



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Debate

#### Schools Bill Report Stage

*col 1774* **The Lord Bishop of Carlisle:** ...I turn now to Amendment 94, which would insert a new clause after Clause 50 and seeks to provide protection for the institution of home schooling against any undue or unfair interference. The proposed new clause would ensure that any contact between the local authorities and home-schoolers respects protected characteristics, as well as Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights, as in the Human Rights Act, in making sure that “the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

... the way in which this Bill is framed could be seen to cast a cloud of suspicion on all home educators. ... Some individuals opt for home schooling precisely because they disagree with certain materials being taught in school, when it conflicts with their deeply held beliefs. However, there is a difference between the state being prescriptive in trying to mould individuals into a specific world view and the liberal principle of allowing parents the right to determine the values and beliefs with which they want their children to be brought up. Many Christians, Muslims, Jews and people of all faiths or none home-school on account of this. What is important is the principle that the state does not have the right, under normal circumstances, to supersede the rights of the parents in determining how they ought to raise their child. ...

*col 1775* I suspect the Minister may argue that these provisions are unnecessary, as they are already contained in the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act, or are responding to things that do not currently exist in law. Nevertheless, a positive statement clearly outlining on what grounds interference is not acceptable, alongside a further commitment from the Government to reaffirm the fundamental principles of home schooling, would counter many of the underlying concerns home educators have about the implications of this Bill. ...

*col 1776* **Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated):** ... the cloud of suspicion being created that this is a potential assault on deeply held religious and philosophical freedoms is something we should all take seriously as democrats who support a free society. ...

I do not think it is a criticism of home educators that they do not trust the state or think that

it does not provide the kind of education that their ... child needs, or that they do not want someone to be exposed to the kind of materials in sex and relationship education ... which have been all over the news. These are reasonable philosophical ideas to hold; they, and religious freedom, are things that we should be protecting in this House. ...

*col 1777* **Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat):** ... Of course, the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle was right about parents' rights and values, but society has to make sure that, when children are in schools which are not subject to any checks or inspections, they are not being taught the most appalling practices, which Ofsted highlights in its reports. There have been a couple of cases where it has taken those schools to court and managed to close them down ... One such school, which was not unregistered, was a Christian school ...

*col 1808* **Lord Mendelsohn (Labour):** ... We have to remind ourselves that the issue of unregistered school settings and the claim that some people are home schooling in order to send children to such settings is a problem that we have long had. ... Section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 was established specifically to make sure that such settings were deemed unlawful. Unfortunately, we found that the law was so difficult to enforce that we have had a massive increase in the number of unregistered school settings, creating much more of the problem that we have had to deal with. Indeed, there have been only three prosecutions, and the first one took 10 years to take place. The number of schools that have been reported to Ofsted exceeds, I believe, a thousand. Hundreds have been identified by Ofsted but have been very difficult to deal with. Enforcement has been so poor that many schools deregistered to unregistered schools to avoid any form of regulation because they felt that they could operate in that way. ...

Departmental advice for collaborative working between the Department for Education, Ofsted and local authorities in March 2018 stated:

“Over recent times, we have seen a rise in the number of institutions operating outside the regulatory regime as unregistered independent schools; this involves a criminal offence and conduct that may be putting children at risk of harm, denying them a suitable education, and limiting their life chances. Tackling unregistered independent schools is a priority—and one that involves joint working and collaboration.” ...

Amendment 97A tries to deal with those who are enablers of the use of unregistered educational settings and who do not take a formal role in the structure of that educational setting. Such people may provide a facility or other forms of support, be that a location or funding that goes towards individuals who are providing these skills, but they structure it in a way that does not make them culpable in any way as an educational institution. ...

*col 1812* **Baroness Barran [Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education]:** ... We have worked with Ofsted to develop the package of measures to investigate illegal schools, to ensure that we can take effective action against unlawful behaviour. Since Ofsted started investigating unregistered schools in 2016, we have gained a much better understanding of how to tackle this sector. There have been six successful prosecutions. The number of cases investigated reflects an increase in efforts to investigate. The actual number of unregistered schools ... is unknown, sadly, but the measures in this Bill have been developed—working together with Ofsted—to address the key issues in the sector ...

*col 1813* We believe that Amendment 97A is not necessary as we can already prosecute companies and charities which are operating schools unlawfully. We already inform the Charity Commission when charities are prosecuted. Education and childcare behaviour orders will allow courts to prevent individuals from continuing to operate from buildings that have been used for illegal schools. When we were developing the measures, we also looked at whether it would be appropriate to create measures which would allow action against landlords, in the way that the noble Lord's amendment has set out. This is a very complex area, and we concluded that education and childcare behaviour orders, which

could prevent those convicted of an offence from continuing to operate from a given site, were the more appropriate mechanism. ...

Genuine part-time settings are not under a statutory obligation to register ... There is ongoing engagement between the department, Ofsted and other stakeholders on the effectiveness of measures to tackle unregistered schools. ...

