



**Safe to Learn**

Addressing antisemitism in UK schools



# **Safeguarding and antisemitism**

*in your school*

A resource for pupils





**All children and young people have the right to feel safe.**

*When we feel safe we usually feel good about ourselves. We can relax, enjoy life and are more likely to do well in school.*

From [rights4children.org.uk](https://rights4children.org.uk) 

Cover image: rawpixel.com / Shutterstock.  
On this page, image: rdne/ Pexels.

What is **safeguarding,**  
**discrimination and**  
**antisemitism** ?

What is **safeguarding**  
and why is this important?

*Safeguarding means making sure that all children and young people are safe, protected from harm, respected and able to thrive. In schools, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded.*

Make sure you understand your rights and speak up if you or anybody else is unsafe, disrespected, discriminated against or not thriving in or out of school. Your teachers and other adults in school are there to help and support you and other pupils.

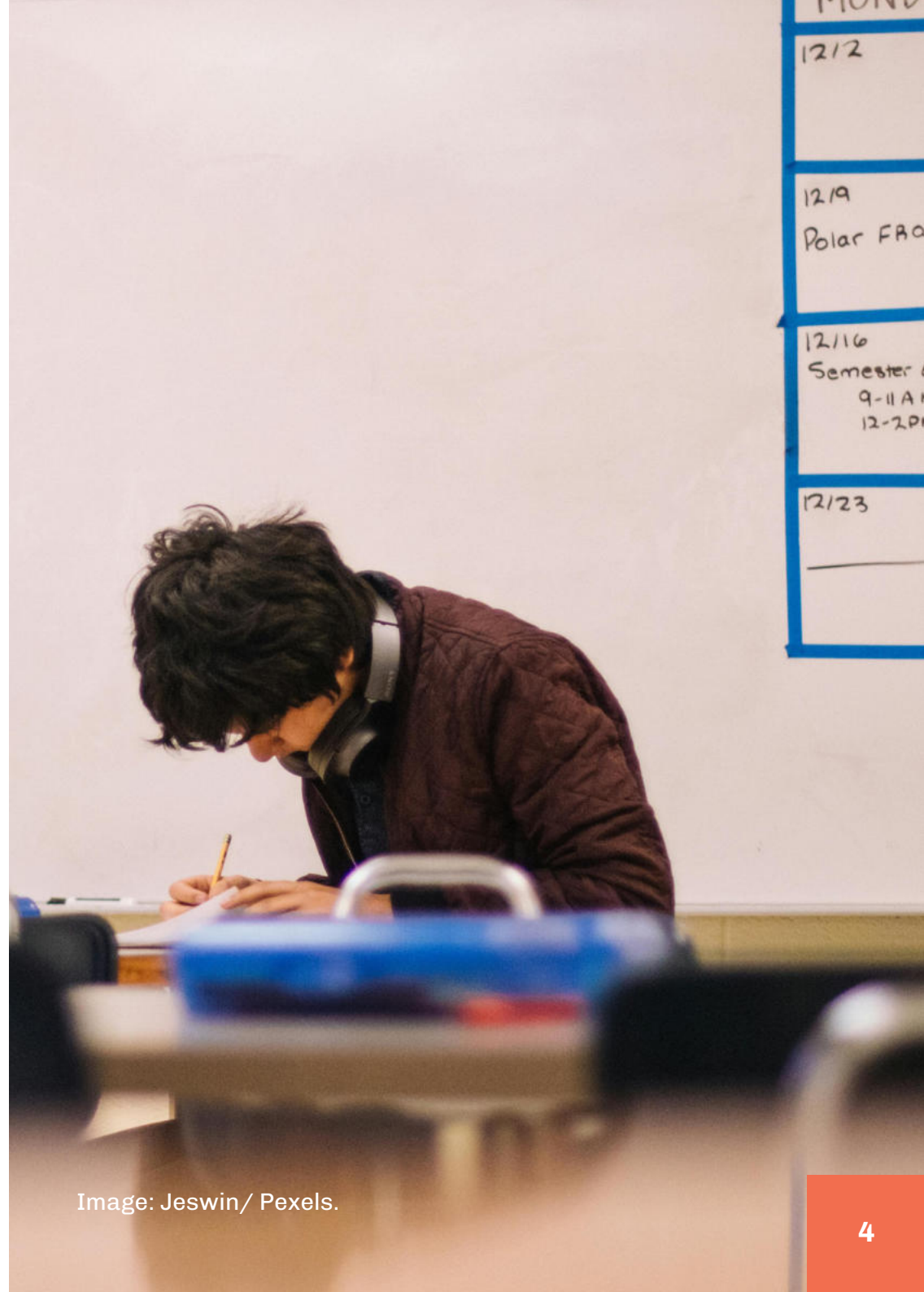
## ***Whose job is it to safeguard pupils in school and how do they do it?***

Every adult working or volunteering in a school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils.

