

INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Committee Secretariat
Inquiry into antisemitism in New South Wales
Parliament of New South Wales
6 Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000

Subject: Antisemitism in NSW Schools

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the rise of antisemitism in NSW, particularly in school environments. As a parent of children attending a K–12 school in NSW, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of antisemitic incidents on young students and their families in the last 18 months.

At our school, swastikas were drawn in several locations, including one instance where the words “*Kill the Jews*” were written in German (please see images below). My children have been directly subjected to vile comments including being told that “Jews need to be killed,” and, in one particularly disturbing incident, several students had a discussion about my son being Jewish and that “he should be gassed”.

The hostility extended beyond verbal abuse. There were social media posts involving students from the school. One showed a student mimicking the act of shooting someone while stating what he intended to do to “Zionists”. My children and other Jewish students were told that “people like them” should have separate places. The message was clear: they were not welcome.

This created an extremely hostile and unsafe environment. My children felt anxious and exhausted by the ongoing harassment. One of my sons, who is still in primary school, became so frightened that he no longer wanted to attend school. He was constantly on edge, afraid that if someone approached him, they might hurt him. He became very quiet and withdrawn, afraid to speak in public. Out of fear that anything might reveal his Jewish identity, even though there was nothing visible on his clothing, he began wearing his shirts inside out. It was a clear sign of how unsafe and unsupported he felt at school.

Despite raising these incidents with the school, the response was deeply disappointing and has not been sufficient to ensure our children’s safety or well-being. The school appeared to be overly tolerant of the behaviour, refusing to name the issue as antisemitism. Even after my children courageously provided the names of the students involved, no investigation was undertaken, and no consequences were issued.

Instead, the school held a town hall meeting where they broadly discussed racism, but avoided mentioning antisemitism altogether. The examples provided during the meeting were not relevant, making the session confusing, dismissive, and ultimately unhelpful. Rather than feeling seen or supported, my children came away feeling even more isolated. This left them with the troubling impression that those responsible for keeping them safe either did not understand the seriousness of what had happened, or simply didn’t care.

At one point, the school principal even told my son that he did not need to inform staff each time a new swastika appeared, that my son could simply remove it himself. This response was deeply concerning. It placed the burden of addressing hateful and distressing acts on a child, rather than treating the incident as a serious matter that required a formal and immediate response. No student should be expected to handle hate symbols or manage the emotional weight of antisemitic incidents on their own. Such acts should be recognised and addressed as hate incidents, investigated properly, and followed up with appropriate support and accountability.

It was only when a new principal was appointed that real action was taken. This change in leadership marked the first time that the concerns of Jewish students and families were treated with the seriousness and care they deserved. The new principal acknowledged the severity of the incidents and took immediate steps to address them. She communicated openly with the school community, sending an email to all parents to inform them of the situation and making it clear that any future incidents involving hate speech or antisemitism would be referred to the police. She also ensured that the incidents were properly investigated and that appropriate consequences were applied to the students involved. This was the turning point when the situation began to improve — but it came only after many months of ongoing distress and harm.

Antisemitism has no place in NSW schools or society. Education should foster inclusion, respect, and understanding, yet the experiences of Jewish students suggest that more needs to be done. I urge the Committee to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Stronger policies and enforcement** – Schools should implement clear, enforceable policies against antisemitism, ensuring that any incidents are taken seriously and addressed promptly.
2. **Mandatory education on antisemitism** – Training for teachers and educational programs for students should be introduced to increase awareness and prevent discrimination.
3. **Support for affected students** – Schools should have a structured approach to supporting students who experience antisemitism, ensuring their safety and well-being.
4. **Accountability and oversight** – There should be an independent mechanism to monitor and assess schools' responses to antisemitic incidents.

I appreciate the Committee's attention to this critical issue and urge you to take meaningful steps to ensure NSW schools remain safe and inclusive for all students. Thank you for considering my submission, and I would be grateful for any opportunity to further discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Images documenting Swastika at the School:

