

A Guide to Education and Support Resources: The War between Israel and Hamas - 2023

It is essential that educational and community institutions provide unwavering support to those impacted and effected during challenging times, such as the October 7 terrorist attack and the war between Israel and Hamas. This is also a critical learning opportunity to teach others that the values of humanity are not political, religious, or racial.

To better support your school communities, especially those of Jewish and Israeli backgrounds, and to foster an inclusive and empathetic learning environment, I encourage you to consider the following elements when crafting your communications:

Acknowledge the Concerns: Begin by acknowledging that the situation may be distressing for some students by recognizing their emotions, and affirming their right to express their feelings in a respectful and peaceful manner.

Promote Inclusivity: Emphasize the importance of inclusivity, diversity, and mutual respect within the community. Highlight that all students, regardless of their background or beliefs, are an integral part of the school and should have a shared commitment to humanitarian values.

Condemn Discrimination and Hate: Explicitly denounce any form of discrimination, harassment, or hate speech targeting Jewish, Israeli students, or students from other backgrounds. State a zero-tolerance policy for such actions and provide information on how to report incidents. Be particularly sensitive to statements that broadly criticize “all Israelis” or “all Jews,” or “all Zionists.” This is often a form of antisemitic shorthand, and a targeted student will recognize it as such.

Provide Resources: Offer resources for students who may be seeking guidance, support, or a safe space for open dialogue. This could include information on counseling services, cultural or affinity groups, or educational materials. More resources are found toward the end of this document.

- [LEAP](#) - Jewish Federation's free program for high school students, preparing them for the opportunities and challenges facing Jewish students on today's schools and college campuses.
- [Jewish Student Union for High School Students](#)
- [Stand With Us - High School Content](#)
- [Stand With Us/Israel Link - Middle School Content & Crisis Toolkit](#)
- [New Jersey Department of Education Trauma Resources](#)

Encourage Constructive and Age-Appropriate Dialogue: Encourage open and respectful dialogue among students to promote understanding and empathy. Share initiatives or opportunities for students and their families to engage in discussions about the situation in a constructive, age appropriate, and educational manner. Make sure your teachers are trained appropriately on how to facilitate these discussions and educate students in a way that empowers them to express themselves on the issues impacting them. See educational resources below for more on this.

Show Solidarity: Express your solidarity with the affected students and emphasize the school's commitment to their well-being. Reiterate that their safety and emotional security are top priorities. As a school leader, demonstrate solidarity, not just with words, but with actions. Students know when the adults in their lives do not mean what they are saying.

Below, you will find some sample language for how to appropriately message without alienating students or parents, as well as educational

resources ranging from classroom tools to sample curriculum to fellow educators who specialize in related subject matters.

Messaging and Language Examples

Example 1:

"As a diverse and inclusive community, [School Name] is committed to supporting all our students. We stand firmly against any form of discrimination, terrorism, or hate speech. We are here to listen and support our students through tragic events."

Example 2:

"At [School Name], we value the diversity of our student body. We want to ensure that every student feels safe and included. We condemn any discrimination against our Jewish, Israeli, Arab, and/or Muslim students. Together, we can build a community that promotes understanding and respect."

Example 3:

"We are dedicated to creating a school environment where all students are free from discrimination and fear. [School Name] stands with our impacted student populations, offering resources and opportunities for engagement and education."

Educational Resources and Tools

Learn about What's Happening

- [We Stand with Israel](#)
- [Hamas Attack Draws Cheers from Extremists, Spurs Antisemitism and Conspiracies Online](#)
- [Questions, Complexities, and Context: Insights into Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)

Talk to Students about What's Happening

- [10 Ways to Have Conscientious Conversations on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)
- [6 Tips for Supporting Jewish Students in the Classroom](#)
- [Hamas Attack on Israel Kills Hundreds of People \(Table Talk\)](#)

General Resources for Talking with Young People about Injustice

- [Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate \(English and Spanish\)](#)

- [Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice](#)
- [Tips for Engaging and Disengaging on Social Media](#)

Resources about Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism

- [Antisemitism Uncovered/Anti-Zionism](#)
- [Antisemitism Today](#)
- [Antisemitic Incidents: Being an Ally, Advocate and Activist](#)
- [Words to Action: A Program for Jewish Students on Antisemitism](#)
- [A Guide to Understanding Antisemitism](#)
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Teaching Resources](#)

Resources about Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Bigotry

- [Anti-Muslim Bigotry and Being an Ally](#)
- [Talking with your Children about Islamophobia and Hate-Based Violence](#)

Resources about Propaganda and Misinformation

- [The Dangers of Disinformation](#) (Table Talk)
- [Outsmarting Propaganda: Combatting the Lure of Extremist Recruitment Strategies](#) (Lesson Plan: Although this focuses on extremism, there's a whole section on what propaganda is and how to detect it)
- [Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics](#) (Table Talk)
- [Posters for Teaching About Accountability, Misinformation, and More](#)

Resources about Holocaust and Genocides

- [Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust](#)
- [Fundamentals for Teaching About the Holocaust and Genocides](#)
- [Online Tools for Learning and Teaching About Holocaust and Genocides](#)
- [Professional Learning Opportunities for Educators](#)

Holocaust and Genocide Education Specialists

For additional resources and consultation

- **Colleen Tambuscio** – New Milford School District Holocaust Educator ctambuscio@nmpsd.org
- **Dr. Jacob Labendz** – Ramapo Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies jlabendz@ramapo.edu

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Your dedication to the well-being of all students and their families is greatly appreciated, and I am confident that your institution can continue to be a place of support and understanding. If you need help or guidance in responding to this

situation or crafting a response, please reach out. We are here to help and partner.

I hope you find these resources helpful in supporting and uplifting your school community. Please reach out at any time for additional support and consultation on this issue and any other you may encounter.