

2 (cont'd)

- If you have exhausted the chain of command without satisfactory results, go to your school board members! They are there to act as “air traffic controllers” for school-based issues experienced by the families in their district.
- Contact information for Orange County school board members can be found at www.ocps.net. Click on “School Board” at the top of the page. The schools within each member’s district are listed on the web page for that district.
- In Seminole County, school board members are elected at-large. You can find contact information at www.scps.k12.fl.us/district/school-board.
- Complete the enclosed JCRC Resource Card for Parents and keep it in a handy location (you can download additional copies at www.jfgo.org/jcrc). This card will serve as a valuable resource if you have questions, need to contact a school official or teacher, or need to report a serious incident that may require the assistance of law enforcement, the ADL, JCRC and others.

3 Help train your child to stand up for herself or himself when appropriate.

- Encourage your child to have associations with Jewish friends through youth groups, summer camp, volunteer opportunities, and other means. These friends will provide an invaluable support group should incidents or uncomfortable situations occur.

Take Action

In cases where anti-Semitic threats or racist graffiti are involved, **contact law enforcement immediately**. Please also **contact JCRC**, as we can advocate on your behalf with local government, local media, and the **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**, which many federal, state, and local agencies rely on for tracking and responding to these incidents. **The Holocaust Center** is also available to work directly with principals or school administrators to organize training and workshops for school faculty, staff and students.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Non-Emergency Law Enforcement:
Dial 311 or Download the 311 App

Emergency Law Enforcement
(imminent threat):
Dial 911

Jewish Community Relations Council
407-645-5933, ext. 233

Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
561-988-2944

Holocaust Memorial
Resource & Education Center
407-628-0555



www.jfgo.org/jcrc

5

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO
ADVOCATE
FOR YOUR
JEWISH CHILD
IN SCHOOL



Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando
851 North Maitland Avenue
Maitland, FL 32751
(407) 645-5933
www.jfgo.org

These guidelines will help you navigate issues of cultural sensitivity and holiday observances with your child's school.

You are your child's best advocate!

1 **Talk to teachers at the beginning of the school year.**

- Bring teachers a copy of the 7-Year Holiday Calendar, available at www.jfgo.org/jcrc.
- Request make-up assignments in advance of the holidays when your child will be absent from school. Remind teachers that holidays may not end until late into the evening on the night before your child returns to school, and request that ample time be given for make-up assignments or test preparation.
- Offer to partner with teachers to create a classroom environment that respects the identities of all students.
- Offer to connect teachers to JCRC for recommendations on workshops, online learning modules, and other media that can assist with issues of cultural sensitivity.

2 **Determine and get to know the “chain of command” for your child’s school.**

- At most schools, the chain is Classroom Teacher >> Assistant Principal or Dean >> Principal >> Mid-level District Administrator. When (or before) an issue arises, we recommend that you always start with the Classroom Teacher.

3 **(cont'd from inside flap)**

- Work with your congregation to offer age-appropriate sessions for children on responding to incidents of bias, either during religious school or youth group meeting times.
- If your child is middle school age or older and his or her school does not participate in the Holocaust Center's Upstanders program, contact the Center at **407-628-0555** to learn how to bring the program to your school.
- Read and discuss books with your child about anti-Semitism. ADL's Books Matter (found at www.ADL.org) is a great resource that includes books on other identity-based biases as well. The books are listed by topic and age, and some offer discussion guides for parents.
- Review and print out ADL's *5 Tips for Talking With Children About Hate Incidents* and *Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate*. Both are linked at www.jfgo.org/jcrc.

4 **Know the laws.**

- The line between church and state became blurred with the 2017 “Florida Student and School Personnel Religious Liberties Act.” Under this law, schools and school districts must allow religious activities before, during, and after school hours. Schools are also now required to allow the voluntary expression of religious viewpoints by students at school-sponsored assemblies. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

allows for religious expression already; this law conjoined public education and religion and does not protect religious minorities. Be extra vigilant and contact JCRC if you have concerns about how this law is being implemented at your child's school.

- The First Amendment and the Blaine Amendment both allow for public schools to teach about religion, but not teach religion itself. Context is everything; it is not only what is said, but how it is said.
- It is appropriate to discuss different cultures and communities in civics, geography, history, music, art and foreign language classes.
- Teaching about a holiday is permissible, but celebrating the holiday is not.

5 **Get involved!**

- Parents can serve on the school calendar committee in Orange County. Contact your school board member to find out more.
- Seminole County residents should contact their school board members to determine ways to act in an advisory capacity for the calendar committee.
- Some schools also have grievance committees; determine if your school has one.
- Join JCRC! We are always looking for passionate and effective people who can help ensure a positive learning environment for all of our children.