



## **Summary: Jewish Teachers' Association Survey on the Effects of the conflict in Gaza/Israel on schools and Jewish Teachers.**

The survey was run as a result of individual problems brought to the Jewish Teachers' Association. The aims were to find out; if problems were more widespread; if the conflict has caused problems for Jewish teachers either with colleagues or with students; and if it is something they were happy dealing with.

The results show there is unease amongst Jewish teachers discussing the conflict in schools despite most respondents feeling they have good background knowledge. This was particularly noted where there was only one Jewish staff member in the school. This is something all schools and teachers should be aware of. It is also worth noting that if Jewish teachers feel uncomfortable it can be extrapolated that this may also apply Jewish students. On a positive note teachers who were happy discussing the conflict reported some positive outcomes and overall there were no reported confrontations or serious incidents. Some respondents felt that there was no issue to worry about.

As a result of the survey the Jewish Teachers' Association will be publishing some brief guidelines for schools on working with Jewish students and teachers with regard to events in the Middle East.

### **Key Results:**

Between Thursday 8th January and Tuesday 13th January, 32 Jewish teachers were surveyed on the effects of the conflict in schools.

The following results were noted.

- 53% of respondents had seen the conflict discussed in their staff rooms.
- 41% of respondents had seen the conflict discussed formally or informally in classrooms.
- Over 50% of respondents either did not feel comfortable discussing the conflict in school or avoided doing so.
- Only 41% were happy to discuss the conflict with colleagues
- Only 28% were happy to discuss the conflict with pupils
- Only 19% of respondents felt they weren't informed about the conflict
- 50% of respondents felt well informed or very well informed.

### **Specific Problems Teachers have faced:**

Posters on staffroom notice boards which teachers have found offensive.

A reluctance to talk to colleagues for fear of disagreement and being labelled.

A reluctance to publicly show their beliefs despite colleagues doing so.

Newly qualified, recently qualified, student teachers and those new in a job may feel uneasy bringing up issues to a senior staff member.

### **A Selection of comments from teachers:**

Pupils may be talking about the Issues outside of the classroom but we don't know.

I worry about being the only Jewish representative in the school and a hope that the conflict is not brought up.

I have a good knowledge of this and love talking about it with friends but don't feel happy with pupils as I'm worried I will not represent both sides fairly.

It has made no impact at all and we shouldn't overestimate the minimal impact the conflict has on most people.

In a 30 year career I have never had the Middle East discussed or brought up.

Common sense suggests that for 99.9% of non-Jews, it's not a personal issue, it's all rather distant, and it's probably quite confusing.

(In a Jewish school) I had a student scared of her Jewish school being targeted/attacked.

I now work in a Jewish school but I actually found it easier to deal with these issues with students in a non-Jewish context!

It's just so painful and I want there to be peace.

I can't wait for some really good easy to use resources to pull out on such occasions and teach!

I have actually quite enjoyed talking to the students in small groups/one-on-one about the conflict - many of them know that I am Jewish, and asked me how I feel about the situation. I felt comfortable answering them honestly, and the conversations that have stemmed from this have been very interesting. I am a Citizenship teacher, and so the issue has been a great case study with my year 11's as we have been learning about human rights. I have enjoyed getting them to realise that the nature of the current conflict involves infringements of human rights on both sides.

I avoid discussions on the Middle East as I am a minority of 1. I only correct blatant falsehoods when needed.

In a previous school two members of staff were members of the Respect party and often made me feel uncomfortable as this issue was high up their agenda.

I receive forwarded e-mail from colleagues that I don't agree with but I choose not to respond as I don't want to enter into disagreements with friends.

Like many I have a real contradiction of feelings on this issue.

Colleagues have joined Facebook groups that I disagree with. I am careful not to publicise my views or opinions on Facebook.

**About the Jewish Teachers Association:**

The Jewish Teachers' Association was founded in 2007. It has around 200 members a large majority of whom are teachers in non-Jewish schools.

