



Advice for teachers and schools on dealing with the current conflict in Gaza/Israel (Jan 15th 2008)

Although we are focusing on the needs of Jewish teachers and students all advice applies equally to other groups of people or individuals that may have strong associations with the conflict regardless of religion or ethnicity.

What to do, what not to do:

- Depending on context, listen, acknowledge the views being expressed, you do not have to offer your own views. It is fine to say 'I don't feel comfortable discussing this'.
- This conflict is very emotive, particularly in light of the religious associations of the geographical area, and the often graphic media coverage. Be sensitive to the variety of emotional needs staff and students may be bringing to school.
- Jewish teachers and students might have a range of opinions about the conflict, which they might feel apprehensive discussing.
- Jewish teachers and students are often a tiny minority in the staff or student body and thus can feel pressure as a representative of an entire people. This can be more intense when in an environment of people with contrary views.
- If you do choose to discuss this issue, ensure that you show news and information from a range of perspectives.
- Be wary of labelling or judging people as a homogenous group; for example, All Israelis..., all Palestinians... All Jews... All Muslims... There are of course a diverse range of opinions within religious and ethnic groups. People should not be labelled by those that appear to represent that group on the news.
- Be aware that the conflict has a long history and is more complex than can be conveyed in a conversation, news bulletin or lesson.
- Displaying materials: Schools and Teaching Unions should be aware that political posters often use inflammatory language which may cause offence. They should be displayed with caution and consideration to all who might view them.

Who to contact:

- For general support contact the Teacher Support Line 08000 562 561 www.teachersupport.info
- For any incidents of racism or race hate related to the conflict contact your local police or school police liaison officer
- Jewish teachers and students may wish to report incidents to the Community Security Trust (CST) www.thecst.org.uk or 0800 980 0668
- For sources of news and information we are happy to advise info@jewishteachers.org.uk
- For outside speakers to give students a background to the conflict contact Nomi Benari at Middle East Education (London) meedu@toucansurf.com 07790860742
- If you wish to look at interfaith work you can contact 3FF who run sessions in schools about the three Abrahamic faiths and the importance of interfaith dialogue. www.3ff.org.uk
- For further guidance and lesson ideas see the Three Faiths Forum resources <http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/Conflict.htm>