



York College Antisemitism Statement

York College is committed to promoting and advancing equality and to an inclusive and cohesive community. We do this because it aligns closely with our own values. We stand firmly against all forms of discrimination, and consider that such prejudice has no place in the College community and actively work to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals.

We do not tolerate Anti-Semitism, nor do we tolerate any other discrimination on grounds of race or religion, including anti-Muslim, anti-Christian and anti-Hindu prejudice. We are committed to addressing all forms of hate and bias.

What is Antisemitism?

We have adopted the definition of Antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA):

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

How might this manifest in practice?

Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools and colleges, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

(this list is not exhaustive – each action will be considered on its own merits)

Conflation of Criticism of Israel with prejudice against Jews

We recognise the potential for conflation of criticism of the state of Israel, with prejudice against Jews. The Israel-Palestine conflict is rooted in political struggles over land, self-determination, and human rights, not religious differences.

Criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country should not by itself be regarded as antisemitic. In much the same way as criticism of say Saudi Arabia or Iran for perceived human rights abuses should not be conflated with Muslims or be perceived to be an attack on Muslims.

Commitment to Freedom of Speech

York College affirms its commitment to freedom of speech without allowing anti-Semitism to permeate any debate.

It is perfectly reasonable for staff and students to be critical of the Israeli state and it does not necessarily follow that such criticism implies prejudice against Jews.

This is reinforced by the Home Affairs Committee which said that:

- “it is not anti-Semitic to criticise the Government of Israel without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent”, and
- “it is not anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli government to the same standard as other liberal democracies, or to take particular interest in the Israeli government’s policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.”

Similarly, it is not prejudice for staff and students to be critical of majority Muslim/Christian/Hindu etc states and not be regarded as being prejudiced against a particular religion.

Reporting a concern

Staff or students wishing make an allegation of antisemitism should report their concerns to either the Director of Human Resources (staff) or Director of Student and Apprentice Services (students) in the first instance. They will investigate and provide feedback. If the person making the allegation is not satisfied with the response, they can report this to the Director of Governance who will investigate.

Staff or students affected by acts of antisemitism can access support via established College support mechanisms. This may include counselling where appropriate.

Approved by the College’s Governing Body on 10th July 2025