**School leaders** are responsible for creating a culture where no one is being discriminated against and everyone is safe. .

**All schools have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** who is a member of the leadership team. Their job is to oversee all of the safeguarding across the school. Their door, as well as pastoral staff will always be open to help the pupils.

**Teachers and other school staff** should listen carefully to pupils and act to help and support them. If you feel something isn't right, find an adult you trust in school and talk to them. They will listen and they will try to help.



## What is **discrimination** ?

*Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of who they are or what they believe.*

In the UK, the law (the Equality Act 2010) says all schools and other organisations must protect people from discrimination. The law lists certain things called 'protected characteristics' – these are features of who you are as an individual. No one should be treated unfairly or badly based on a protected characteristic.

**Some of these characteristics include:**

- Religion or belief**
- Race** (colour, nationality or ethnic background)
- Sex** (being male or female)
- Disability**
- Sexual orientation** (who you are attracted to, if anyone).

## What is **antisemitism** ?

*Antisemitism means having negative ideas, views, stereotypes or hatred towards Jewish people just because they are Jewish. This is a form of discrimination.*

It can show up in different ways in what is said, written or done, such as:

- 1 Words/Pictures** – making jokes, insults or comments about Jews.
- 2 Actions** – bullying, damaging property or attacking someone.
- 3 Blaming** – holding Jewish people responsible for things they didn't do.

Antisemitic acts can target individuals, groups of people, or even buildings and places connected to Jewish life, like synagogues or schools.



Image: Mary Taylor / Pexels.

*Antisemitism*

**in schools**

*It is the job of all school staff to ensure that no one in the school community is discriminated against in or around school and to teach pupils how to recognise and address discrimination.*

Pastor Martin Niemoller wrote the following poem shortly after the Nazi era. It explains why we must speak out against discrimination. If people stay silent, it will eventually affect everyone in some way.

This poem helps us to understand the importance of standing up to all forms of discrimination. If we allow discrimination against some people it can affect us all.

How would you feel if discrimination towards a pupil or adult was tolerated in your school?

“ First they came for  
the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist  
Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew  
Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me. ”

A poem by Pastor Martin Niemoller.

# Understanding

## *antisemitism in schools*

Read the scenarios below and think about if these would be antisemitic?

- If so, what makes them antisemitic?
- Who is causing the antisemitism?
- What could be done to change things by; school leaders, teachers, parents and pupils?



Image: Dmitry Pistrov / Pexels.

**Scenario:** When something bad happened and was reported in the news, Jo was blamed just because she was Jewish.

**Scenario:** Maya was bullied online on social media with jokes and cartoons about Jews and nobody stepped in to help even though she reported it to her teachers.



Image: Kampus / Pexels.

**Scenario:** Richard went round to Michael's house one evening after school. Whilst he was there Michael's parents started asking him about what it is like to be a Jewish pupil in a non-Jewish school? Richard felt uncomfortable and unsure what to say.

**Scenario:** On her first day at a new school, Jamie was added to a group chat on Snapchat. When she scrolled through the chat she saw other pupils talking about how their new classmate was an 'evil Zionist'.

**Scenario:** Mrs Jacobson is a History teacher at her school. In September, one week she is absent from school for two days, she is absent for one day the next week and then a further two days, for the next two weeks due to Jewish festivals. Pupils overheard other members of staff discussing how ridiculous it was that Mrs Jacobson keeps taking all of these days off.

Antisemitism can sometimes be targeted with the aim of deliberately hurting, upsetting or intimidating people, though it can sometimes be unintentional and caused by people not understanding or considering the needs, beliefs and feelings of Jewish people. But what should schools be doing to prevent Antisemitism from happening in schools?



Image: Monkey Business Images / Shutterstock.

