liaison.

4. If you haven't had an acceptable resolution, reach out to a Jewish communal organization for help. You can email communityrelations@jewishdallas.org or see below (page 8) for additional local Jewish community resources.

***Keep in mind the difference between being uncomfortable and something that is actionable. Recognize that this may be a long process and can take time. Responses and addressing the issue may or may not occur overnight. If the need is systemic change or policy review, this will take time. Reach out calmly and with a clear plan of action and intention (see below).**

What To Say/Do

It can feel awkward, uncomfortable or intimidating to tell a teacher or principal about antisemitism. Still, it's possible to approach your school in a way that best helps you find a resolution. Make clear that you want to support them in supporting their students, and

would like to be seen as a partner and resource in addressing the issue. Below, you'll find sample language for these conversations; you can adapt them and make them your own.

Requesting a meeting/Prep

- Keep your email request short and neutral in tone. Example:
“Hi, Mr. Smith — Michael had an experience in class today that left him feeling uncomfortable (OR: anxious/unsafe). I'd like to meet with you to get your sense of what happened and discuss how to address it. Please let me know your availability.”
- An in-person meeting is ideal for best communication. Second-best is a virtual meeting; third is a phone call.
- Plan ahead what to say and consider your goals. If you're nervous, practice with someone else or in front of a mirror. Make and bring notes to stay on track.
 - Some potential goals to consider, depending on the particular incident, could be:
 - Acknowledgement or Apology
 - Education (for students, staff or teachers). For instance, Holocaust education is mandated in the State of Texas. The Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum can provide education and host visits.
 - Disciplinary action or enforcement of the code of conduct or school policy
 - Review of school policy or code of conduct

If you'd like, you can reach out to a Jewish communal professional for support (see page 8).

- If possible, bring another person to the meeting to act as an advocate or witness, and task that person with taking careful notes. That will allow you to participate more actively in the conversation.

In the meeting

- Stay calm. This might be difficult, but it gives you a better chance of being heard. It can help ease tension if you admit at the start that this situation is upsetting to you.
- Remember that you're there to get a fuller understanding of the event—and be willing to collaborate on a resolution.



- Relay what you've heard from your child and explain how they (and you) feel.
- Get their observations, ask questions and restate what they say to confirm:
"It sounds as if your view of the situation was ABC You mentioned that you had observed XYZ. Am I getting that right? I want to be sure I'm understanding this correctly..."
- Take notes.
- If the issue involves another student, try—at least at first—not to judge. Social media is full of misinformation (inaccurate) and disinformation (deliberately wrong).

It's common for kids to repost or say things without fully understanding their meaning/implications (e.g., "From the river to the sea").

- Always ask for a response by a set time—and follow up if you don't hear back. You may have several conversations at one level as you work toward a resolution. If you don't see progress or a good-faith effort within a reasonable time, escalate the concern.

After the meeting

Email your thanks and summarize the meeting, points of agreement, loose ends, next steps, and timeline for the expected response. This provides you with a necessary paper trail. Do this after each meeting, for example:

"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. To help us keep track of the details, I've summarized our discussion in the points below. Please let me know if I've missed anything."

Remember

- Avoid getting worked up or visibly angry. (If you tear up or cry, it's OK.)
- Don't issue threats or ultimatums.
- Take notes on every conversation and keep them in one place.

Don't leave without a clear understanding of what's next, and a timeline.

(See more on next page)

How To Be Proactive

If your child has not experienced any problems, but you want to be sure safeguards are in place, there are some actions you can take proactively at the start of or during the school year.

- Be proactive in building strong relationships with teachers and administrators. Developing regular communication with school personnel early on makes it easier to reach out later if you have concerns about antisemitism (or anything else).
- If you feel comfortable, consider letting teachers and administrators know that your family is Jewish. This information will improve the school's awareness of Jewish families' presence and needs. Start by getting to know your child's principal, guidance counselor and teachers. Here are some ideas:
 - **Introduce yourself.** If you can't get to school in person, email the principal and teachers to tell them about your family and anything you want them to know, such as if you keep Kosher, your level of observance, if your child wears a kippah, or any lived experiences with antisemitism. You can also consider sharing any dietary observance in medical forms for emergency contacts. Present yourself as a partner and resource to the school. For instance, "I don't speak on behalf of all Jews, but I can share our family's experience and help connect you with other resources."
 - **Show up.** Attend parent meetings or other school events. Administrators often are there; go meet them.
 - **Volunteer.** Offer time for your PTA (Parent-Teacher Association). Even a small amount of time can provide a window into the workings of the school and make you a familiar face.
- You might **ask questions**, too. (Does the school have a Jewish club? Are there other Jewish students/families?) Mention you look forward to seeing teachers and administrators at parent conferences. If your child will be starting at a new school in the fall, contact administrators the previous spring with this information.
 - Prepare to ask questions at Parent-Teacher Conferences, such as:
 - If meeting with a Social Studies teacher, ask about curriculum or the education plan about international conflicts or religions or world



history. If you're comfortable, you could ask directly about the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Israel-Hamas war.

