

Supporting Jewish Students on Campus: A Practical Guide

Introductory Message from the Shamor Committee:

At the *Shamor Committee of the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore (RSNS)*, we are committed to helping Jewish students thrive on campus while maintaining their safety, dignity, and identity. College should be a place of learning, growth, and exploration—not fear or exclusion. RSNS, in conjunction with its clergy, is a key community connection to your Jewish identity, which can provide an envelope of protection to help students navigate Antisemitism on the college campus.

This guide equips students with practical tools, clear information, and supportive resources to:

- Recognize and confront Antisemitism
- Protect emotional and spiritual well-being
- Engage constructively with peers, faculty, and administrators
- Build supportive networks and allies
- Report to both internal and external sources when students feel it is necessary

Table of Contents:

1. Welcome
2. Understanding Antisemitism on Campus
3. Responding in the Moment: Practical Strategies
4. Advocacy & Institutional Channels
5. Israel, Zionism, and Campus Tensions
6. Emotional & Spiritual Resilience
7. Building Allies & Community
8. Resources & Contacts

Section 1: Welcome

You Are Not Alone: College should be a place of growth, learning, and belonging. For many Jewish students, however, there can be times of discomfort or fear related to Antisemitism.

Program Mission:

- Help students feel safe, valued, and respected
- Equip students with practical tools to recognize and respond to Antisemitism
- Encourage education, dialogue, and accountability
- Empower students to take concrete steps when incidents occur

Key: You are not alone! Support and guidance are available, both on campus and through your community and external networks.

Section 2: Understanding Antisemitism on Campus

Definition (Non-Political): Antisemitism is prejudice, hostility, threats, or discrimination directed at Jews as Jews, their identity, culture, or institutions.

Campus Examples:

- Negative stereotypes, slurs, or jokes
- Social exclusion or intimidation
- Vandalism or threats
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions they did not take

Israel-Related Speech:

Criticism of Israeli government policy is not automatically Antisemitic, but it can become Antisemitic if it:

- Holds all Jews responsible for Israel's actions
- Promotes conspiracy theories
- Uses Antisemitic tropes or symbols
- Targets Jewish students or institutions

Section 3: Responding in the Moment: Practical Strategies

Pause & Assess: Is it safe? Is it directed at you personally? Do you want to engage now?

Three Response Paths:

1. Address briefly
2. Redirect or de-escalate
3. Disengage and document

Sample Language:

- **Classroom:** “I’m uncomfortable with how Jews are being spoken about here”
- **Peers:** “I’m not responsible for defending or condemning a government”
- **Social media:** Screenshot, mute, or report; respond only if safe

Key: Setting boundaries is a valid and effective response, as is temporarily unplugging from hostile social media.

After the Moment:

- Document the incident
- Talk with a trusted person
- Consider reporting

Key: Reporting Matters! Documenting and reporting incidents creates a record, triggers institutional obligations, and protects you and others.

Documentation Best Practices

What to Document:

1. Date and time of incident (be specific)
2. Exact location (building, room number, online platform)
3. Detailed description of what happened
4. Direct quotes when possible
5. Names and contact info of witnesses and perpetrators
6. Photos / screenshots of evidence (graffiti, social media posts, flyers)
7. Your response and any immediate actions taken
8. Physical/emotional impact on you
9. Any prior related incidents (establish pattern)

How to Document:

- Write it down immediately while details are fresh
- Save all evidence (don't delete emails, messages, or posts)
- Screenshot with timestamps visible
- Keep a dedicated folder/file for all related materials
- Make copies before submitting to anyone
- Create a timeline if incidents are ongoing
- Note who you reported to and when (for follow-up)

Section 4: Advocacy & Institutional Channels

Campus Roles:

- Dean of Students / Student Affairs
- Bias Response Team / Equity & Inclusion Office
- Title VI / Civil Rights Office
- Campus Security / Campus Police
- Faculty / Advisors

Advocacy Steps:

1. Be clear and specific
2. Put things in writing
3. Ask direct questions
4. Bring support

Quick Guide Table

Situation	First Contact
Classroom comment	Professor → Department → Dean
Bias / harassment	Bias Response Team / Student Affairs
Discrimination pattern	Title VI / Civil Rights
Threats / vandalism	Campus Police
Unsure	Dean of Students/Campus Ombudsman

Key: Persistence.

Section 5: Israel, Zionism, and Campus Tensions

Key Principles:

- Jewish students are not obligated to take a position on Israel; however, you do have the right to express your positions without fear of Antisemitic response
- Political debate becomes harmful when it targets Jewish students or spaces
- You are allowed to set boundaries and exit hostile conversations

Examples of Response:

- “I’m not here to represent a government”
- “I’m extremely uncomfortable with sweeping generalizations about Jews”

Report When:

- Jewish students are targeted or excluded
- Harassment is repeated or escalates
- Spaces are disrupted
- Antisemitic language or imagery is used

Section 6: Emotional & Spiritual Resilience

Recognize Reactions:

- Anxiety, isolation, anger, or exhaustion are normal
- Documenting and talking about experiences is important

Practical Strategies:

- Stay connected to Jewish and other supportive communities
- Take breaks from social media or stressful environments
- Use spiritual or reflective practices if meaningful

Seek Additional Support:

- Campus counseling
- Hillel / Jewish student groups
- Community rabbis or mentors
- Home clergy

Key: Resilience does not mean ignoring pain; it means holding pride alongside challenge. You should be proud to be Jewish and need not shy away from that pride.

