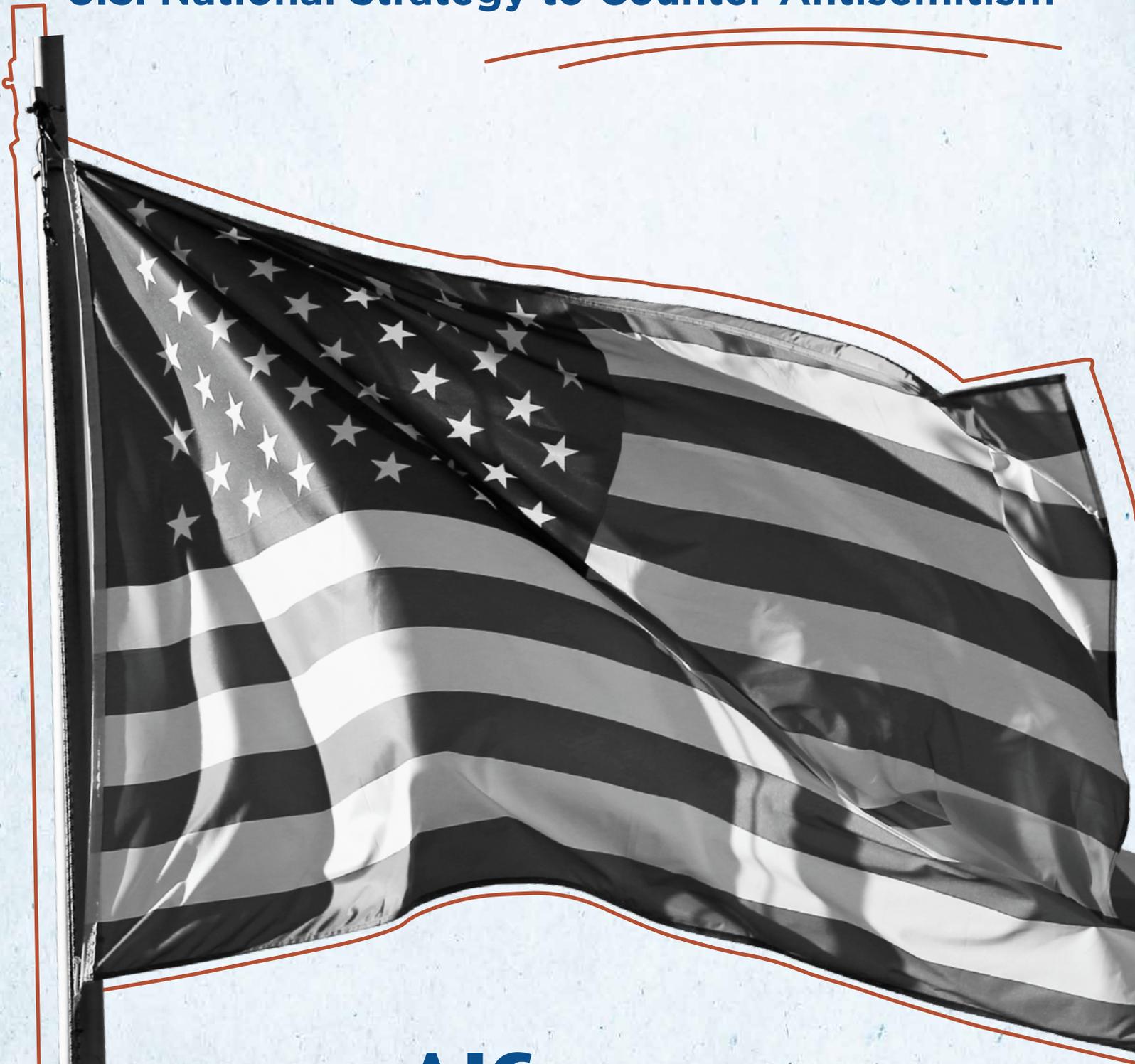


AJC Guide for Administrators of Independent Schools
**Tools for Successful Implementation of the
U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism**



