

# SCHOOLS OUT FOR PALESTINE! High School Walkout



**NYC  
MAY 31**

**FIRST STEP: [Complete this Google Form](#) to take part in the WALKOUT**

On Friday, May 31, high school students across New York City will walk out of school to **demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza & an end to U.S. support for Israel's genocide of Palestinian people.** Use this toolkit to plan a walkout at your school, get support, and coordinate your action with thousands of other students who are doing the same.

## ORGANIZE A WALKOUT

**NOTE: School walkouts from across the city will come together at 3:00 PM at Tweed Courthouse (52 Chambers Street) to rally & march. See you there!**

### STUDENT WALKOUT CHECKLIST

[Fill out this form](#) to let us know you're planning a walkout. That allows us to keep track & coordinate.

- **Assess your school climate**
  - What do you need to do to gain your school administration's support? (**You do not need their permission** but it helps.)
  - Are there fellow students who are willing to join you in the walkout? What support would you need to encourage them to participate?
  - Do you expect counter-protestors at your school?
  - Are there other collectives in your school like SAYA, Global Kids, Eco Club etc. that you can engage or persuade to take action with you?
  - Assess the level of engagement you expect. How many students will participate? How many parents will support?
- **Assess your neighborhood**
  - Do you expect counter-protesters around your school?
  - Do you think the community around your school will be receptive to the walkout?
  - Note the nearby NYPD precincts and the presence of police in or around the school.
  - Find a route that maximizes support and minimizes resistance.

- If you and your peers do not feel comfortable leaving school grounds, consider marching through the hallways and gathering in central spaces within the school (or on the school steps) for a sit-in.
- **Assess preparedness**
  - Identify people to take on different roles:
    - Elect Speaker(s)
    - Elect Chant leaders (2 per school)
    - Elect a Social Media Coordinator (posting using hashtags: **#schools4ceasefire** **#shutitdown4palestine**)
      - The Social Media Coordinator should ensure all participants have masks to hide their faces, for anyone who doesn't want to be identified on camera
    - Students Rights Coordinator (print and distribute *Know Your Rights* flyers)
      - Know Your Rights Flyers (ACLU)
      - Legal support hotline: National Lawyers Guild (212) 679-5100
    - Personnel Coordinator (explain buddy system and assign buddies for accountability and safety, and count participants at regular intervals to ensure everyone is together and safe)
    - Marshals (once you've submitted the Google Form, we will coordinate a team of experienced marshals to meet you outside school and support your walkout to run safely and smoothly)
    - Legal Observers (we will coordinate trained legal observers for your walkout)
- **Identify Walkout + March Plan**
  - Determine the exit/location in the school where participants will gather.
  - Identify the route on a map based on your assessment of the neighborhood (find a place where people can gather safely and that is not too physically straining since there is also a rally afterward).
  - Establish a backup meeting location in case things do not go as planned so everyone knows where the fallback meeting point is.
- **Safety Plan**
  - Ensure everyone knows their rights as student protestors (coordinated by the Student Rights Coordinator).
  - We will send a team of marshals to meet students outside your school to support safety during the walkout. Marshals will:
    - Assess whether to block traffic or wait for traffic lights at intersections.
    - Ensure participants stay on the sidewalk and do not enter the streets.
    - De-escalate with police or counter-protestors if needed.
  - We will also send Legal Observers to support your walkout. They will be there to monitor and document any police conduct. In the unlikely event that someone is arrested, notify a legal observer (they wear lime green hats).
- **Engaging other students**
  - **Start a conversation:** "Have you heard about the student walkout for Palestine on Friday?" Get a sense of where they stand.

- **If they are enthusiastic:** Great! Share the time, place, and reason you're walking out. Ask them directly: "Will you join the walkout on Friday at [time]?" and "Will you help us get the word out?"
- **If they seem uninterested/unsure:** Explain that students all over NYC are planning walkouts on Friday to demand a ceasefire in Gaza. Share your own personal reason for participating in the walkout. Ask them directly "Will you join us for the walkout?"
- **If they are opposed:** Politely end the conversation and move on to the next person. If someone is staunchly opposed, it's unlikely you'll change their mind in one conversation. Focus your efforts on reaching students who are more likely to join you.
- **Be patient:** Understand that some people might not know or care about what's going on. Sharing your personal reason for participating in the walkout can help motivate others to take action.
- **Get the word out:** [Print flyers](#) to hand out during lunch and get your friends to help.
- **Acknowledge differences:** Recognize that not everyone has the same access to information or spaces and might be influenced by what they hear or see.
- **Believe in your power:** Trust in your ability as a student organizer/activist to impact change.

