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Bohunt Horsham Headteacher: Ms G Ayling BA (Hons)

19 October 2023

Dear Bohunt Horsham Families

RE: Israel/Palestine Conflict

I am sure you have all been saddened by the current events in the news regarding the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It is natural that our students will have questions and be concerned by these events and some of us also have family or friends who are personally affected. At times such as this I know members of our school community can provide a support to one another and offer understanding and compassion to those who are affected.

The history of the conflict is long and complex and trying to summarise it for students into a few minutes or even a lesson would be doing them, and the people affected, a disservice. However, here at school we are also aware that talking to students about current events such as this is very important and supports our duty to promote fundamental British Values. It is also very important for us to remain within Section 406 and 407 of the Education Act regarding partisan materials in schools and the political impartiality guidance issued to schools in Feb 2022. To this end we have issued guidance and reminders to colleagues across the school.

The Home Secretary has sent a letter to all schools and spoken to police chiefs making it clear that Hamas is a banned organisation in the UK. Of course in schools we must be aware of both anti-Semitic and islamophobic behaviour and any instance of these must be dealt with as school policy determines. As always with concerns in school, your child's form tutor is the first port of call to report any concerns.

I believe it is also important to address that unfortunately as is always the case at times like this, cases of anti-Semitism and islamophobia increase across the country. There is a possibility that this could spill over into our school and staff have been reminded to be particularly conscious and watchful over students and to report any concerns in school in the normal ways. This will include, but not be limited to, being vigilant for any signs of tension between pupils such as graffiti, name calling, abuse or bullying and take appropriate action immediately.

I am particularly concerned about the possibility that our students may accidentally, or through seeking answers to questions they have about this conflict, be exposed to distressingly graphic or violent images. These are currently being shared online by mainstream news organisations and by social media users. In reading about current events recently online I myself saw very, very upsetting content. Now, perhaps more than ever, I urge families to review the boundaries for internet access you have at home and to consider, if you don't already, reading through your child's histories online and social media feeds. There is some useful advice from mental health charity, Young Minds [here](#) and from online safety charity, Childnet [here](#).

Proud to be part of the Bohunt Education Trust

enjoy respect achieve

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Ayling', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ms G Ayling
Headteacher