

A Guide for Administrators of U.S. Public Schools:
**Implementing the U.S. National
Strategy to Counter Antisemitism**



A Guide for Administrators of U.S. Public Schools:

Implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism



In May 2023, the White House published the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, the first ever American action plan on antisemitism and the first whole-of-society effort to address anti-Jewish hate. [AJC's Task Force to Implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#)¹ is excited to work with all stakeholders, including partners in the U.S. Public School System, in this important work. 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.

Context for the National Strategy

Antisemitism is a problem whose scope is not limited only to Jews or Jewish communities. Data from [AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report](#)² unequivocally affirms that a vast majority of the general American population - 92% - feel 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."³

¹[AJC.org/NationalStrategyNews](https://www.ajc.org/nationalstrategynews)

²[AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2023](https://www.ajc.org/antisemitismreport2023)

³U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, p. 2.

Suggested Actions and AJC Resources:

The National Strategy calls 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.*” The Department of Education (ED) is tasked to, “*spotlight notable efforts by students, communities, educators, and administrators to prevent and address antisemitism.*”

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

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 the school curriculum and co-curricular programming.

Provide opportunities for faculty to obtain education and training in these areas so that they feel confident in their ability to teach them.

Share efforts with ED officials to contribute to a deeper understanding of how public schools are proactively countering antisemitism.

- **AJC’s [High School Affairs](#)⁴ Department can provide trainings for educators and administrators and has educational tools to navigate the topic of antisemitism in the classroom and beyond. For questions about these resources or trainings in your school please email highschool@ajc.org.**

Central to the efforts put out by the White House is the need to educate students about antisemitism. The Strategy calls on “*schools and colleges to treat antisemitism with the same seriousness as other forms of hate.*”

Proactively educate your student body about what antisemitism is, how to identify it, and how to combat it. AJC offers dynamic educational tools about antisemitism for students and educators which can be found [here](#)⁵.

Share [AJC’s Translate Hate glossary](#)⁶ with teachers, school boards, PTAs, and in age-appropriate libraries. This easy-to-use glossary details dozens of widely-used antisemitic tropes. Additionally, AJC’s annual [State of Antisemitism in America Report](#)⁷ helps shine a light on the magnitude and impact of this hatred.

⁴AJC.org/HighSchoolAffairs

⁵AJC.org/Antisemitism

⁶AJC.org/TranslateHateGlossary

⁷AJC.org/AntisemitismReport2023

The National Strategy calls “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.”

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. This requires active accommodation in order to observe the schedule of Jewish holidays, such as adding them to school district calendars and ensuring major school programs or testing are not scheduled on Jewish holidays. Accommodation should be offered to students who cannot attend school on Jewish holidays out of religious observance. **AJC offers [this guide](#)⁸ to Jewish religion and culture that will help staff plan around Jewish holidays and become better acquainted with key Jewish cultural practices.**

Educators and administrators should make an effort to attend Jewish student groups’ cultural events and holiday celebrations.

Incorporate [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)⁹ in May or Jewish holiday celebrations throughout the year into your school’s cultural calendar. This programming signals to the entire school community that Jews are welcome in your community and their religion and culture are seen and respected at your school. **Please email highschool@ajc.org to learn more about [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)¹⁰.**

The Strategy urges “schools and colleges to issue clear and unwavering statements condemning all forms of hate, including antisemitism, especially in the wake of antisemitic incidents.”

When antisemitic incidents occur at school or in your district, make clear and unwavering statements that specifically name and condemn them. Administrators play an important role in responding to and preventing future incidents. **AJC offers a number of resources on antisemitism, which can be found [here](#)¹¹. In addition, our staff experts are available to help suggest relevant language or thinking for strong statements. Strong statements:**

- Specifically name and condemn antisemitism when it occurs, even in the larger context of free speech and academic freedom imperatives.
- Offer denunciation without reservations, and avoid excluding those who profess a connection to Zionism or the State of Israel.
- Offer pathways forward, including resources for victims, that help the school community heal, and proactively addresses antisemitism by generating an improved understanding about Jewish history, identity, and heritage.

The National Strategy calls 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.”

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. Creating such a mechanism involves two important steps:

- A mechanism for reporting incidents 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. Students should know the process for filing Title VI complaints with ED technical assistance centers.

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 receive little clarity as to what next steps, protection, or concluding steps will be.

⁸AJC.org/Culture

⁹AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth

¹⁰AJC.org/JewishAmericanHeritageMonth

¹¹AJC.org/Antisemitism

Schools are urged *“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.”*

Consider assembling or recommending the creation of a task force with diverse members of the school community to address hate that reports directly to a school district official or principal of your school. It is essential that Jewish voices be included 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.

Schools are urged in the National Strategy *“to ensure efforts to prevent and address antisemitism are integrated into their DEIA programs, including into mandatory trainings on discrimination and harassment.”*

Ensure that your school's student-focused DEIA programming addresses anti-Jewish hatred and discusses it alongside other forms of hate, including misogyny, Islamophobia, homophobia, and racism. When antisemitism isn't addressed as a relevant form of hatred that is still part of today's world, and when Jews are simply assigned an identity that equates Jewishness with whiteness and privilege, Jews can become scapegoats and misperceptions about Jews flourish.

DEIA discussions on antisemitism should include common threads linking various forms of hatred that are experienced by marginalized groups; in addition to antisemitism's distinctive features, such as its connection to conspiracy theory and its tendency to escalate, not shrink, in tandem with Jewish socioeconomic prosperity. **AJC has highly specialized staff who excel in educating student-facing administrators and staff and improve understanding of where Jews fit into the current DEIA landscape. Please email highschool@ajc.org to arrange such a training.**

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).