

Five Steps: Addressing Antisemitic Incidents in Schools



Mr Vic Alhadeff

Former CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and a consultant to schools on leadership that addresses prejudice.



Five Steps

The following steps are recommended by Vic Alhadeff, a consultant to schools addressing prejudice-based bullying incidents.

Step #1.

Own the problem.

If something untoward happens, own the problem. This means acknowledging that there is an issue and that it needs to be dealt with. Honestly, fearlessly. Doing so will reflect positively – not negatively – on the school.



Step #2.

Provide support to the victim.

Ensure that the student who has been targeted feels supported. This means meeting privately with the student within 24 hours of the incident and conveying that support. And it means reaching out to the student's parents to assure them that the issue is being taken seriously and that their child's welfare is of paramount importance.

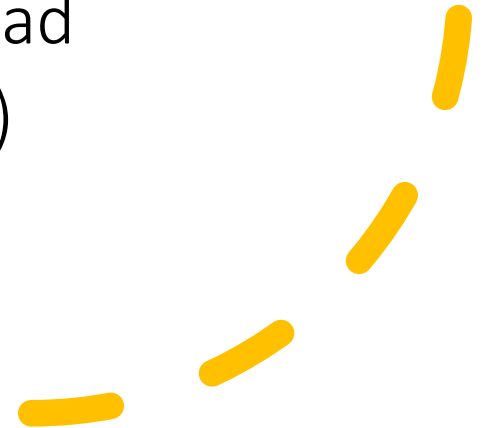


Step #3.

Send a clear message to the student body.

A message has to be communicated to students that such incidents are not tolerated by the school and that they have serious consequences.

(If there are no consequences, this too will send a message: e.g., you can spread antisemitism and get away with it.)



Step #4.

Respond to the offender.

Three components to a response:

Punitive. Help the offender to understand that our poor choices have consequences; e.g., temporary suspension, or demotion from a leadership position.

Remedial. Connect with the student on a personal level so that the student understands the hurt caused by his/her words or actions.

Educational. Putting in place measures that focus on the historical aspects of the offence; e.g., if the offensive conduct relates to the Nazis, taking steps to educate about who the Nazis were and what they did to real human beings.

Step #5.

Keep well-maintained records.

Keep a detailed record of the incident in a centralised log, separate from records of other forms of misbehaviour, even when the offender(s) cannot be identified.


Ensure that each incident is reported up the chain to the designated contact person in the relevant diocesan or other school system.

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Remember.

Look for opportunities.

If dealt with well, such incidents can be turned into life-changing opportunities to develop leadership and empathy. Maintain this as your end goal: unlocking the positive potential in all involved and creating opportunities for growth and learning.

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Consultant

Leadership addressing prejudice



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Vic Alhadeff

Vic Alhadeff was CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies for 17 years.

Today he works closely with school leaders and staff; he meets with students who have engaged in antisemitic conduct and speaks on the importance of leadership that addresses prejudice.

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Contact Vic for:

- A confidential discussion about an issue of concern relating to antisemitic or other prejudice-based bullying.
- A meeting with students, parents and/or teachers concerning an antisemitic incident.
- Presentations to students and staff on leadership: the courage to take a principled stand, to respect difference and to refrain from being a bystander in the face of prejudice and bigotry.



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