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In May of 2023, the White House published a 60-page [U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#)¹. The National Strategy is the first federally-issued set of guidelines to outline society-wide action steps aimed at confronting antisemitism, including specific recommendations for K-12 schools. At American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, we are proud to have served as key interlocutors in its development. In June, we announced the creation of [AJC's Task Force to Implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#)², designed to ensure the timely execution of the action plan. **Our Task Force prepared this guide to ensure that administrators of independent schools can be part of this historic national initiative to confront anti-Jewish hatred.** We hope you will use our guide to identify specific areas of focus that will make your school more inclusive for Jews and all minority groups. We are eager to work with you and the members of your team to devise a specific, actionable plan that addresses antisemitism effectively.

¹www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf

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

Context for *The National Strategy*

ANTISEMITISM IS A PROBLEM THAT EXTENDS BEYOND just Jews or Jewish communities. Data from [AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report](#)³ unequivocally affirms that a vast majority of the general American population - 92% - feels that antisemitism affects society as a whole, everyone is responsible for combating it. The National Strategy also recognizes antisemitism's long reach, which "threatens not only the Jewish community but all Americans."⁴ To confront it effectively requires a community-wide effort involving cooperative intergroup action, modeling effective practices from the top, sharing knowledge across sectors, and creating clear pathways of inclusion so that Jews can participate fully and freely in all aspects of American social life.

Educational institutions have an important role to play in addressing antisemitism. Because of their deeply-held commitment to inclusive and diverse community-building, K-12 schools routinely grapple with the challenges posed by bias, bigotry, and intolerance within a pluralistic setting. The National Strategy correctly affirms that a broad coalition of voices and a shared sense of responsibility are required to confront antisemitism effectively.

In this guide, we have designated two main categories of action that independent schools can invest in: **Proactive Initiatives** and **Responsive Measures**. Each of the specific action items in these two categories elaborates on the direct points issued in the National Strategy. While we recognize that not all independent schools can implement every one of these items, we hope that this guide will offer concrete, actionable steps that will build on existing initiatives at your school.



³[AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2023](https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2023)

⁴[U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf), p. 2.
(www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf)

Proactive Steps Your School Can Take to Confront Antisemitism and Promote Intergroup Allyship and Jewish Inclusion



Goal: Create forums to discuss resources and best practices for antisemitism education, where teachers can learn from Jewish and non-Jewish community leaders and educators.

Action step: The National Strategy states, “We call on academic and other research institutions to create forums for Jewish and non-Jewish community leaders and K-12 teachers to partner with academics on educational resources that teach about antisemitism and other forms of hate.” Addressing antisemitism requires that everyone involved in this shared undertaking engages in conversations about best practices, from K-12 educators to religious leaders, corporate and political leaders, and those in the non-profit sector. Within independent schools, this includes training educators to integrate education about the American Jewish community and its diversity, Judaism, antisemitism, and its areas of overlap with anti-Zionism, and the Holocaust in age-appropriate ways into school curricula and co-curricular programming. Schools should provide opportunities for faculty to obtain education and training in these areas so that they feel confident in their ability to teach them.

AJC resources: AJC has been a leader in combating antisemitism for over a century and through its [High School Affairs](#)⁵ department has educational resources, tools, and guides to best navigate this topic in school settings. Additional resources include:

- **Trainings:** AJC welcomes the opportunity to work with schools to train both administrators as well as relevant educators on how best to educate your student body on these issues. To schedule a training, contact highschool@ajc.org.
- **AJC Project Interchange:** [AJC Project Interchange](#)⁶ delegations to Israel offer productive avenues for creating better awareness of Jewish identity, Israel, and the intersections with antisemitism.
- **Educational tools:** We offer freestanding educational tools about antisemitism for students and educators, including [AJC's Translate Hate glossary](#)⁷.