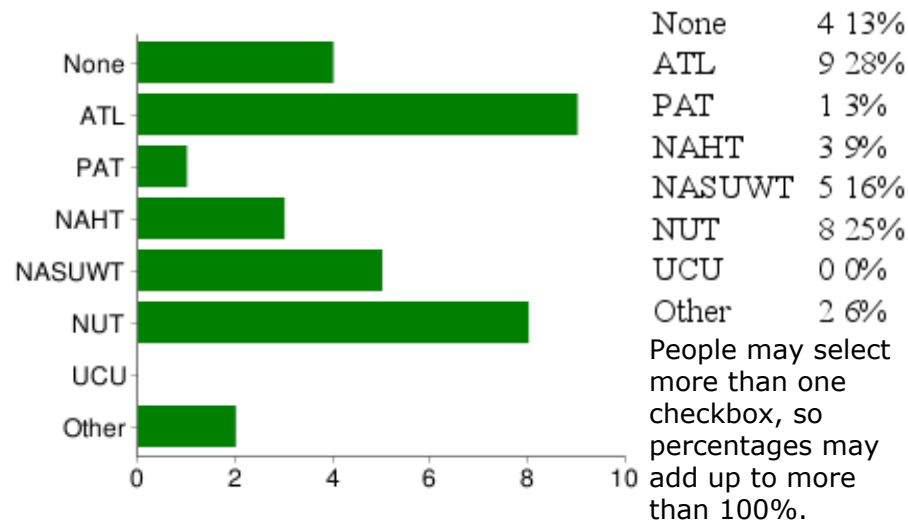
The Jewish Teachers Association exists to:

1. Provide a network for Jewish 'educationalists' to discuss teaching and learning, and other matters.
2. Endeavour to liaise and represent the needs of Jewish educationalists to outside organisations.
3. To provide Social Networking and Professional Development opportunities
4. To support and provide advice to Jewish educationalists who might meet with problems, for example religious discrimination.
5. To encourage balanced teaching about Judaism and the State of Israel.

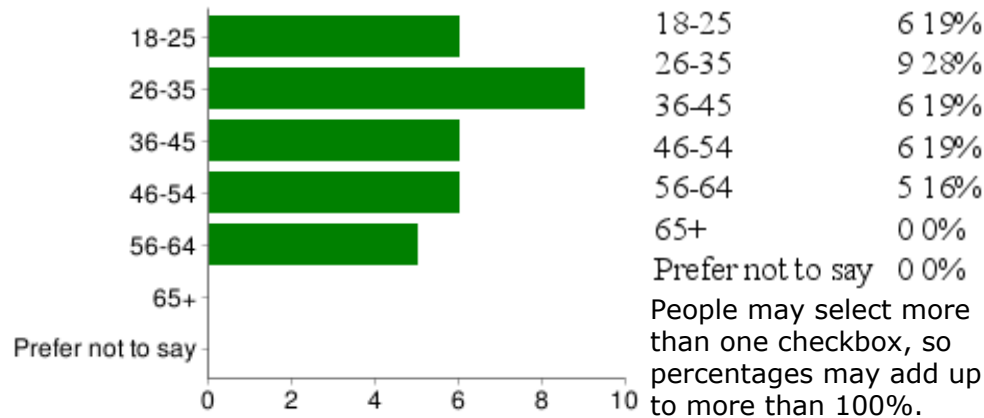
**For further details or comment on the survey or the Jewish Teachers' Association please contact Daniel Needlestone at [chair@jewishteachers.org.uk](mailto:chair@jewishteachers.org.uk)**

## Appendix 1: Background Information on Respondents

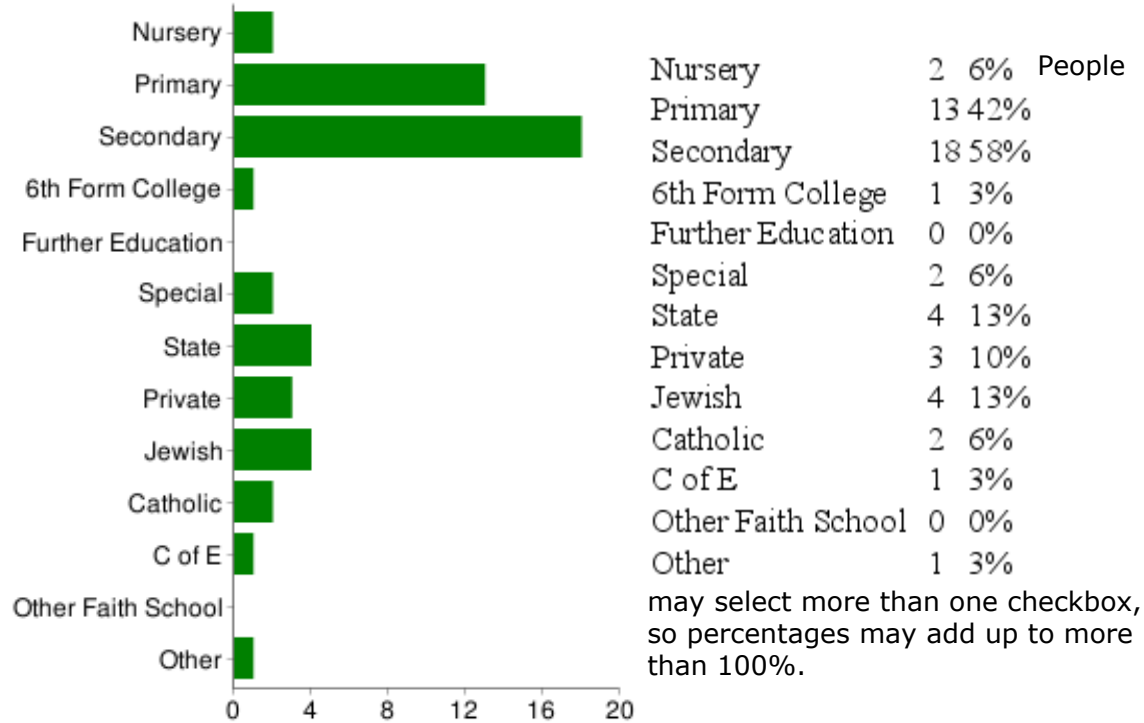
Which Teaching Union do you belong to?



