

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

Contents

Home Affairs
Israel

Other Relevant Information
Relevant Legislation
Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Religion: Education

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [3150] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the merits of including religious education in the national curriculum.

Nick Gibb: Religious education (RE) must be taught by every state funded school to pupils up to the age of 18.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to support the activities of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and publish an agreed syllabus for maintained schools without a religious designation in their local area. Maintained schools with a religious designation and academies are not required to follow the agreed syllabus, although it can act as a useful benchmark for their curriculum planning.

SACRE membership must include representatives of the area's principal faith groups, teachers and from the local authority. This contributes to securing the confidence of local communities and enables the SACRE to take account of the circumstances of each area in creating an agreed syllabus that has regard to local context.

The Government does not have any current plans to remove the duty on local authorities to establish SACREs and include RE in the National Curriculum.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-05/3150/>

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [3151] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to include (a) antisemitism and (b) Islamophobia in the personal, social and health education curriculum.

Nick Gibb: The Government is committed to tackling religious discrimination and racism, and to ensure that we have an inclusive society where everyone is treated with respect and fairness.

The National Curriculum provides many opportunities to raise awareness of racial and religious diversity and tolerance. Good quality religious education can develop pupils' knowledge of the values and traditions of Britain and other

countries, and foster understanding among different faiths and cultures. Religious education remains compulsory for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all Key Stages.

Holocaust education is a mandatory topic in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for history. This can be used to explore issues such as anti semitism and attitudes and hate crimes related to other races and faiths.

Teaching about discrimination can also be included as part of the statutory programme of study for citizenship education at ages 11-16 in maintained schools.

Schools are also already expected to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and, as part of this, fundamental British values, including the values of mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is at the heart of their responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Schools are free to teach about religious discrimination as well as racism in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, where pupils can reflect on and challenge notions of prejudice.

The Children and Social Work Act (2017) allows the Secretary of State for Education to make PSHE education, or elements therein, mandatory in all schools in England, subject to careful consideration. The Department will be conducting a thorough engagement process on the scope and content of PSHE, involving a wide range of interested stakeholders. We will set out more details shortly about the engagement process and the work to consider subject content.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-05/3151/>

Prisons: Education

Ellie Reeves (Labour) [3452] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what programmes his Department sponsors across the prison system to educate prisoners against (a) racism, (b) anti-Semitism, (c) Islamophobia and (d) homophobia.

Sam Gyimah: All new prisoners go through a local induction programme that promotes tolerance for protected characteristics. It also advises on the process for reporting incidents in prison that might be considered hate crimes through the prisoner complaint system or to prison staff. The Thinking Skills Programme encourages participants to develop pro-social attitudes and manage relationships with other people. There are no specific sponsored programmes for educating prisoners on these issues.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-06/3452/>

Prisoners: Rehabilitation

Ellie Reeves (Labour) [3463] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which organisations have been given clearance to run educational activities on hate crime, racism or discrimination as part of prisoner rehabilitation work.

Sam Gyimah: There are currently no external organisations delivering specific educational activities on Hate Crime, racism or discrimination as part of prisoner rehabilitation work.

All new prisoners go through a local induction programme that promotes tolerance for protected characteristics. It also advises on the process for reporting incidents in prison that might be considered hate crimes through the prisoner complaint system or to prison staff.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-06/3463/>

TOP

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Minister for the Middle East statement on the terror attack in Jerusalem

Foreign Office minister Alistair Burt said: I strongly condemn the horrific terror attack in Jerusalem. I am saddened and appalled by this despicable act and offer my condolences to the victims and their families. The UK continues to stand with Israel against terrorism.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-the-terror-attack-in-jerusalem>

United Nations

Secretary-General Condemns Deadly Attack on Israeli Police Officers in Jerusalem

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres: The Secretary-General condemns this morning's attack by three assailants in the Old City of Jerusalem in which two Israeli police officers were killed and another injured. This incident has the potential to ignite further violence. All must act responsibly to avoid escalation.

The thoughts and prayers of the Secretary-General are with the families of the victims, and he wishes a speedy recovery to the injured.

The Secretary-General welcomes the swift condemnation of this attack by Palestinian President Abbas and the assurances by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu that the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem will be respected. The sanctity of religious sites should be respected as places for reflection, not violence.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sgsm18610.doc.htm>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

Campaign Against Antisemitism

New report by CAA shows that antisemitic crime suited 44% in the last two years, but charging and prosecution dropped to only 15 prosecutions last year

New figures obtained from all UK police forces by Campaign Against Antisemitism for its National Antisemitic Crime Audit show that hate crime targeting Jews has escalated for the third year running, reaching the worst level on record.

- Antisemitic hate crime has surged 44% since 2014, making 2016 the worst year on record
- 1 in 10 antisemitic crimes were violent but only one violent antisemitic crime was prosecuted in 2016
- Almost half of police forces did not charge a single one of the antisemitic crimes reported to them
- Only 1.4% of antisemitic crime was prosecuted — just 15 cases last year
- The Home Secretary has issued a statement promising to “consider the report’s recommendations carefully” ...

In a statement, the Rt Hon. Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, responded to the report, saying: “Hate crime of any type is not acceptable. Everyone in this country has the right to be safe from violence and persecution. We are working together to tackle antisemitic hate crime in all its forms and using the full force of the law to protect every person in the UK. Our Hate Crime Action Plan has encouraged further action against hate crime

across the police and criminal justice system. This includes encouraging more victims to report incidents to the police. We will consider the report's recommendations carefully as we develop new ways to rid the country of this sickening crime." ...

To read the full press release see

https://antisemitism.uk/new-report-by-caa-shows-that-antisemitic-crime-surged-44-in-the-last-two-years-but-charging-and-prosecution-dropped-to-only-15-prosecutions-last-year/?mc_cid=8649167a32&mc_eid=a94f096a6b

National Antisemitic Crime Audit 2016

<https://antisemitism.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/National-Antisemitic-Crime-Audit-2016-1.pdf>

United Nations

Faith central to hope and resilience, highlights UN chief, launching initiative to combat atrocities

Voicing concern over the abuse of religion to justify incitement to violence and discrimination, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today underscored the importance of religious leaders in preventing violence and contributing to peace and stability.

"Around the world, we see how [religion is being twisted](#) [and] cynically manipulated," stressed the Secretary-General today, speaking at the launch of an initiative to prevent atrocity crimes, which include [genocide](#), [crimes against humanity](#), and [war crimes](#).

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres cautioned against the proliferation of hate speech – both online and offline – and said that such messages spread hostility and hatred, and encourage populations to commit violence against individuals or communities, often based on their identity.

"Hate speech sows the seeds of suspicion, mistrust and intolerance [and] over time, it can play an important role in convincing people that violence is logical, justifiable, even necessary," added Mr. Guterres, joined by UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and a number of religious leaders from around the world.

Hate speech is one of the most common warning signs of atrocity crimes, Mr. Guterres said, noting that early action can be taken to prevent them from occurring and that religious leaders are key actors in that warning process.

Also in his remarks, Mr. Guterres highlighted the commitment expressed in the *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes* to promote peace, understanding, mutual respect and the fundamental rights of all people. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57183#.WWuug9OGOY>

TOP

Relevant Legislation

** new or updated today

UK Parliament

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Scottish Parliament

Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law (closing date 18 September 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

TOP

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438