

Teacher Guide: Responding to Misinformation

What gives
you hope?

What does
peace look
like to you?

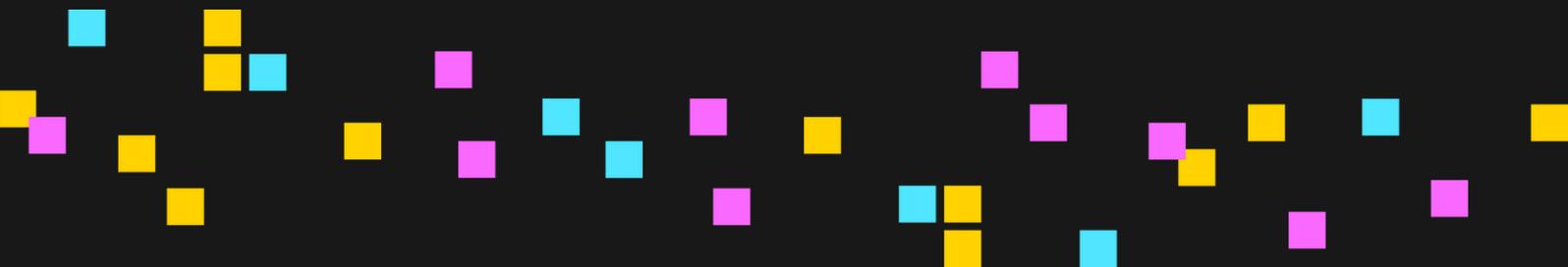
How do you
cope with fear
or anger?

How do
you react
to hate?

Introduction

This document has been created to help schools and other educational bodies respond to misinformation about peace and dialogue groups coming from partisan political organisations.

As educators, we will uphold the right of young people to learn about political issues in an impartial space. We will keep that space free from hate, inequality and violence. We will teach skills of critical thinking, communication, active listening and conflict resolution so they can learn to navigate these issues for themselves.



Recognising misinformation

A campaign promoting misinformation about a dialogue or education organisation working on the topic of Israel-Palestine will bear the following hallmarks:

- It will be focused on secondhand reference to online posts, and will cherry pick its sources to build an incomplete and seemingly partisan picture.
- It will target individuals from specific communities, usually Jewish or Muslim, and will bully those individuals in an attempt to discredit the organisation they work for.
- It will promote conspiracy theories about funding sources and political/military connections of the organisation.
- It will lack any firsthand research such as impact evaluation results, or quotes from members of the organisation or end-users.
- It will try to claim there are not two sides, and that there is only one legitimate ‘truth’ about the issue that should be taught in schools.
- The campaigners will use disengagement tactics, such as not giving the organisation they are attacking a fair right of reply, or refusing to engage in-person and gain firsthand knowledge of the organisation’s work when the opportunity is offered.

Recognising misinformation cont...

- The campaigners will present themselves as having majority public opinion on their side—either within a specific community or more widely in the UK—when in fact, they do not.
- The misinformation will often be accompanied with threats of protests, petitions etc.
- A closer look at the organisation that is organising the campaign will usually reveal a consistent pattern of either antisemitic, Islamophobic, anti-Palestinian or anti-Israeli attitudes in their messaging.

How to respond to misinformation

- Immediately inform the organisation that is being targeted that misinformation is being spread about their work.
- Be careful to take no action that could appear to legitimise the misinformation until a proper investigation is carried out.
- Communicate with parents and any other members of the school community who are concerned to reassure them and remind them of the importance of impartiality on this issue—as well as the importance of keeping a safe space open for learning and discussion and not shutting that space down.
- Organise a meeting for parents/staff to get firsthand knowledge of the curriculum and content of the education programme.
- Respect the democratic right of protest, but request that any protest takes place away from the school building for childrens' safety and check that the organisers are notifying the appropriate authorities of their intention to protest.
- Ensure you are briefed with the impact results of the organisation's work and its credibility and endorsement by the Department for Education and other bodies.

How to respond to misinformation cont...

- Ensure you are briefed with the background, messaging and objectives of the organisation perpetrating the attack—do they have a political agenda? Do they have a proposal of another way that you could deliver education on this issue that is in line with the DfE’s impartiality guidelines?
- Prepare a statement for the local press, just in case.
- Take measures to ensure that anti-Muslim or anti-Jewish bullying is not taking place within the school due to increased pressure from the campaign.
- Once all stakeholders are fully briefed and aware of the situation, take a course of action that will ensure that your students receive impartial and good quality education on this issue.

Thank you

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