What is your age range?

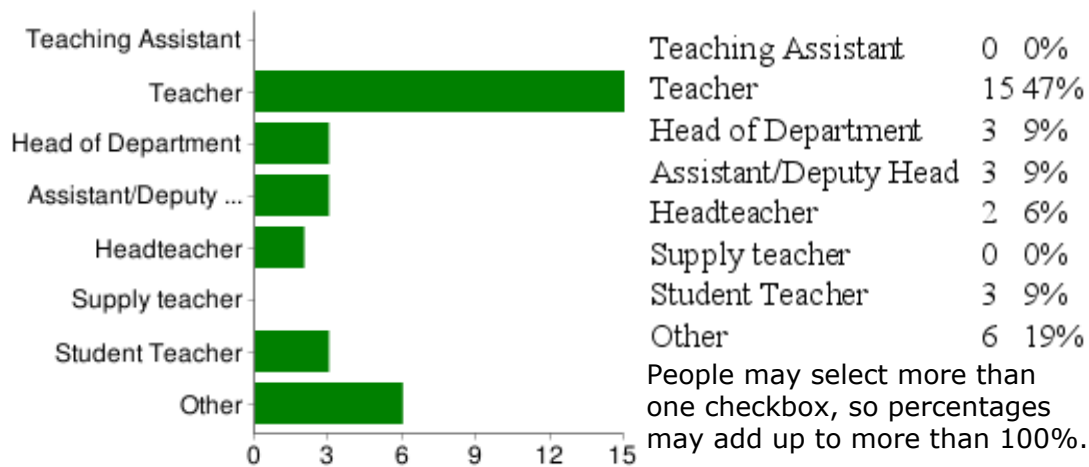


What type of school do you work in?



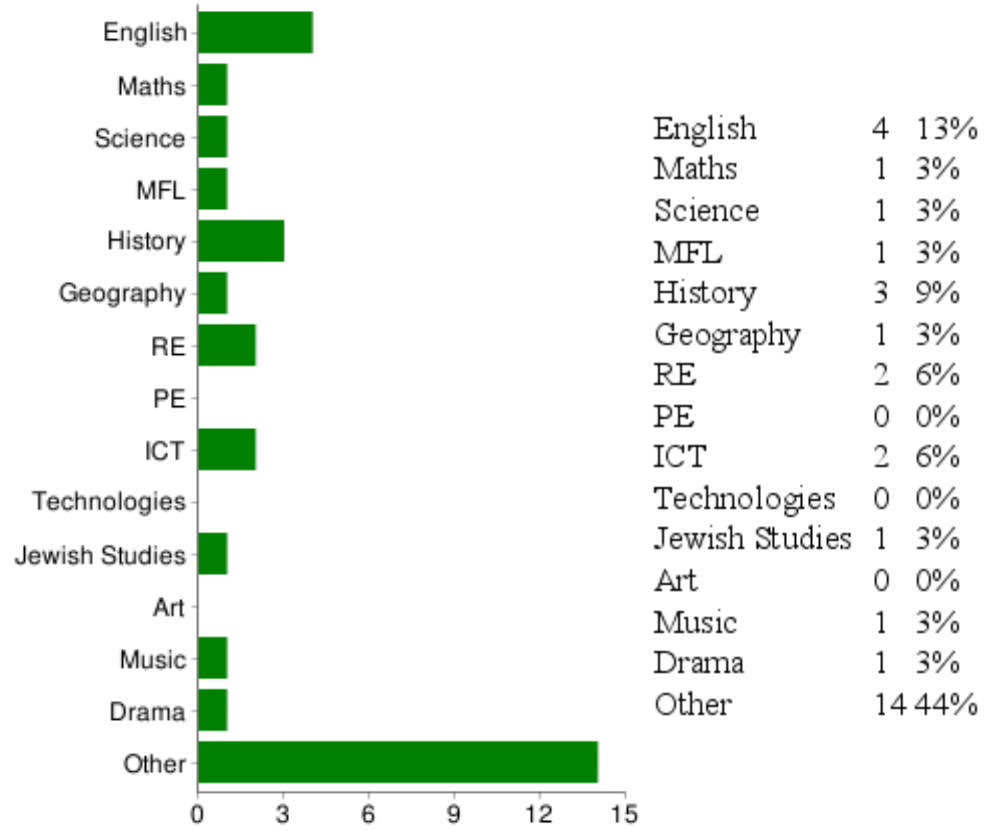
may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Position in school