For questions about these resources or opportunities, or to arrange such training in your school, please email highschool@ajc.org.

⁵AJC.org/HighSchoolAffairs

⁶AJC.org/ProjectInterchange

⁷AJC.org/TranslateHateGlossary

Goal: Proactively educate your student body about what antisemitism is, how to identify it, and how to combat it.

Action steps: Central to the efforts of the National Strategy is the need to:

- **Educate** students about antisemitism. As stated by the administration, “*We call on schools and colleges to treat antisemitism with the same seriousness as other forms of hate*” as well as “*We call on Jewish student groups in K-12 schools and colleges to consider developing materials for their campus communities on how to identify and combat antisemitism.*” This could include classroom efforts and lesson plans, general awareness campaigns, as well as school-wide assemblies or community service projects.
- **Enhance Understanding:** When it comes to understanding antisemitism, a critical step is to turn to Jewish students as well as Jewish organizations and subject-matter experts to design such opportunities. Jews are the recipients of antisemitism and therefore, it is critical to elevate their voices. Those within the Jewish community should establish the parameters of what makes something antisemitic and how they best want this hatred addressed. As with any form of hatred, the best antidote is education and fostering understanding.

AJC resources: AJC offers dynamic educational tools about antisemitism for students and educators, which can be found [here](#)⁸. Of particular importance are [AJC’s Translate Hate glossary](#)⁹ which helps students understand varying antisemitic tropes as well as AJC’s annual [State of Antisemitism in America Report](#)¹⁰ to help students understand the magnitude and impact of this hatred. For questions about these resources or opportunities, or to arrange such training in your school, please email highschool@ajc.org.

Goal: Ensure that Jewish holidays are respected within the academic calendar, and enhance awareness and accommodation of Jewish culture and practices, including holidays and dietary restrictions.

Action steps:

- **Inclusion** for Jewish students must include measures to accommodate and raise awareness of Jewish practices. As the National Strategy states “*We call on schools and colleges to ensure that Jewish students are respected and have their needs met. This includes modeling attention and concern for Jewish students’ rights and needs together with those of other groups; explicitly condemning antisemitic incidents; attending Jewish student events and celebrations; and ensuring that cultural and religious sensitivity policies also include areas of concern for Jewish students and families.*”
- **Accommodation:** This requires active accommodation to observe the schedule of Jewish holidays, including ensuring that major school programs or testing are not scheduled on certain Jewish holidays and offering accommodation to students who cannot attend school on Jewish holidays out of religious observance.

AJC resources: AJC offers [this guide](#)¹¹ to Jewish religion and culture that will help staff plan around Jewish holidays and become better acquainted with key Jewish cultural practices.

⁸AJC.org/Antisemitism

⁹AJC.org/TranslateHateGlossary

¹⁰AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2023

¹¹AJC.org/Culture

Goal: Make an effort to attend Jewish student groups' cultural events and holiday celebrations.

Action steps: Modeling an effective “tone from the top” starts with demonstrating a willingness to learn about Jewish life.

- **Show support:** Consider attending an event with your school's Jewish affinity group, should your institution have one, or organize a gathering to meet with Jewish student leaders in your middle or high school. These gestures signal to the entire school community that Jews are welcome and their religion and culture are seen and respected at your institution.
- **Celebrate the American Jewish experience:** In addition, incorporate elements like [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)¹² in May or Jewish holiday celebrations throughout the year into your school's cultural calendar and programming.

AJC resources: AJC is happy to connect you to the regional office closest to your school to discuss further opportunities to engage in your nearby community or better understand your local Jewish community.

For assistance engaging with the Jewish community and/or celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month, email highschool@ajc.org. To learn more about Jewish American Heritage Month, which occurs each May, find AJC resources and best practices [here](#)¹³.

