

## **Israel/Hamas Conflict: useful information for Schools**

You will be fully aware of the appalling terrorist attack launched by the proscribed terrorist organisation, Hamas on Saturday 7 Oct 2023, and the ongoing violence in the region.

The UK government has committed to providing its full support to Israel and our thoughts are with all the innocent victims of this devastating conflict. The attack and its aftermath are likely to exacerbate inter-faith tensions and be exploited by extremists intending to spread harmful narratives and radicalise people. It can also be an incredibly complex and emotive topic for many people, including those susceptible to radicalisation. The police are taking active steps to provide community reassurance and prevent disorder.

**Listed below is some useful information and links for your information.**

### **Prevent Referrals**

Prevent seeks to intervene early, to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Where someone is concerned a person may have been deliberately exposed to harmful terrorist narratives, it is right that they refer them to the necessary authorities. A Prevent referral does not amount to an accusation of criminality. Rather, it allows for a multi-agency assessment to be conducted and support to be provided to help divert people from engaging in harmful activity. Through this referral, the person will be able to receive the vital support they need.

All referrals to Prevent are carefully assessed based on the specific details of the case. If a person is found to not be at risk of radicalisation, the case is immediately closed to Prevent. They may be referred to other appropriate services, or no further action may be taken. Lawful non-violent protest or activism does not meet the threshold for Prevent referrals. Holding legitimate political views is not an indicator for extremism provided they are not expressed or furthered by statements, deeds or actions which result in harassment, intimidation or threats of violence against individuals or society itself. Encouragement of terrorism, including glorifying the commission or preparation of acts of terrorism, fundraising for the purposes of terrorism, and inviting support for a proscribed terrorist organisation, are all criminal offences.

Hamas are a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK. [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/proscribed-terrorist-groups)

### **Prevent & Schools**

Many young people will have a strong personal interest in these issues, and we are aware that in some schools this may lead to political activity by older pupils. Schools should ensure that political expression by pupils is done sensitively, avoiding disruption and feelings of intimidation or targeting for other pupils and staff. Schools should also make every effort to ensure that this activity does not extend to discriminatory bullying or involve the expression of antisemitic, anti-Muslim, or other discriminatory views. Where this does happen, the Department for Education expect schools to deal with these incidents with all due seriousness, in line with their behaviour policy.

Depending on the circumstances, safeguarding leads may also look to determine whether abusive and discriminatory views expressed or shared by pupils are representative a wider susceptibility, and consider the appropriateness of engaging with support through the Prevent programme. We trust teachers and other staff to exercise their professional judgment about whether a referral is appropriate, as they do for all other safeguarding risks.

Further training and more discussion around radicalisation will help in addressing this, and advice and guidance is available on [Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism](#) and [Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) to support safeguarding leads in making these decisions.

Schools should also be mindful of their legal duties regarding political impartiality and should always avoid working organisations that promote antisemitic, anti-Muslim or any other discriminatory views. The Department for Education has published clear and comprehensive guidance to help those working with and in schools to better understand legal duties on political impartiality. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools>”

Further Resources Particularly in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict, and antisemitism and Islamophobia emanating as a result of this, you may find the below links useful.

- The Community Security Trust (CST) [CST – Protecting Our Jewish Community](#) has published a number of resources on their social media feeds, including guidance on how to communicate about Israel in a non-antisemitic way. A host of other resources can be found on their website here: [Educational Resources – CST – Protecting Our Jewish Community](#). CST also has a national emergency number which should be used to report antisemitic attacks, alongside calling 999: 0800 032 3263.
- Tell Mama is a confidential support service for those suffering from Islamophobia across the UK. Their website features a number of different ways to report anti-Muslim hate or Islamophobia, including via phone or WhatsApp: [Report in Anti-Muslim Hate or Islamophobia \(tellmamauk.org\)](#). The site also hosts useful resources, including on mosque security. Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation, following the extension of the proscription of Hamas’ military wing to the organisation in its entirety.

You can find out more about proscription here: [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **North Yorkshire Contact:**

If you have a concern, please contact;

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