

East London: School asks pupils to 'fast' for Gaza

From the [Telegraph](#)

A London secondary school where more than half of pupils are eligible for free school meals has asked children to “fast for Gaza” on Friday.



George Green's School is to raise funds for a crisis appeal in aid of Gazan children

George Green's School in Tower Hamlets have been told to “come together in a collective fast” on Dec 13 in support of the people of Palestine.

A post on the school's website said: “As a Rights Respecting School, we stand united in supporting the children of Gaza, firmly advocating for their right to safety, health, and education. On 13th December, both staff and students will come together in a collective fast, demonstrating our solidarity and raising awareness.”

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The co-educational state school, founded in 1828, has launched a Just Giving page to raise funds for a crisis appeal in aid of Gazan children, run by the humanitarian charity Unicef.

A Jewish parent told the Jewish Chronicle, which first reported the event, pupils who have opted not to participate in Friday's fast have faced "stigma". "It puts the onus on the young person at the age where they least want to stand out," they said.

It comes after Bridget Phillipson, the Education Secretary, urged teachers not to take part in pro-Palestine demonstrations across schools last month amid fears it could make Jewish pupils "feel intimidated".

Ms Phillipson said: "Political impartiality in our schools matters; the safety and belonging of Jewish students matters; and as Education Secretary the interests of children and young people will always come first. I would urge the minority of teachers considering taking part in protests on Thursday to think very carefully about the message they are sending to children and young people, and in particular Jewish students. Many Jewish young people, including in schools and in universities, have experienced abhorrent anti-Semitism, particularly over the past year."

George Green's School won a gold award from Unicef for "inspiring pupils" to stand up for children's rights.

Its assembly programme is "primarily based on recognising, celebrating and informing students and staff about celebrating international days and weeks" on the United Nations calendar, according to the school's website.

Mr Jon Ryder (*headmaster*) told the Jewish Chronicle: "As a Unicef Gold Award Rights Respecting school, we take any acts of discrimination incredibly seriously and will always investigate and take appropriate action if we are made aware of it, in line with our behaviour policy."

