

Research briefing

Antisemitism in safeguarding and other policies in schools in London



'My 13 year old son was threatened with beheading by older students at school because he is Jewish. It was totally unprovoked and he was terrified. The school police liaison interviewed the students and reported back to me that in all other respects they were model students and then I got an enlightening lecture about right wing extremism'.

Parent of a Jewish child in a UK school

'Hitler should have finished the job.'

Comment from a child to a Jewish child in school

'I see the comments about us on snapchat all the time. I don't understand why people are allowed to pick on us and nothing happens.'

Jewish teenager in a UK school

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Introduction

All children have the right to be safe in school, whatever their nationality, ethnicity, race, religion or belief, however in 2024, almost a quarter of British Jewish parents reported that their child or children had faced antisemitism in or around school.

Jewish children have been physically assaulted on their way to school, subjected to bullying and abuse by their classmates, threatened in both Jewish and non-faith schools and had their property deliberately damaged or destroyed.

The safeguarding and welfare of Jewish children may also be affected by their experiences of antisemitism in the broader community including when online, as well as harm caused by witnessing antisemitic abuse of their family, friends and community.

All schools are legally responsible for safeguarding children from harm, treating them equally and protecting them from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. This means that school leaders should ensure safeguarding policies and procedures explicitly address antisemitism, including reporting, monitoring and response processes, staff training and listening to children, and taking account of their worries and concerns.

A number of child safeguarding practice reviews have demonstrated that safeguarding measures that do not fully address racial bias and discriminatory attitudes, or take into account how children are impacted by racism and other forms of discrimination, can jeopardise children's safety, wellbeing and education. This is underlined in the child safeguarding practice review panel's briefing of March 2025. The following research briefing presents the results of a rapid review of safeguarding and related policies published by London secondary schools, aimed at better understanding the extent to which antisemitism is explicitly addressed within safeguarding-related documentation.

The key finding of the research is that almost half of London secondary schools do not mention antisemitism anywhere in their safeguarding policies. This suggests that many schools may not be recognising or adequately addressing the harm caused by antisemitic discrimination and abuse, and thereby failing to meet their statutory obligation to safeguard all children.

About Safe to Learn

This research was conducted by Safe to Learn, a newly established network of teachers, parents, researchers, policymakers, young people and child safeguarding practitioners, working together to end antisemitism in UK schools. We co-produce evidence-based child safeguarding resources, tools and standards to address antisemitism and improve the school environment for all children, educators and support staff.

Research aim

The research examines safeguarding and child protection policies as well as other related policies (anti-bullying, Prevent, Behaviour and so on) published by London schools educating pupils of secondary age, with a particular focus on whether antisemitism is explicitly referenced within safeguarding-related documentation.

The analysis also considers:

- Whether antisemitism is addressed elsewhere in school policy frameworks
- Differences between schools with and without a religious character
- Variations between state-funded and independent schools.

Data source and scope

The dataset is derived from the Department for Education (DfE) 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) website. It includes:

- All schools in London that were operational on 6 December 2025
- All schools educating pupils of secondary age, including:
 - Maintained secondary schools
 - Academies and free schools
 - Independent secondary schools
- Independent preparatory schools educating pupils aged 4–13
- All-through schools educating pupils from primary through secondary phases
- In total, the dataset comprises 744 London schools educating pupils of secondary age.

All demographic and structural information (including school type, phase, governance model and religious character) is based on DfE-published data.

Safeguarding policy availability

Of the 744 schools:

→ **703 schools (94.5%)** are recorded as having a safeguarding or child protection policy available online

→ **41 schools (5.5%)** are recorded as not having a safeguarding or child protection policy available online.

All subsequent analysis of safeguarding policy content uses 703 schools as the baseline population.

Overall findings: antisemitism in safeguarding policies

Among the 703 schools with an online safeguarding policy:

→ **380 schools** explicitly reference antisemitism (or anti-semitism)

→ **323 schools** do not.

