



Five Ways To Advocate for Yourself as a Jewish Student **You Have the Right To Feel Safe, Respected, and Included at School**

This guide is intended to help Jewish middle and high school students build positive relationships, handle challenges, and speak up in ways that are both safe and effective. You can do a lot on your own, and when you need backup, your parents, teachers, and community are here for you.

1) Start By Building Positive Relationships

At the start of each semester, introduce yourself to your teachers in person and by email. Share a bit about who you are. If you know you'll miss class for Jewish holidays, let them know early so you can work together on a plan. Remember, long term positive relationships at school are built on consistent positive interactions, so participate and be respectful.

Pro Tip: Positive relationships make it easier to ask for help later on.

2) Get Involved On Campus

- Join and participate in the Jewish Student Union or Club if your school has one—or consider starting one if they don't.
- Participate in other clubs, groups, or teams. This will help you build a strong campus community of both peers and adults at school.
- Consider joining school leadership like the student council, or even becoming a student member of the school board. Leadership roles give you a stronger voice.

Pro Tip: Being visible and connected means more people will listen when you speak up.

3) Address Concerns Calmly and Clearly

Sometimes things happen—a misunderstanding with a teacher, concerning content in a lesson, or an incident with another student.

Here's what to do:

- Go to the source: If it's about a class, speak to that teacher first.
- Explain the concern: Be respectful and focus on solutions.
- Follow up in writing: Send a quick email summarizing what you discussed.
- Give them a chance to fix it: Most people will try to help if they understand the problem.

Pro Tip: If the teacher doesn't respond, you can then bring the issue to an administrator.

4) Keep a Record

Make sure you have a plan and system in place for tracking issues.

- Write down what happened—date, time, people involved, and what was said.
- Save copies of emails and notes from conversations.
- This helps you remember details and makes it easier to explain your side if you need extra help.

Pro Tip: Documentation is your best friend when you need to show what really happened.

5) Ask for Support When You Need It

- Tell your parents or guardians what's going on, even if you think you can handle it yourself.
- For serious situations—like antisemitic comments, threats, or vandalism—get help right away.
- You can reach out to the JCRC Bay Area for support.
- If you feel unsafe, involve school leadership or law enforcement immediately.

Pro Tip: Asking for help is not a weakness—it's a smart way to protect yourself.

Final Word

You have the right to feel proud of your identity and safe at school. By building strong relationships, getting involved, speaking up respectfully, keeping good records, and asking for help when needed, you can navigate challenges with confidence. *Your voice matters—use it.*