

EDUCATORS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELVES

Please Read: All advice is case-dependent and will apply differently in EACH state based on the precedent set. In SOME states tenured teachers have more flexibility and protection. Please consult with a lawyer in your state or union representative to get a more comprehensive understanding of how the advice applies to you directly.



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST DOXXING

Do a quick search of yourself and remove any personal information such as your address, place of work, phone number, emails. If needed, request sites to remove them.

[Online Harassment Field Manual: Protecting from Doxing](#)

KEEPING RECORD

Always keep a meticulous record of any communication with Admin. Write notes if you cannot voice record. Do not delete anything, and do not hesitate in contacting an attorney for help.



MEETINGS WITH ADMIN

If you are called in for a disciplinary meeting with Admin, try to have as limited engagement as possible until you find out the school's intentions and next steps. You are encouraged to have a colleague or Union Representative with you at the meeting. You can identify if your state is a one-party consent state, and record if you feel safe doing so. If you cannot record, make sure to keep a meticulous record. Ask more questions than they ask you to identify why you're being questioned. Gather information on the policy you are allegedly violating, the school's history, and how they've handled previous situations.

Get in contact with an attorney immediately afterward.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT ACTION ITEMS

Keep communication regarding protests, walk-outs, rallies etc. on your personal email rather than district-issued emails, as they are considered public records. In some states, public record laws can extend to even private phone/personal email, so be aware of that before communicating.



TEACHING WHILE MUSLIM

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QUESTIONS ON TEACHING ABOUT PALESTINE



WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR TEACHING LESSONS ON PALESTINE?

First, consult your local policies to see your district's stance on teaching controversial topics. When teaching about Palestine, root your lesson in questions and issues that are directly connected with your students. It is encouraged to use lessons that have been approved by an ethnic studies program and have been thoroughly vetted and hold credibility. Students also have 1st Amendment Rights. One of their rights is to be taught accurate information, especially if they are raising questions about a specific topic. In the case that you are called in for disciplinary action, leverage students' rights. You may state that you were responding to the needs of your students (Palestinians, Muslims, those who are watching the news etc.)

WHAT IF A STUDENT ASKS FOR MY PERSONAL OPINION?



It's highly encouraged to use this as a teachable moment to provide facts and history for students to form their own educated opinions. First Amendment rights in this situation might not always apply so try to refrain from giving your personal opinion.

Tip: Look at Board Policies under Board of Ed's "controversial topics policies" as well as the Union Contract to see how the policies affect you.



CAN I WEAR A KEFFIYEH TO SCHOOL?

The keffiyeh is considered cultural attire and therefore may be protected under discrimination laws (Title VII). If the admin brings up your attire as an issue, you may bring up other staff wearing cultural representations in the form of jewelry or clothing, and how they have not been questioned.

This may only apply if you are of Palestinian or Arab descent.

Read more here: [EEOC: FAQ- Nation Origin Discrimination](#)

CAN ADMIN ASK ME TO REMOVE MY CEASEFIRE SIGN IN MY CLASSROOM?



In the case that your classroom decor is questioned, get in touch with the Union representative at your school. Also, be sure to examine and note what is present in other teachers' spaces. Look for comparisons of types of signs and declarations in other staff members' classrooms (Ex. BLM or Gay Pride). This can help build up a case of you being unfairly targeted.

Tip: Ask your Union Representative to point out specific policies to guide you



WHAT DO I DO IF I AM DOXXED?

In the case that you are doxxed, and your place of work has been disclosed, you can ask admin for support. It is the school's responsibility to ensure a safe space for staff and students. Some things in their capacity are that they can take down office phone numbers/email so fewer hateful messages are sent.

Resources for more support:

[Digital Defense: Guide for the Doxxed](#)

[NEA: Guidance for Educators Experiencing Harassment and Doxxing](#)



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IRAC FRAMEWORK, ASSESING RISK, AND FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

I WHAT'S YOUR ISSUE?

Name the Issue or problem that you might be facing. What is the infringement?

R WHAT'S THE RULE?

The Rule is the constitution and how that has been interpreted by courts over time, policy, regulation, ordinance, or the discipline code that could protect you or that could be used against you.

A HOW CAN YOU APPLY THE RULE TO YOUR ISSUE?

Identify how that rule may apply to your situation?
How has it applied in others similar situations?

C WHAT DO YOU CONCLUDE?

Is the rule being skewed directly against you because of what you are advocating for, your culture, or your religion?

ABC's of Assessing Risk & Building Power

Assert your rights! (But know the limits!)	Blueprint a plan in partnership with legal workers, advocates, attorneys, and colleagues	Consult with an attorney or legal worker in a confidential setting
<p>I'm taking risks within the bounds of the law and my workplace is upholding those rights. I will share this information with my peers and support collective power building</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You: existing, wearing a keffiyeh, attending protests outside of work Employer: sending "guidance" to the team about shared values and norms 	<p>I believe my employer <i>may be</i> violating my rights or the law and I might consult an attorney or legal worker to assess options or attend a know your rights workshop.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>I believe I am taking risks that <i>could have legal consequences</i> and I might consult an attorney or legal worker or attend a KYR workshop to assess options.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You: organizing in workplace, using political slogans or advocacy materials in class with knowledge of your rights and respecting reasonable guidelines Your employer: speaking with you individually, asking you to stop doing things others do freely 	<p>I feel quite certain that I took an action that will threaten my job. I will contact an attorney immediately.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>I feel quite certain that my employer took an action that violated my rights and i will contact an attorney or legal worker to assess next steps</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You: organizing in workplace, using political slogans or advocacy materials in class IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF WORKPLACE RULES/POLICY Employer: Taking action to isolate, intimidate, or punish you through creating less favorable working conditions, such as putting you on administrative leave, taking away leadership roles destabilizing your class schedule

First Amendment Rights

I'm a public school teacher. Is my speech protected by the First Amendment?

First Step:

- Is the speech a part of your **official job duties**?
- If it involves scholarship or teaching, **maybe**.
- If you spoke in your official capacity but the speech does not involve scholarship or teaching, **no**.
- If you expressed your opinion as a private citizen, **keep going!**

Second Step:

- Did you speak on a matter of public concern, i.e. a topic of general interest to the public?
- If no, **no**.
- If yes, **keep going!**

Third Step:

- Your right to free speech is weighed against your employer's interest in promoting workplace efficiency.
- The outcome of this balancing will depend on your unique situation.
- In most places, your employer does not need to show that your speech caused an actual disruption - just a reasonable likelihood of one.

I don't know what you mean by a reasonable likelihood of disruption. Can you give me examples?

- Speech that leads to negative publicity for your employer
- Speech that targets individuals or communities because of their racial, ethnic, or religious identity
- BUT some courts have recognized that simply expressing strong feelings is not enough.
- Takeaway: Know your school community and be aware of how your speech may be perceived.