



Addressing the Recent Attack on Israel

The State of Israel was attacked this past weekend by [Hamas](#), a terrorist organization that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007. We now know that, “Not since the Holocaust have more Jews been [murdered](#) on one day.” Antisemitic rhetoric has increased sharply around the globe alongside this massacre (see [here](#) and [here](#)), and your Jewish students might be having feelings of sadness, fear, and anxiety. It is important that they be supported at school in this unprecedented time in history. School leadership should notify counselor services. Jewish students (or others impacted) may need additional support on campus and these professionals should be prepared to provide teachers with resources that safely and appropriately navigate this topic. In addition, education is a powerful tool to fight hatred, so we have supplied language below that is appropriate for superintendents to release to the public.

A letter should do the following:

- **Address the needs of Jewish members of the community** - acknowledge that terrorism impacts students, teachers, admin, and staff in our schools
- **Condemn terrorism** - specifically, the terrorist atrocities perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli civilians
- **Refer to the terrorist attacks as “acts of terror”** - terrorism has no place in the value system that the school district embodies and holds its students to every day
- **Condemn hate speech** - while students have the right to speak their minds, there is no place in our communities for hate speech targeting Jews or Israelis
- **Unite in support of victims of terrorism** - the community would be well served by coming together in support of victims of terrorism, and recognizing that this massacre must be opposed regardless of any political divisions or disagreements
- **Share Reporting Mechanisms** - Promote information about proper reporting mechanisms to monitor hate speech, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination on campus

Here is a model text that can be modified for distribution:

Subject: Support Your Family and School Community - Guidance Regarding Recent Events in Israel

Dear Friends and Families of the District,

The School District embraces the values of respect and dignity for all races, ethnicities, and cultures. We stand with all leaders and nations in condemning the recent massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas. Our priority is to maintain a safe and welcoming school environment for all families and students, and we will respond immediately to any perceived threats to our learning communities.

The District is also committed to providing you with important resources to assist your school community address events like these. We want to assure you that our schools are committed to helping our students and families navigate these difficult times, and it is unfortunate that there has already been an increase in online acts of anti-Jewish hatred since the attacks began this past weekend.

It is important to note that we already incorporate discussions about global conflicts, including the recent attacks in Israel, into our curriculum in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. With these open discussions in safe places, we can empower our students to become informed global citizens.

Children look to the adults for a sense of safety and security – even more so in times of crisis. Please refer to the District Model of Student Safety for further details on how to help a student in times of need.

Here are some tips on how to talk to students/your child about war and conflict:

- Find out what your children know and how they feel - The images being profiled in the media can be terrifying. Try to shield children from disturbing images.
- Keep it calm and age-appropriate - Children have a right to know what's going on in the world, but adults also have a responsibility to keep them safe from distress. Try not to overshare any fears with your child.
- Spread compassion, not stigma - This can be challenging when talking about the horrors of war. Focus on messaging that children deserve to be safe at school and in society. Bullying and discrimination are always wrong and we should each do our part to spread kindness and support each other.

- Focus on the helpers - It is important for children to know that there are people who are exercising courage and kindness and promoting peace. There are adults at school for your child to talk to if they desire.

Should you require any further support, please do not hesitate to speak with your school principal or contact your Regional office.

555-555-5555

Sincerely,

District Leadership