



Independent Review – Tackling antisemitism in schools and colleges in England: Terms of Reference

Background

Hate crime, discrimination and racism have no place in Britain. Schools and colleges must be places of education where everyone is treated fairly and can learn and work without fear of being targeted because of their religion, race or background.

Antisemitism is a deeply concerning and complex prejudice that has plagued communities for centuries. Since the 7 October Hamas attacks that killed over 1,200 people, antisemitic violence has surged worldwide - including the 2025 Bondi Beach shooting in Australia, and the murders of Melvin Crazvitz and Adrian Daulby and attack on Yom Kippur worshippers at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. These are devastating reminders of the threats and violence faced by Jewish communities.

Antisemitism is unfortunately a society-wide issue, and the evidence suggests antisemitism is also occurring in our schools and colleges. The data makes for alarming reading:

- [Community Security Trust recorded](#) 3,700 antisemitic incidents in 2025, the second-highest annual total ever, and a 4% increase from 2024. A total of 204 school-related antisemitic incidents were recorded in 2025, a 23% decrease from 2024, but still double the levels typically seen before 2023. Children are disproportionately involved as both victims and offenders, for instance 19% of child-victim incidents involved physical violence compared to 7% when adults were victims.
- [NASUWT surveyed Jewish members in 2025](#) and found 51% experienced antisemitism in the workplace in the past year and 52% of those respondents felt that when they reported issues, appropriate action was not taken.
- [The Institute for Jewish Policy Research](#) revealed 23% of surveyed British Jewish parents reported that their children had been subjected to antisemitism in school, the school's vicinity or commute.

Stakeholder feedback also suggests a nervousness or perceived lack of opportunity to approach the topic. [UNESCO's 2026 paper 'Addressing antisemitism through education'](#) which surveyed teachers from across the European Union found confidence levels did not always reflect knowledge with some teachers possessing misconceptions about what counts as antisemitic (e.g., for comparing Jews to Nazis – 62% identified this correctly as antisemitic, but 9% said it was not antisemitic and 20% said it depended on the situation).

It's for these reasons that the Department for Education (DfE) has launched an independent review to ensure schools and colleges in England are properly equipped to identify antisemitism, respond to it, and tackle its root causes.

Review aims

The Secretary of State for Education has asked Sir David Bell KCB DL to conduct a review into the policies, procedures and support available to schools and colleges in England when dealing with antisemitism. The reviewer is independent of Government and has no conflict of interest.¹

The review will consider:

- **How well schools and colleges in England are supported to make decisions and handle incidents**, including the use of their own policies and relevant DfE or Government guidance
- **The handling and accountability** for when incidents may not have been handled well, including the role of inspectorates
- **What schools and colleges do to prevent antisemitism**, including efforts to identify and tackle issues early.
- **The role and influence of campaigning organisations** and how their activities impact school and college decision making

This is a practically-focused review focused on recommending actions to improve the sector. It is not a review of the level of antisemitism in schools and colleges. The reviewer will make recommendations for the DfE and sector leaders to help schools and colleges prevent, identify and respond effectively to antisemitism as well as other forms of hatred and prejudice.

Scope

We want all schools and colleges in England to have the necessary confidence, ability and support to prevent, identify and deal well with incidents of antisemitism (as well as other forms of hatred and prejudice) when they arise. If schools or colleges do not deal with incidents of antisemitism effectively, then they must be proportionately held accountable for their actions, or lack thereof. What the indicators of effectiveness are will be in scope as part of the review.

The Review will not look to blame, or to place undue burdens on school and college staff and leaders. However, dealing with antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice is paramount and we want to teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders to be supported to deal with it effectively.

¹ Sir David Bell remains Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Sunderland and [Vice Chair of Skills England](#), which is a board responsible for advising on shaping the strategic direction of Skills England, providing independent insight, challenge and support to the executive team.

The review will be using the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) definition of antisemitism](#).

Antisemitic incidents in scope of the review include those undertaken by pupils, staff or leadership (including governors and trustees). The review will also consider external factors which either directly (e.g. an external protest outside the setting) or indirectly (e.g. a geopolitical event) may cause or contribute to antisemitism in the school or college.

The schools and colleges which are in scope of the review include:

- All schools in England (other than nursery schools), including maintained schools, Academy schools, special schools, independent schools, Pupil Referral Units and alternative provision Academies
- Sixth form provision in these schools
- Institutions within the further education sector (general further education colleges, designated institutions and sixth form colleges)
- 16-19 Academies.

The educational settings in England which are out of scope of this review include:

- Early years and childcare settings
- Nursery schools
- Out-of-school settings²
- Independent training providers
- Components of further education settings which provide higher education
- Higher education institutions³.

Whilst schools and colleges in England are the focus, the reviewer may wish to make recommendations based on international good practice.

The Review is invited to explore how schools and colleges have dealt with specific incidents of antisemitism. However, the review's scope does not extend to an assessment of the level of antisemitism in schools and colleges.

To understand how schools and colleges deal with antisemitism, and how this could be improved, we expect the review to consider questions such as:

- How do **safeguarding** frameworks support schools and colleges to identify, record, and respond to incidents of antisemitism?
- How are allegations of antisemitic **behaviour, bullying or harassment by staff** handled, and are responses consistent with those for other forms of prejudice?

² Out-of-school settings are organisations or individuals that provide tuitions, training, instruction or activities to children in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, but are not: schools; colleges; registered education settings providing alternative provision; 16 to 19 academies; providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency.

³ Higher Education Institutions are not in scope for this review, as they are independent, autonomous institutions and are subject to different legal and regulatory requirements. English universities registered with the Office for Students must comply with regulatory requirements on harassment reporting, misconduct procedures, training, and support.

- How well is the **teaching workforce equipped to recognise and address antisemitism** in the classroom, including during discussions on sensitive topics?
- How do settings manage **protests**, whether external or internal to the setting?
- What processes ensure that **speakers or events** do not promote antisemitism, and how effectively are risks assessed and mitigated?
- How do staff ensure they remain **politically impartial**, in particular related to Israel/Palestine?
- How are **fundamental British values** used to promote respect for different faith and ethnic groups, including Jewish students and staff?
- Do **equality, anti-racism, and religious-hatred policies** effectively address antisemitism?
- How do **Prevent** processes identify and deal with antisemitic extremism or ideology, and is this treated consistently with other forms of extremist hate?
- How do **behaviour** policies respond to antisemitic incidents, and is this proportionate and consistent with responses to other discriminatory behaviour?
- How effectively can students, parents, or staff raise **concerns or complaints** (including whistleblowing) about antisemitism?
- How do **inspectors and regulatory bodies** assess how well institutions prevent and respond to antisemitism?

The Review will not make recommendations directly in relation to core schools or further education funding or workplace supply issues. These will be considered by the Government as part of spending review and business planning processes.

The DfE has recently conducted an Internal Review of the Framework for Recommendations and Decisions about Teacher Prohibition. This review is not intended to replicate or call into question the findings of this review, nor any recent review related to the issues of antisemitism in schools and colleges.

The independent review will undertake a call for evidence and a programme of engagement in Spring 2026 to hear from school, college, community and religious representatives. The call for evidence response will be published as part of the independent review's report which will set out recommendations for the sector. A reference group will be established to act as a critical friend to the independent review.

Timeline

The Review will commence from March 2026 and is expected to conclude by Autumn 2026.