## Safeguarding *in action*

*Schools have a duty in law to help keep every pupil safe. Safeguarding means protecting pupils from harm, which includes making sure no one is excluded, bullied, or treated unfairly. This includes protecting them from antisemitism and any other forms of discrimination.*

# What schools

# should do *to safeguard*

*pupils from antisemitism?*

**Here is what school leaders must do:**

- ✓ **Take reports seriously** – if a pupil reports antisemitism, the school should investigate and act quickly. Records should be kept of incidents including the actions taken by the school.
- ✓ **Stop discrimination, bullying and harassment** – whether it happens in or out of school or in person or online and make it clear the school has a zero-tolerance approach.

✔ **Make policies and procedures fair and monitor these to ensure that they are effectively implemented** – school rules, trips, exams and activities should not disadvantage Jewish pupils (for example, clashes with Shabbat or festivals).

✔ **Train staff and educate pupils and parents** – staff should be trained to recognise and act on antisemitism, and pupils should learn about respect, inclusion and diversity. Parents should understand school policies and procedures and why these are in place so that they know what actions to expect from school leaders.

✔ **Support pupils, families and staff** – listen, act fairly and never penalise anyone for raising concerns in good faith.

✔ **Protect against hate and extremism including online** – schools must have systems to keep pupils safe from discriminatory views, harmful content and radicalisation and to educate pupils about these dangers.

*How might my school*

***deal with antisemitism ?***

**Questions you can ask your teachers and school leaders:**

- Who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and how can you contact them in your school?
- What is the policy on antisemitism and discrimination?
- How does your school make sure that Jewish pupils can access the curriculum including trips, sports and exams fairly?
- What training do staff get about antisemitism and other discrimination?
- How does your school teach about antisemitism and discrimination in Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE), assemblies or other lessons?

- If you report antisemitism, discrimination or bullying, what would happen next?
- Can you raise a concern anonymously with teachers about safeguarding or antisemitism if you don't feel safe putting your name on it? If so, how?
- How can pupils be involved with school leaders in ensuring the school is inclusive, respectful and understanding?
- How does the school make sure pupils can talk safely about stereotypes, prejudice or difficult issues without being bullied or punished?
- How are pupils' views and experiences listened to and acted on when it comes to tackling antisemitism and other discrimination?



*Taking action and*

## **further support**

***You have the right to be safe, respected and proud of who you are. Schools have a duty to protect you, and your voice matters.***

Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and included in every part of school life.

Your school has a legal duty to protect you and all students and staff from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Reporting discrimination or antisemitism should never lead to you being punished or ignored.

## What to do

# if you experience or witness antisemitism ?

*Towards yourself, another student or a member of staff.*

 **Tell an adult you trust straight away.**

This could be your Form Tutor, any other teacher or member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). You may also want to share what happened with your parents or carers, who can support you and, if needed, contact the headteacher.

 **Write down what happened.**

Note the time, place and what was said or done and if anyone else was present. If it happened online, keep screenshots.



**Remember: it is never your fault.**

The responsibility always lies with the person or people discriminating, not you.



**Support each other.**

If you see a friend, another people or even a member of staff being targeted, don't ignore it and leave it to someone else – check they are okay and encourage them to speak to staff as soon as possible.



**Follow up.**

If you report something, you should be reassured that it has been investigated and dealt with appropriately. If you do not feel reassured, all schools have a complaints policy that your parents can use. If you report something, you have the right to know your school has responded.

*If you need more help or information, these organisations can support you:*

**Stop Hate UK** 

### **The Police**

Call 999 in an emergency (if you or someone else is in immediate danger).

For non-emergency situations, call 101.

### **Community Security Trust (CST)**

Advice and support on antisemitism in schools.

Telephone: 0208 457 9999


Website: [www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk) 

### **Childline**

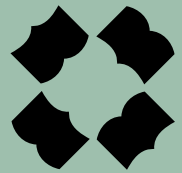
Free, confidential support for young people.

Telephone: 0800 1111

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) 

 **You deserve to feel safe, respected, and proud of who you are.**

*Your school has a duty to protect you and your voice matters. Speaking up can help make your school safer and fairer for everyone.*



*Safe to Learn*

Addressing antisemitism in UK schools

**[www.safetolearn.uk](http://www.safetolearn.uk)**