*col 1816* **Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench):** ... When teaching British values was first introduced in 2015, some people here will remember that it met with quite a lot of opposition. That opposition may have been totally unfounded, but the fact is that it met opposition from those who objected to the whole concept of British values, as though it implied that British values were superior to other values, as well as from certain sections of the Muslim community. ... We need to try to overcome that opposition and dissipate it. ... the teaching of British values is absolutely fundamental to our education system, and it is not being done well at the moment. ...

*col 1817* My amendment [101] seeks to address this ... Instead of simply talking about British values, it talks about the “values of British citizenship.” ... when it comes to citizenship, that is a very clear legal concept. If you sign up to be a British citizen or you are born in this country and are a citizen by birth, there are quite specific values—or there ought to be—associated with being a citizen. ...

The present system of values concentrates on the fact that people should be respected whatever their beliefs or lack of beliefs. That, of course, reflects the worry in 2015 about religiously-based terrorism, which is why that was put in in that form. However, that resulted in something rather less rounded than it ought to be and rather skewed, and one fundamental value was left out: that there should be equal respect for every person. ... in our society, one counts for one. You get just one vote, not more than one. The law has to treat people equally whether they are wealthy or poor. Every government department has to treat people equally. That is an absolutely fundamental value, and it should be clear in the teaching of British values ...

*col 1818* **Baroness Whitaker (Labour):** ... Other countries have their written constitutions; we do not. The Americans also have the Gettysburg Address—easy to teach, easy to understand. In this amendment, we have a coherent system of basic principles of democracy, human rights and equality and the modern imperative of care for the environment. This whole subject, taught as a unity, is particularly important for non-faith schools also, which have a less coherent framework than the faith schools. We are a diverse society. We have several faiths and beliefs and we need a framework that we can cohere around, such as the values of British citizenship ...

*col 1819* **Lord Sandhurst (Conservative):** ... I will speak to Amendment 105, the purpose of which is to ensure that parents can discover what their children are being taught in school. They must have access, we say, to the materials deployed in class.

It arises because some commercial providers of materials in the sensitive field of RSE and health have tried to stop parents getting access to materials which they have provided for use in class. Requests to see material have been met with the assertion that it is protected and exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act by reason of commercial confidentiality. ... In some instances, schools have simply refused point blank. ...

*col 1820* In some schools, I am sorry to say, ideological beliefs are being asserted in these lessons as though they were fact. Biological facts about sex are consciously confused. Novel ideological beliefs are asserted as fact when they plainly are not. ... Parents must be confident that what their children are taught in this area and others is factually correct, evidence-based and not misleading propaganda. ...

*col 1821* **Baroness Morris of Yardley (Labour):** ... Some of the materials that I saw that were being withheld from parents were hugely contentious, and many parents—quite reasonably, to my mind—would not have wanted them to be taught to their children. ...

... we do not want to get to a position where parents demand to have the right to see every note that a teacher is going to use in a lesson. ... We are talking about a broad understanding of the curriculum content so that parents and teachers can be the joint educators of children, especially in these important areas. ...

**col 1823 Lord Woolley of Woodford (Crossbench):** ...Only through a freedom of information request by the *Guardian* newspaper do we know that UK schools recorded more than 60,000 racist incidents in the last five years. Many people, including black community and education leaders, accuse the Government of failing to meet basic safeguarding measures by hiding the true scale of the problem. For example, the data from the *Guardian* excluded 80% of England's multi-academy trusts. The scale of racial incidents in schools is therefore probably much worse, causing one academic working in this area, Professor David Gillborn from the University of Birmingham, to conclude that we have a racism epidemic in our schools.

What does racial discrimination look like in our schools? It might be plain old racial abuse or, worse still, racial bullying. The overwhelming majority of this would be student to student. But there are other types too that can easily be characterised as institutional. ...

**col 1824** A parent came to me and said that her son was distressed after being at school and the dinner lady saying to him when he was being animated, playing with his friends, "Why are you behaving like animals? Why can't you behave like those?", "those" being a group of white children. The parent went to the school to meet the headmaster and told them the story. The headmaster said, "It was nothing serious, just a misuse of language. Oh, and by the way, your son was late for school yesterday." Nothing occurred. ...

Some 50% of young black kids asked said that racism, including teacher perception, is the biggest barrier to their educational success. The data somewhat proves them right unless we feel that black children are predisposed to bad behaviour. How do we adequately explain that they are six times more likely to be permanently expelled? Other groups, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, are nine times more likely to be expelled. ...

My amendment [118A] would require Ofsted to monitor school compliance with the equality legislation, ensuring that schools which fail to tackle the tens of thousands of instances of racial discrimination are identified and changes are made. ...

This is not just about safeguarding children in our schools, important as that is. Surely this is about giving children an opportunity to flourish; to be the best they can be and have a sense of belonging. ...