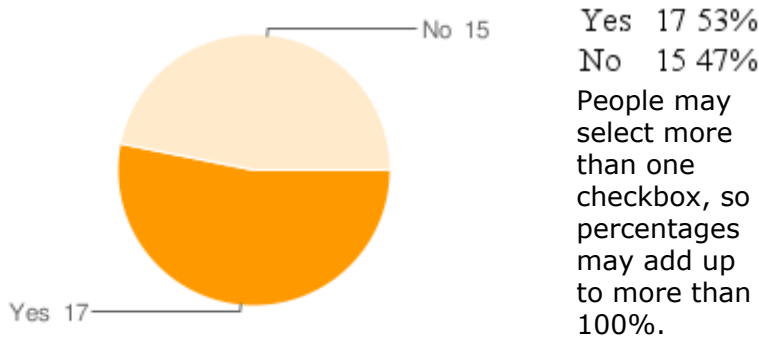
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Subject

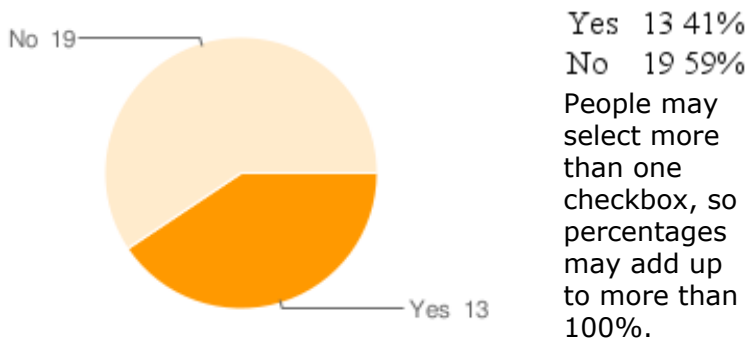


Appendix 2: Full Quantitative Results of Survey

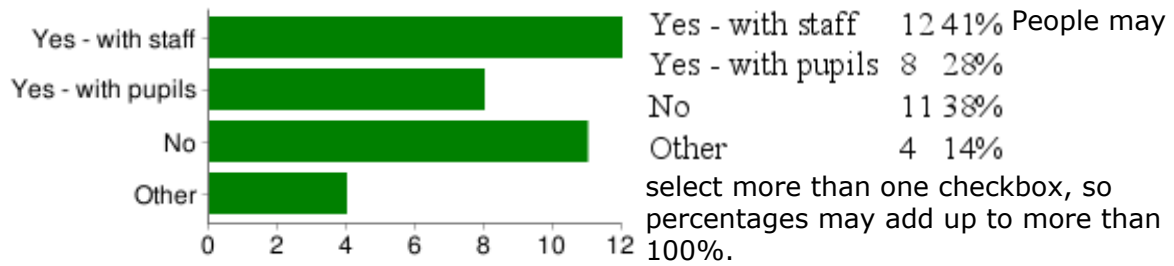
Has the current conflict been discussed in your staff room?



Have pupils discussed the current conflict?



Have you felt comfortable discussing issues regarding the conflict?



How well informed do you feel about the current conflict?