- Is Holocaust education part of the curriculum this semester/year?
- Does the school host a multicultural or international festival? What are the policies around this?
- Ask whether the school's anti-bias incident response training (for faculty, staff and students) includes antisemitism, and if their education initiatives (for faculty, staff and students) include Jews and the Jewish experience.
 - If not, ask that they add these components. Let them know the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, which can help connect to other local organizations, is happy to serve as a resource for these subjects. Contact Michelle Golan Friedman, Jewish Federation's Director of Community Relations at mgolan@jewishdallas.org.
- Does your school have a school-based improvement committee? Consider learning more or becoming involved.
- Ask about political expression policy — what is and is not allowed for students? For teachers? Also ask how policies are enforced.
 - For example: What happens if a student or teacher comes to school wearing a cap or t-shirt with a message such as: "Free Palestine" or "Support the IDF"? Ensure that there is consistency.
 - It is also important that administrators understand the implications of messages and are clear on the difference between, for example, "Free Palestine" and "Bring them home" or "From the river to the sea."
- **Share important dates.** If your child will be absent for Jewish holidays, your introductory email is a good opportunity to let the principal and teachers know. Even better — every August, send your school the dates of major Jewish holidays for the following two school years. Let them know you're communicating early with the hope of avoiding scheduling conflicts. In the fall, follow up by sending a reminder of these dates. You can share [this resource](#) on Jewish holidays.
- **Plan ahead for trips.** Multi-day school trips are usually planned months or a year in advance. If you know there is a regular trip at your school, it's easy to give a heads-up well ahead of time. If the 6th grade class goes to a wilderness camp every March,



for example, contact school when your child is in 5th grade to ask that this not be scheduled during Passover, when dietary laws can make travel a challenge.

- **Say thank you.** Acknowledge positive responses and support from your school or district administration.

Know Your Rights

All young people have the right to attend school free of bias, discrimination, harassment and bullying. These protections are important to be aware of as you think about the expectations all parents/caregivers should have of their child's school.

According to [federal civil rights laws and policies](#), students are entitled to protections against discrimination and equal access to education, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or other protected characteristics. These laws [prohibit discrimination based on race, color, or national origin](#) in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects all students, including Jewish students, from discrimination and harassment based on their actual or perceived race, color, or national origin, which has been interpreted to include shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.

Title VI states that: "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Additionally, it is recommended that you take time to **learn your school's or district's policies**, including the Student Code of Conduct and/or Handbook.

If you are seeking legal assistance, please reach out to the organizations listed below that can help direct you.



If you need further assistance, please reach out to our local Jewish communal agencies who can help address incident responses in schools. **We are here to be of resource and support to you and your family.**

Anti-Defamation League Texoma (ADL Texoma)

ADL Texoma fights antisemitism and hate by fielding and responding to antisemitic and discriminatory incidents and building more inclusive campuses through educational programs, trainings and workshops for students, parents, teachers and administrators. All resources are interactive, designed to teach about antisemitism, bias and discrimination.

Local Contact: Alex Horn, Regional Director at ahorn@adl.org or (469) 953-8582.

American Jewish Committee (AJC Dallas)

Since 1906, American Jewish Committee (AJC) has worked to enhance the wellbeing of the Jewish people and advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world. Through our [Center for Education Advocacy](#), we are expanding our already considerable efforts to support parents, educators and administrators in supporting their Jewish students.

Local Contact: Joel Schwitzer, Regional Director at schwitzerj@ajc.org or (214) 673-7720.

Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas (JFGD)

With concern for the more than 70,000 Jews in the area, the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas is the central coordinating agency for the Dallas Jewish community. Our Community Relations team works to counter and reduce antisemitism through education, dialogue, and community collaboration.

Local Contact: Michelle Golan Friedman, Director of Community Relations and Public Affairs at mgolan@jewishdallas.org or (214) 615-5229.

StandWithUs

StandWithUs is an international nonpartisan education organization that supports Israel and fights antisemitism through high school fellowships, middle school curricula, social media, conferences, educational materials, legal support for students, its Holocaust education center, and more.

Local Contact: Joshua Arbib, Senior Campus Regional Manager, Central Area for StandWithUs at joshuaa@standwithus.com or (918) 232-1060.

**Visit www.JewishDallas.org/antisemitism
for further information and resources.**