

The King David School is a Jewish school that is proudly affiliated with **Progressive Judaism Victoria** and the **Union of Progressive Judaism**. This affiliation is not merely technical; it is deeply ideological and reflects the values that guide our educational approach. Our movement emphasises individual autonomy, equality, and adapting Jewish traditions to contemporary life.

As a Jewish day school, we seek to cultivate a distinct *hashkafa* – a philosophical worldview grounded in **Progressive Judaism**. While we aim to instill this worldview in our students, we do not impose a prescriptive model of Jewish life or learning on students, families, or staff. Reflecting the spirit of the Progressive Judaism movement in Israel, we embrace the belief that “there is more than one way to be Jewish.” We work to foster a sense of belonging to the global Progressive Jewish movement, which we nurture through *mifgashim* (encounters) with other Progressive Jewish institutions. These include engagements with visiting speakers brought to Melbourne by the UPJ, participation in the Leo Baeck Education Center’s Ambassadors Program, and ongoing collaboration with Victoria’s Progressive Rabbis and their involvement in our school.

We promote an accessible and inclusive Judaism, grounded in the principle of **informed choice**. We support students in exploring and determining their own “Jewish journeys”, in partnership with their families, and in ways that are personally meaningful. While we encourage individual exploration, we also maintain communal standards that reflect our values and ensure consistency in Jewish life and learning across the school. These include, for example, the structure and substance of *tefilah* services, the occasions on which *kippot* are worn, and the standards of *kashrut* observed in the tuckshop on both campuses, at school camps, and during other events. These policies are expressions of our communal identity and are not in conflict with our commitment to individual choice.

Our Jewish teaching and learning is grounded in Progressive Jewish *hashkafa*, law, custom, and practice as defined by the movement from time-to-time. We teach our approach to core issues such as the authorship of the Torah, the nature and authority of *halacha*, mechanisms for change in Jewish tradition, the question of who is a Jew, and the centrality of egalitarianism. At the same time, we present alternative perspectives – including Orthodox and Conservative interpretations – so that students are equipped with a well-rounded understanding of Jewish thought. This enables them to better engage with the broader Jewish community and the diverse views within their own families and peer groups.

We educate about the *mitzvot* (commandments), encouraging students to explore and adopt those which resonate with them, in ways that connect them to **God, Torah, and tradition and innovation**. **Torah learning** – including engagement with the full breadth of the Jewish textual canon – is central to our vision. Through this learning, we aim to empower students with the knowledge needed to make informed and meaningful choices.

Tikkun olam – repairing the world – is a core value of our school, understood through a Jewish religious lens rather than a politically partisan one. Our commitment includes LGBTQA+ rights, gender equality, human rights, care for the environment, Indigenous rights, religious pluralism, economic justice, interfaith work, ethnic justice, and advocacy for the vulnerable (“the orphan, the widow and the stranger”), including asylum seekers and refugees. We also promote the strengthening of democratic values, norms and mores, including protection of minorities. These are Jewish values, deeply rooted in our tradition, and we value political representatives who champion them, in both Australia and Israel, without aligning ourselves with any specific political party.

We are committed to presenting students with **complex and varied narratives** about Jewish life and identity, as well as about Israel. In our senior years, this includes exposure to Palestinian narratives. We welcome speakers and educational resources from outside our movement, provided they do not stand in direct opposition to our understanding of Jewish justice, as outlined above. While we value open dialogue, we reserve the right not to engage with materials or speakers whose views fundamentally contradict our core values.

As an institution which embraces **Zionism** and a love of Israel, we affirm **The Jerusalem Program** and are committed to educating students toward a deep and multifaceted engagement with the land, people, state, and language of the Jewish people. This includes a thorough understanding of Israeli and Zionist history, politics, society, and culture. We uphold the values of Israel as both a Jewish and democratic state, in accordance with its **Declaration of Independence** and **Basic Laws**. We believe in Israel, the nation state of the Jewish people, as a liberal democracy, extending its hand in peace to its neighbours, and embracing civic equality for all its citizens. We want our students not only to love Israel, but to engage with it as independent, thoughtful, and analytical individuals. Just as we encourage critical engagement with Jewish text and tradition, we also promote thoughtful, sincere connection with Israel and Zionism.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with organisations which support these views. We welcome Jewish unity initiatives which celebrate diversity of views and respect differences, without demanding uniformity.