## SAMPLE WALKOUT PLAN

- Start at 11:30 EST.
- **Organize beforehand:** Coordinate with student activists and your friends to be ready and prepared.
- **During the walkout:**
  - Begin the walkout by standing up and starting a chant. Meet up in the hallways.
  - Leave the hallways of your school within 10 to 15 minutes of starting and mobilize outside!
  - Start chanting and holding space outside the school. If reporters show up, you can speak with them using our talking points below.
  - **Plan to end at 52 Chambers Street by 3:00 PM** to join students from across the city for a rally and march. Consider which trains you'll need to take to get there.

## STUDENT DEMANDS & TALKING POINTS

- Refer to [STUDENT DEMANDS](#) for the NYC DOE, City Council, and our broader demands.
- You can refer to these [TALKING POINTS](#) when speaking to the media or mobilizing others. Use the messages that resonate with you, or use them as inspiration to create your own.

**Post photos of your action on social media, and get others to do the same. Make this big.**

**MAKE SIGNS.** Get together with other students during a lunch break to make signs for your walkout. You can also see a folder of [PROTEST SIGNS](#) here and print some out.

**PRINT POSTERS.** To help get the word out, print a poster to put around your school. We have a folder of [PRINTABLE FLYERS](#) you can use.

**Practice Chants.** To make sure people hear student's demand for ceasefire and end to U.S aid to genocide in Gaza, practice these [CHANTS](#) and use them for your walkout.

Join other student walkouts at the **STUDENT RALLY & MARCH FOR PALESTINE:**

Friday, May 31 @ 3:00 PM at Tweed (52 Chambers Street).



Remember to [Complete this Google Form](#) to take part in the walkouts. Make your action count & connect to organizers who can support.

# SUPPORT & RESOURCES

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### YOUR RIGHTS AS A STUDENT PROTESTER

**Can students who participate in a walkout be punished for leaving class?** Yes. If your school normally does not allow you to leave the building without permission, then you do not have any special right to do so to engage in a political demonstration. But, just because the school is authorized to punish you does not mean they must do so. It is worth asking for leniency.

— [READ MORE](#) on your rights to protest in school.

**Can students be punished more severely for participating in a walkout rather than leaving for other reasons?** No. Imposing harsher punishment on students who skip school to engage in political activities than on those who cut school for any other reason violates the First Amendment. If you believe this happened to you, [contact NYCLU](#) so they can gather more information.

— [PRINTABLE “KNOW YOUR RIGHTS” FLYERS](#)

**What other tools can you use to organize in your school?** You know best who the supportive teachers are in your school. Make them your allies! Ask for time during class to talk to the other students and get them involved.

**What if you want to give out leaflets or make speeches, etc. outside your school? Do you have to leave the area like the security guards tell you?** **NO!** Anyone, including students, has the right to engage in peaceful First Amendment activities – including leafleting, petitioning, and picketing – on public sidewalks in front of NYC schools.

### YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EDUCATOR: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Per [Chancellor’s Regulations D- 130](#), “school buildings are not public forums for purposes of community or political expression.” [DOE’s general policy](#) is that “students should learn in a politically neutral environment; employees should refrain from advancing their own personal political views while on school grounds; and, that schools and employees should avoid the impression that the school is endorsing any particular political perspective or point of view.” School staff should be cautious not to use school facilities, equipment or supplies to promote political activities, or appear to solicit, direct, or compel students or other staff to participate in political speech, events, or activities.

[Per Chancellor’s Regulation C-110](#), staff may not participate in walkout, protest, demonstration, etc. during their scheduled work hours, including during lunch periods and breaks, or engage in political activity that causes them to be absent during the hours they are scheduled to work; however, staff can absolutely participate in political activities on their own time and not on DOE property.

— For more, See [NYCLU’s guidance on Speaking Out as a Public Employee](#).



## YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EDUCATOR: CONTRACTUALLY PROTECTED ACTIVITIES

- Schools can facilitate discussions and engage students in activities related to current events and civic engagement. Discussions and activities should include multiple points of view and be linked to relevant classroom activities, lesson plans, curriculum, etc.
- School staff can display posters, signs, etc. to the extent connected to classroom activities, lesson plans, curriculum, etc.
- Schools can develop safety plans as needed to ensure the safety of students participating in known organized walkout, protest, demonstration, etc. activities. Staff can volunteer to assist with such safety plans.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EDUCATOR: SOME THINGS TO BE MINDFUL OF...

- Schools cannot organize field trips to participate in organized walkouts, protests, demonstrations, etc., stage their own such events, and/or distribute flyers promoting or inviting participation in such events.
- Schools **CANNOT PREVENT STUDENTS FROM PARTICIPATING** in walkouts, protests, demonstrations, etc; however, to ensure their safety, elementary school students must be signed out by a parent or guardian if they wish to participate.
- Schools should follow their regular [attendance policies](#) in determining whether any absences are excused or unexcused (including retaining proper documentation). **There are no disciplinary consequences for excused absences.**
- *If the family communicates that a student is absent due to a non-school-sponsored event by verbal or written notice, reason code 34 (SPECIAL EVENT-EXCUSED ABSENCE) can be used.*

**If you should be arrested for any reason, contact your [UFT district representative](#)**, who will contact the UFT's central office for assistance. Within 48 hours, you must also notify your principal and the Office of Personnel Investigations at [OPIarrestnotification@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:OPIarrestnotification@schools.nyc.gov) ([see Chancellor's Regulation C-105](#)).

You can [request free legal support from Palestine Legal](#), which works with a network of organizations, attorneys, and advocacy groups to respond to requests for legal and advocacy assistance, and to document incidents of suppression. You may also find [these resources](#) related to doxxing, your right to organize, and other common issues helpful.

## HOW EDUCATORS CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS TO PROTEST

While students have a right to free expression, the school can limit or punish them for their behavior if it creates a “substantial disruption or material interference in school activities.” In most districts, a walkout would be a substantial disruption and probably a violation of the code of conduct (missing class, roaming in the hallways, etc.). A teacher cannot protect a student from being disciplined by admin for engaging in a walkout, but they can **show support for their students by making classroom level decisions like canceling tests or major paper deadlines or making the lesson more flexible to accommodate students who walk out.**

# SUPPORT & RESOURCES

## HEALING RESOURCES

- [Mental Health + Somatic Resources for Palestinians in Diaspora / SWANA Folks](#) – free & low-cost therapy, support groups, & healing spaces.
- [Dignity Practice](#) – a somatic healing exercise
- [Circle the War](#) – a guide for educators and youth workers to speak with young people about the Palestinian genocide. Created by restorative justice practitioners.
- The Poem, [Moon Over Gaza](#) and other poems by [Naomi Shihab Nye](#)
- If you are equipped to do so, consider holding a healing space for Palestinian and Arab students, teachers, and other impacted communities in your school.

## PREPARE FOR & RESPOND TO BACKLASH

- [Rapid Response Resources](#) – a resource developed by **Muslims for Just Futures** which includes hotlines & information if you face discrimination at your school/workplace, are the target of doxing, and more.
- [Understanding and Preparing for Backlash](#) – a framework for educators and administrators: understanding, preparing for, and responding to backlash.
- [Anti-Doxing Guide for Activists](#) – **Equality Lab**'s guide offers best practices for protecting yourself against a doxing campaign and steps to take to secure your digital identity after being doxed.

## COLLECTIVE LEARNING

- [Schools Out for #CeasefireNOW Teach-In](#) outline & slides — created by **YAYA Network** & **Circle Keepers** for the Day of Action. Use this to lead a teach-in at your school.
- [2023 Palestine Liberation Resource List](#) — the **Palestinian Youth Movement** has created this resource to provide an introductory level breakdown of the events of October 2023 and the history that birthed it.
- [Toolkit on Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions](#) — from the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights.
- [Free Palestine Toolkit](#) — videos and articles to learn some of the historical context of Israel's occupation and current siege.
- [Resources for Educators to Support a Free Palestine](#) — the **Abolitionist Teaching Network** updates this document with teaching resources, as well as Know Your Rights and mental health resources.
- **Curriculum resources to check out:** [Project 48](#), [Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation](#), & [Teach Palestine](#).

## HOW DO I TALK ABOUT THIS?

- [Gaza Talking Points Toolkit](#) — **Jewish Voice for Peace** created this toolkit with talking points and tips for having hard conversations in this moment.

