



The War in Israel

GUIDANCE FOR HEADTEACHERS

The current heightened security alert is inevitably having an impact on all stakeholders within the school. It is therefore important to consider the impact the current situation is having and ensure that for each of the key groups there is a coherent and consistent message.

Below we have suggested some of the aspects and considerations that should be considered.

School Leadership

As a priority, all Senior Leaders must be aware of the security and safety procedures within their school including the critical incident policy. They must be given clear areas of responsibility and understand that a critical part of their role is to always present an aura of calm and control.

Pupils

We sometimes assume that younger children are protected from the difficulties we are facing. However, too often they are the most severely impacted. Even the youngest children will have heard about the tragedies in Israel, often through rumour and whisper and in an uncontrolled fashion. They pick up on the concerns of the teachers and the murmuring of their parents. Even older students are finding this situation unsettling and scary, and this has been exacerbated by the use of social media spread by Hamas to increase fear and terror.

These fears should not be dismissed but need to be recognised and addressed with sensitivity. Teachers should discuss these concerns in an age-appropriate way, reinforcing the message that the UK government and police are working to ensure our safety and security.

This may also be an opportunity to raise the concept of British Values and that a cornerstone of our society is the freedom of religion and a right for everyone to live in safety.

Parents

In many regards dealing with parents can be one of the most challenging aspects. Their priority, quite rightly, is the safety of their children.

Our best advice would be to ensure they are kept informed of the increased precautions put in place. You can reassure them that you are working with professionals in this area, namely the police, CST and your security team, in order to ensure the safety of your students. Together with the CST we will be hosting an event for parents, on zoom, focusing on emotional and physical safety for your children at this time. Please ensure promotion of this event is shared widely with your parent body.

It is worth emphasising that they also have a role to play. This would include being vigilant and reporting anything suspicious to the Police or the CST, showing consideration to the guidance and direction of the security guards when collecting and dropping off children, making sure they have an appointment before coming to the school, and contributing towards the increased security costs.



It is crucial to be sensitive to our children's feelings, no matter how old they are.

As parents and teachers, we need to stay connected. We must be present, to create a warm and open space for conversation. Our children's responses are based on how we react to the situation.

It is important to maintain a normal routine at home and in school. As adults, we must show that we are in control. Minimise exposure to the press. Turn off the television, put the newspapers away and encourage young people to stay off social media. These are means that terrorists use to instil fear in us.

Staff

The impact of working in a school under heightened security supervision can be very unsettling. It is therefore very important that your staff are reassured, and the message is constantly reinforced that there are no specific threats against our schools, and that the actions taken ensure we are all working in a safe and secure environment. We need to ensure that our staff are supported with Employee Assistance Programmes and with guidance on self-care where necessary. Please circulate the free phone number for The Education Support Free Helpline who will offer emotional support to anyone working in the educational sector. The number is 08000 562 561.

Governors

It is important to appreciate that you are not alone, and the governors share your responsibilities in having a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupils and the staff. Governors should be encouraged to support the leadership of the school and to be present, in order to help reassure parents and staff.

They can also play a role in sharing the burden of meetings with police and the CST and in the communication with parents.

Headteachers

This is a very hard time for Headteachers.

In many ways it is true that the more challenging the situation, the calmer and more controlled you must be. However, it is also important to know that you are not alone, and you do have support. Headteachers are not trained experts in security or psychological matters, and you are not expected to have all the answers.

PaJeS are creating a dedicated page on our website to guide and support staff and parents in how to respond to the current situation. Please contact us if you need any further information.

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