

Dear Principal [name]

I write to you with urgency about a major concern our community has regarding a planned protest in support of Palestinians. Many [STATE] high schools have planned to participate in a “National Shutdown for Palestine” scheduled for November 9, 2023.

In an Instagram post advertising the planned protest, Palestinian Youth Movement has written: “public schools across [the country] will unite for SCHOOLS OUT FOR #CEASEFIRENOW Day, demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and an end to US support for Israel’s genocide of Palestinian people.” The use of the inaccurate and inflammatory word “genocide” to describe the current conflict between Israel and Hamas, serves as a preview of the offensive, antisemitic, and disinforming language that will undoubtedly characterize this protest.

In addition to the very real dangers of antisemitic violence, many Jewish and Israeli students throughout [STATE] have been directly impacted by the terrorism of Hamas. Some have lost family members or have loved ones currently fighting in Gaza, not to mention the many ordinary Israelis who continue to live under consistent rocket fire from Hamas, even four weeks after the initial barbarity of October 7.

On that now infamous day, parents were slaughtered in front of their children. Hundreds of young people at a music festival were stabbed and shot at point blank range by Hamas terrorists. Women were raped and then paraded around the streets of Gaza with blood gushing from their bodies. Over 240 hostages remain in the Gaza strip with their status unknown, including women, children, and elderly.

The occurrence of protests or rallies, within school buildings and/or on school property, poses a unique challenge and potential danger for Jewish and Israeli students. As a result of the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre, antisemitism has risen 400% globally in the last month. Attacks against the State of Israel, in which many of these pro-Palestinian gatherings engage, have the potential to incite violence against, and harassment of, Jewish and Israeli students and community members. Just this week, a Jewish man from California died from a brain bleed that was caused by a strike to his head from a pro-Palestinian protestor with a megaphone. Peaceful protests are not supposed to lead to death.

While freedom of speech protects the rights of the students and teachers who plan and participate in these pro-Palestinian—and often blatantly pro-Hamas—events, what is not protected speech is incitement and threats of violence. Due to the strength of the vitriol espoused by pro-Palestinian protestors, including teenagers in high schools, these events planned for November 9 are likely to escalate to physical and verbal harassment. Because of the way these events have thus far been set up, Jewish and Israeli students have not always been able to avoid seeing the offensive posters, hearing offensive slogans, and walking through crowds of Palestinian flags. All students should be safe in their schools, without exception, and any potential threats to this safety should be eliminated when possible. You now have that opportunity.

Please treat this with the utmost urgency.

Respectfully,