Section 7: Building Allies & Community

Allies:

- Recognize Antisemitism
- Support you even without speaking for you
- Can be peers, faculty, or student leaders

Steps to Build Allies:

1. Identify safe people
2. Communicate expectations
3. Collaborate on initiatives
4. Maintain boundaries

Examples:

- Invite peers to educational events
- Participate in interfaith dialogues
- Support campus-wide anti-bias campaigns

Section 8: Resources & Contacts

Campus Resources Table

Resource	Purpose	How to Access	Typical Contact Approach
Dean of Students / Office of Student Affairs	Handles student conduct, campus climate, and coordination	Office visit, email, or online form	Check campus website for office email address and phone number
Bias Response Team / Office of Equity & Inclusion	Tracks bias incidents, responds to harassment	Online reporting or office visit	Use online form or email office staff
Title VI / Civil Rights Office	Handles discrimination complaints (race, ethnicity, ancestry)	Formal complaint submission via campus office or online	Check campus Civil Rights / Title VI webpage
Campus Security / Campus Police	Threats, vandalism, or safety issues	Emergency line or campus security desk	Call emergency line or campus security number
Hillel / Jewish Student Organization	Peer support, mentorship, cultural and social programming	Visit office, email staff, or check website	Email or office phone per local Hillel info
Trusted Faculty or Advisors	Guidance and advocacy support	Identify faculty/advisors you trust	Email or office visit per campus directory

External Reporting & Support Table

Organization	Purpose	How to Access	Typical Contact Approach
Local Law Enforcement	Immediate threats, assault, vandalism	Call 911 (emergency) or non-emergency line	Local police department numbers
U.S. Dept of Education, Office of Civil Rights	File civil rights complaints under Title VI	Online complaint submission	https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)	Education, reporting incidents, advocacy	Online portal, hotline, or local office	https://www.adl.org
Local Synagogues / Jewish Federations	Guidance, mentorship, community support	Visit or email local offices	Check local directory
Campus Legal Aid / Advocacy Groups	Legal advice or guidance on student rights	Contact via campus office or website	Email / phone per campus info

Key: Use Documentation Best Practices.

Emotional & Peer Support Table

Support Type	Purpose	How to Access	Typical Contact Approach
Campus Counseling Services	Confidential emotional support	Schedule appointment via campus center	Campus counseling website / email / phone
Hillel / Jewish Student Groups	Peer mentoring and community support	Visit office or email staff	Local Hillel contact info
Community Rabbis / Mentors	Spiritual guidance, pastoral support	Contact local synagogue or mentor	Email / phone per synagogue directory
National Jewish Support Hotlines	Guidance for serious incidents or advice	Call hotline or online	ADL Hotline or other regional hotlines, Report Campus Hate
Rabbi Jodie Siff & Cantor Eric Schulmiller	Reassure connection, spiritual guidance, pastoral support	Text, Call, Email	RabbiJodie@RSNS.org 516-314-7107 CantorEric@RSNS.org 917-312-6725

Key: Keep this chart accessible—knowing the right resource in advance helps you respond quickly and confidently.

Note:

Antisemitism is not confined to any single point on the political spectrum—it manifests across both left and right-wing movements, though often in different forms. On the far right, antisemitism has historically appeared through explicit racial hatred, conspiracy theories about Jewish control, and white supremacist ideology. On the left, it can emerge through the demonization of Israel that crosses into antisemitic tropes about Jewish power, the exclusion of Jewish voices from progressive spaces, or the downplaying of Jewish concerns about real discrimination.

Experiencing Antisemitism is deeply painful. It strikes at your sense of safety, your identity, and your belonging in spaces that should welcome you. Whether it's a comment in class, exclusion from campus activities, or hateful graffiti, these incidents can leave you feeling isolated, anxious, and questioning whether you can be fully yourself on campus. The hurt is real, and your feelings are valid.

You don't have to face this alone. RSNS is here for you—as a source of support, guidance, and community. Staying connected to our vibrant Jewish community can be a strong antidote to troubles we all encounter on this issue. Whether you need someone to talk to, help navigating reporting processes, or simply a reminder that you are valued and supported, our Shamor Committee, clergy, and congregation stand with you. Reach out to us anytime. RabbiJodie@RSNS.org, Cantoreic@RSNS.org, Lgreengrass1234@gmail.com

We are your home away from home, and we are committed to ensuring that every Jewish student can thrive with dignity, safety, and pride in who they are.