Goal: Ensure that your school's student-focused DEI programming addresses anti-Jewish hatred and discusses it alongside other forms of hate, including misogyny, Islamophobia, homophobia, and racism.

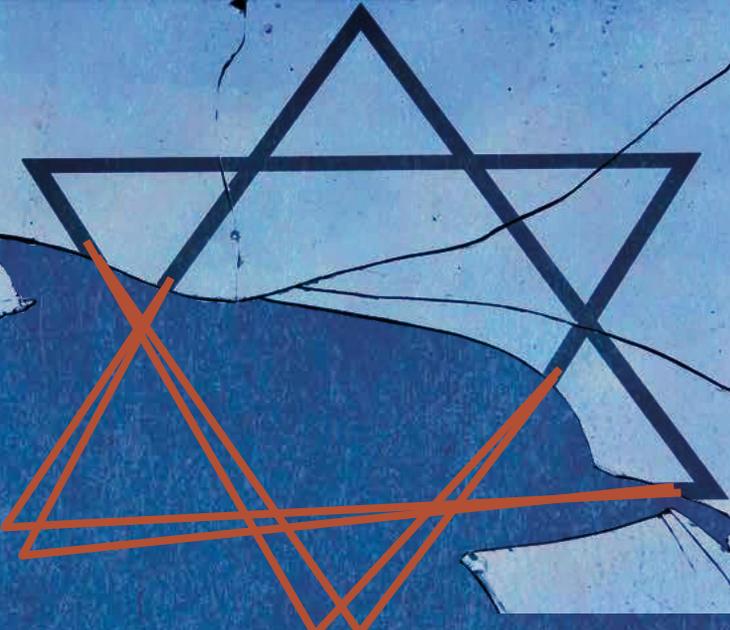
Action step: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs have a vital role to play in confronting antisemitism and resisting its normalization. The National Strategy, in fact, recommends this: “*We call on schools and colleges to ensure efforts to prevent and address antisemitism are integrated into their DEIA programs, including into mandatory trainings on discrimination and harassment.*” When antisemitism isn't addressed as a relevant form of hatred that is still part of today's world and when Jews are assigned an identity that equates Jewishness with whiteness and privilege, Jews can easily become scapegoats for a host of perceived social ills and the misperception that all Jews are wealthy and privileged.

- **Include antisemitism in DEI:** It is essential that DEI programming aimed at students include robust discussions about antisemitism. Ideally, this should include a discussion of the common threads linking various forms of hatred that are experienced by marginalized groups in addition to focusing on antisemitism's distinctive features, such as its connection to conspiracy theory and its tendency to escalate, not shrink, in tandem with Jewish socio-economic prosperity. We recognize that DEI professionals themselves often require better resources in order to understand the identities and histories of Jewish students and stage these discussions.

AJC resources: AJC has highly specialized staff who excel in educating student-facing administrators and staff. We can help sensitize small and large teams to the needs of Jewish students and improve staff's understanding of where Jews fit into the current DEI landscape while providing pathways towards respectful intergroup communication among students. Please email highschool@ajc.org to arrange such a training.

¹²[AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth](https://www.ajc.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth)

¹³[AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth](https://www.ajc.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth)



Responsive Measures *Your School Can Adopt to Help Address Antisemitic Incidents*

Goal: *When antisemitic incidents occur at school, make clear and unwavering statements that specifically name and condemn them.*

Action step: The National Strategy calls for “schools and colleges to issue clear and unwavering statements condemning all forms of hate, including antisemitism, especially in the wake of antisemitic incidents.” Equally important, for Jewish students, when such incidents of hate occur, they look to school administrators and leadership to establish a message that hate is unwelcome in their school community. Unfortunately, normalization occurs when antisemitism is ignored, downplayed, or diluted, and it can occur when authority figures fail to name and condemn antisemitism or when it goes unremarked in the general population. Authority figures, particularly those who occupy high-level administrative roles, have a particularly important role to play in responding to antisemitic incidents within a school and setting a positive “tone from the top” that makes clear that antisemitism is not tolerated in their school community.

- **Speak out consistently against antisemitism:** Strong statements specifically name and condemn antisemitism when it occurs, even in the larger context of free speech and academic freedom imperatives. Strong statements also offer denunciation without reservations, such as excluding those who profess a connection to Zionism or the State of Israel. Productive statements offer pathways forward, including resources for victims, that can help the school community heal while also proactively addressing antisemitism by generating an improved understanding of Jewish history, identity, and heritage.

AJC resources: Defining antisemitism is often paramount in effective statements. AJC offers a number of online educational resources surrounding what is rendered antisemitism, which can be found [here](https://www.ajc.org/antisemitism)¹⁴. In addition, our staff experts are available to help suggest relevant language or ideas for strong statements.

¹⁴[AJC.org/Antisemitism](https://www.ajc.org/antisemitism)

Goal: *Ensure that your school has a clear, transparent reporting mechanism for antisemitism alongside other hate crimes and offer transparency about the measures taken in response to such reports.*

Action steps: As outlined in the National Strategy and long encouraged by AJC, transparent reporting is paramount to addressing antisemitism. The Strategy states, “We call on schools and colleges to have a clear and transparent mechanism for students to report hate incidents and acts of antisemitism. Schools and colleges should also be transparent about the measures taken in response to such reports. This should include resources for students who have been the victims of intimidation, undue harassment, or violence on the basis of being Jewish or perceived as Jewish.” Creating a robust and transparent reporting system involves two important steps:

- **Establish a known system to report antisemitism:** There should be a clearly outlined mechanism for reporting such incidents. This could include an online portal, as is done in many university settings, or having a clearly designated educator, administrator, or staff person and associated process that students know they should go to if they believe they are victims of an antisemitic incident. At the start of the year, schools should also clearly outline and circulate the process of what happens once an incident is reported.
- **Offer transparency:** The second equally crucial step is for schools to provide transparency to the affected student about how the incident will be investigated and ultimately responded to. This takes on particular significance as many Jewish students have shared that even once they report an incident, they then receive little clarity as to what the next steps, protection, or concluding steps will be.

AJC resources: For guidance about reporting structures or to arrange training on best practices for your educators, please email highschool@ajc.org.

Goal: *Convene task forces with diverse members of the school community, including Jews, to address hate within your educational institution.*

Action steps: As highlighted in the Strategy, “We call on schools and colleges to create committees or task forces to combat hate on campus, including antisemitism, composed of administrators, faculty, and students from diverse ethnic and religious beliefs and backgrounds.”

- **Develop a task force to address antisemitism:** Consider assembling or recommending the creation of a task force to address hate that reports directly to a senior administrator or principal within your school. This sends a strong signal that a school is actively engaged in addressing antisemitism and that it imagines this as a school-wide effort involving a range of minority groups.
- **Ensure Jewish voices are included:** It is essential that Jewish voices be part of ongoing conversations about actionable steps to address areas of concern specific to their school community; however, engaging Jewish student leaders and faculty alongside representatives from other groups also communicates an expectation that these groups are aligned as part of a focused and inclusive ongoing conversation about how to make school safer and more inclusive for everyone.

AJC resources: For guidance about creating an effective task force or to arrange trainings for such a task force, please email highschool@ajc.org.

American Jewish Committee (AJC) 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.

Following the historic unveiling of the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism by the White House, AJC CEO Ted Deutch announced the creation of the AJC Task Force to Implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. AJC's Task Force is designed to ensure the execution of the National Strategy, which includes dozens of AJC's recommendations closely resembling [**AJC's Call to Action Against Antisemitism in America**](#), in a meaningful and timely manner. For more information on AJC's Task Force visit [**AJC.org/NationalStrategyNews**](https://www.ajc.org/NationalStrategyNews).