



Islamic Speakers Bureau Tips for Teachers #3

Suggestions for Preventing Potential Harassment of Students of Muslim or Middle Eastern Background

Provided below are some tips and suggestions on how to help prevent hate crimes and harassment of students of Muslim and Middle Eastern background in your classroom.

1. Remind your students that the school is a place of safety for everyone in it, and that help and protection for all students is a right that they are entitled to.
2. Inform your students that the school does not support or allow harassment, threats, or so-called joking about a current situation directed at any student, teacher or school employee.
3. Let your students know that if they feel uncomfortable and fearful during school hours, they can voice their feelings to teachers, counselors, or other school officials.
4. Remember that students are both perceptive and impressionable. By promoting an atmosphere of understanding and tolerance in the classroom, you are preventing problems from arising.
5. Be supportive in words and deeds of a collective, inclusive, and positive feeling in the classroom and school. Avoid discussions that refer to “us” and “them”, especially with students of Muslim or Middle Eastern background.
6. In all verbal communication, body language and behavior, be careful not to cause any student or teacher to feel isolated or singled out due to their ethnic or religious background.
7. Avoid asking students of Middle Eastern or Muslim background to publicly comment on current events or suggest that they are the classroom “expert” on the current crisis or situation.
8. Do not expect any student, particularly those of Middle Eastern or Muslim background to openly denounce any attacks/incidents or endorse the U.S. government’s actions in order to be “acceptable” to the rest of the class. The First and Fourth Amendments upholds freedom of speech and privacy.
9. Encourage public discussion about religious/ethnic beliefs and practices and how they differ from those who misuse them to support terrorist activity.
10. Allow for comparative discussions on various types of terrorism and terrorists, i.e., Timothy McVeigh, terrorist executed for 1995 Oklahoma City bombing; militia or white supremacist groups; and anti-abortion extremists in the U.S. Discuss the role of the media in its focus on certain groups, double standards and lack of diverse views. (See Teacher Tips #1)
11. Provide public and repeated vocal support and respect for all human life.
12. Remind students about the principles of justice and equality that our country was founded on and the importance of recognizing the rights of all Americans, irrespective of their race, religion, or national origin.

The Islamic Speakers Bureau is a program of ING, a nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1993 that promotes interreligious understanding, tolerance and harmony by increasing religious literacy. Through the Islamic Speakers Bureau program, more than 700 educational presentations about Islam and Muslims are delivered annually to schools, universities, law enforcement agencies, healthcare facilities, corporations and other institutions.

To schedule an educational presentation for your students, simply complete the online form at www.ing.org/speakers/request.asp or email ING at scheduler@ing.org. Please allow up to two weeks to schedule a presentation.

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