Overall proportions:

→ **54.1%** explicitly reference antisemitism

→ **45.9%** do not.

Key observation

While a majority of schools now acknowledge antisemitism within safeguarding-related documentation, nearly half still do not, indicating inconsistent recognition of antisemitism as a safeguarding concern.

Religious character of schools

Schools with a religious character:

- 217 schools with an online safeguarding policy
- 120 reference antisemitism
- 55.3%

Schools without a religious character:

- 478 schools with an online safeguarding policy
- 259 reference antisemitism
- 54.2%

Interpretation

There is no meaningful difference between schools with and without a religious character in the likelihood of referencing antisemitism in safeguarding policies.

Breakdown by religious designation

(schools with an online safeguarding policy)

| Religious character | Schools | % Referencing antisemitism |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| Roman Catholic | 65 | 56.9% |
| Church of England | 61 | 54.1% |
| Christian (general) | 24 | 58.3% |
| Muslim | 20 | 55% |
| Inter-/non-denominational | 11 | 54.5% |
| Jewish | 9 | 55.6% |
| Islam (separate classification) | 7 | 28.6% |
| Catholic (alternative classification) | 4 | 50% |
| Multi-faith | 3 | 66.7% |
| Sikh | 3 | 33.3% |
| Greek Orthodox | 1 | 0% |

Note: Several categories contain very small numbers of schools; percentages for these groups should be interpreted with caution.

State-funded and independent schools

State-funded schools

- 481 schools with an online safeguarding policy
- 255 reference antisemitism
- 53.0%

Independent schools

- 214 schools with an online safeguarding policy
- 124 reference antisemitism
- 57.9%

Interpretation

Independent schools are somewhat more likely than state-funded schools to reference antisemitism in safeguarding policies, although the difference is modest.

Conclusion and key recommendations

This research found that 45.9% of London secondary schools do not mention antisemitism anywhere in their safeguarding policies, with small variations across state-funded and independent schools and in schools with or without a religious character. This indicates that many school leaders may not recognise antisemitism as a safeguarding concern or understand their responsibility to prevent and respond to harm to children caused by antisemitic hate.

These findings have important implications for all schools, not just schools with Jewish pupils. A failure to safeguard children from antisemitism in schools is likely to have a direct impact on Jewish children, but it also risks harming all children by exposing them to a school culture in which hatred, discrimination and exclusion are tolerated and normalised.

The following recommendations are aimed at addressing the gaps identified in this research:

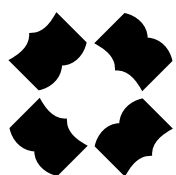
The Department of Education should:

- Write to all UK schools reminding them of their statutory safeguarding duties and emphasising that school leaders must ensure that their safeguarding policies and procedures explicitly address antisemitism, racism and other forms of discrimination and exclusion.
- Ensure comprehensive measures to safeguard children from antisemitism in schools are included in the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.
- Ask Ofsted to carry out an urgent thematic review on safeguarding and antisemitism in schools to better understand key issues and challenges.
- Include safeguarding children from antisemitism, racism and other forms of discrimination and exclusion as a key priority for improvement in the universal Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) scheme.
- Make schools facing challenges in adequately safeguarding children from antisemitism, racism and other forms of discrimination and exclusion eligible for targeted RISE interventions to address these gaps.
- Provide quality-assured mandatory training on recognising antisemitism and implementing measures for safeguarding children from antisemitism, racism and other forms of discrimination and exclusion to all:
 - School leaders
 - School inspectors
 - RISE advisors
 - Regional directors
 - Regional Prevent co-ordinators.

→ School leaders should ensure safeguarding policies and procedures explicitly address antisemitism. This includes, reporting, monitoring and response processes, staff training and listening to children, and taking account of their worries and concerns.

For further guidance see the Safe to Learn toolkit:

Addressing antisemitism in child safeguarding and protection - a guide for schools and education settings



Safe to Learn

Addressing antisemitism in UK schools

www.safetolearn.uk