**col 1827 Lord Storey:** ... The amendment in the name of the noble Lord, Lord Woolley, is very important. ... we have to be sure that black, Asian, Jewish and other minorities in schools are completely part of the school community and that they do not in any way face some of the issues that the noble Lord told us about. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0779BA5F-90B1-4631-BF2F-9DF346B22A64/SchoolsBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0779BA5F-90B1-4631-BF2F-9DF346B22A64/SchoolsBill(HL))

*The amendments referred to above can be read at*

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/47451/documents/2163>

## House of Commons Written Answer

### Pupils: Discrimination

**Alexander Stafford (Conservative)** [26925] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support (a) pupils and (b) families who are the victims of discrimination in schools.

**Will Quince:** The government condemns and strives to tackle all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools

have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all protected characteristics, including between people of different ethnic backgrounds. The department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools?msckid=9ce22ddcc5d11ec9a0a2d6e2fd0a666>

The department is also making sure that all children in England will learn about respectful relationships, in person and online, as part of mandatory relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). The curriculum has a strong focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference. Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>

The department is also providing over £2 million of funding, between 10 August 2021 and 31 March 2023, to five anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate-related bullying.

The department continues to publish information, guidance and support for teachers and school leaders on how to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs, on the Educate Against Hate website, available at:

<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-28/26925>

## Law Commission

### Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2022/07/A-new-weddings-law-LC-report.pdf>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Iran: Nuclear Weapons

**Robert Jenrick (Conservative)** [35965] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help ensure the security of (a) Israel, (b) the United Arab Emirates, (c) Saudi Arabia and (d) Bahrain if Iran achieves nuclear weapons capability.

**Amanda Milling:** We continue to have regular discussions with a range of regional and international partners, including Israel, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's nuclear escalation. We are clear that our priority is to see Iran return to compliance with its commitments and the US to return to the deal. Our commitment to the security of our allies is unwavering. The UK is committed to working with the international community to ensure Iran abides by international laws and norms and is held to account for its destabilising activity in the region.

It is for this reason that we currently have over 200 sanctions designations in place against Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety, and

support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors in the region, including to Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701) and the Houthis in Yemen (UNSCR 2216).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-13/35965>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1701>

UNSCR 2216, referred to above, can be read at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2216>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

### Updated travel advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

### Updated travel advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Community Security Trust (CST)

#### **Covid, Conspiracies & Jew-Hate: Antisemitism in the Covid-19 conspiracy movement**

A new Research Briefing from CST ... reveals the full extent of antisemitism within the Covid conspiracy movement.

In April 2020, not long after Covid-19 began spreading through the world's population, CST released a research briefing titled [Coronavirus and the Plague of Antisemitism](#). It demonstrated how the pandemic was being used by far right extremists online to push antisemitic narratives and conspiracies.

Today, antisemitic images and language have become much more common in online spaces used by the Covid-conspiracy movement. These include conspiracy theories claiming that the virus is a Jewish hoax, and that vaccines have been invented by Jews to poison the population. ...

This movement brings together people from the far right, far left, new age, those with mixed ideologies and other parts of society. It reaches well beyond traditional forms of extremism: leading figures even include a celebrated street artist and a rapper ...

This is the first time that Britain has had a domestic political movement fuelled primarily by conspiracy theories, that is active both online and offline. It has outlived the ending of This report shows the offline consequences of these views becoming more widespread. CST recorded 118 antisemitic hate incidents in 2020 and 2021 that involved language or imagery linked to the pandemic, alongside anti-Jewish language or targeting. ...

An alternative form of antisemitism that became prominent in the Covid conspiracy movement is the grotesque and offensive misuse of language and symbols related to the Holocaust. ...

Most worryingly, there are elements within the Covid conspiracy movement that are moving in a more confrontational and violent direction. In the UK this has involved the harassment of politicians, journalists and police officers on the streets. ... The antisemitism in the Covid conspiracy movement, combined with this gradual move towards violent activism, could therefore pose a direct threat to the Jewish community.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2022/07/19/covid-conspiracies-jew-hate-antisemitism-in-the-covid-19-conspiracy-movement>

**Covid, Conspiracies & Jew-Hate: Antisemitism in the Covid-19 conspiracy movement**

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/0/9/Antisemitism%20in%20the%20Covid%20Conspiracy%20Movement.pdf>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

#### **Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

#### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

#### **Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

#### **Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

#### **Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

#### **Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

#### **\*\* Schools Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Report Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0779BA5F-90B1-4631-BF2F-9DF346B22A64/SchoolsBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0779BA5F-90B1-4631-BF2F-9DF346B22A64/SchoolsBill(HL))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0D1DB6C2-51D0-4550-8FC2-C4279418A7C5/SchoolsBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-07-18/debates/0D1DB6C2-51D0-4550-8FC2-C4279418A7C5/SchoolsBill(HL))

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/47494/documents/2167>

## Scottish Parliament

### Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 3 days**

**Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament** (closing date 22 July 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

**Standards for ethnicity data** (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

**Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25** (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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