

Primary school closes early for Christmas after 'threats' from pro-Palestinian parents

This was not my Primary school when I lived in Waltham Forest but I did some 'teaching work experience' there, back in my Sixth Form days, enough to know that primary school teaching was not what I was cut out for.

From the [Telegraph](#) and [Sky News](#)

A primary school has closed early for Christmas in a row with parents who staged a pro-Palestinian protest at its gates.

Hundreds of protesters waving Palestine flags and placards gathered outside Barclay Primary School in Leyton, east London, on Thursday morning after a rallying cry in a TikTok video.

The school said it had shut two days early "in the light of escalating threats against staff and the school, based on malicious fabrications" and criticised "threatening and completely unacceptable conduct".

Protesters gathered outside the school, which is rated outstanding by Ofsted, on Thursday chanting "Barclay, Barclay, shame on you," and "teachers and families must unite, education is a human right".

It comes after a TikToker calling himself Zaki, who has more than 80,000 followers, alleged an eight-year-old pupil had been "bullied, harassed and mentally traumatised by his teachers" because he is Palestinian. In the clip, which has attracted more than 1,000 comments, he says parents were told they and their children could be referred to the government's Prevent anti-terrorism programme after students showed support

for Palestine on Children in Need day on 17 November.

He also claims 170 parents signed a letter of complaint against the school, citing concerns over “freedom of speech, disparity of approach and Islamophobia”.

The boy’s father has been quoted as claiming his son was subjected to punishments because he refused to remove a small Palestine flag patch stitched into his coat.

Novara Media reported that the boy’s parents sent a letter to the headteacher and governors, saying the action taken had left him “distressed, hurt, humiliated, helpless, withdrawn and fearful”. *There are a couple of nasty pieces of work scribbling for Novara Media.*

5 Pillars has also got in on the act

BREAKING: Parents are protesting outside London's Barclay Primary School amid a row with Muslim parents over alleged anti-Palestine censorship. pic.twitter.com/32E8XEV74K

– 5Pillars (@5Pillarsuk) [December 21, 2023](#)

The school denied the allegations, saying: “It is very unfortunate and distressing that this misinformation is being used to target a primary school”.

Some social media users have cited an apparent letter from the school warning that “inappropriate comments made at school or demonstrated at school including extremist or divisive comments can and will lead to formal meetings with the school, referrals to the Prevent team or the hate crime team in Waltham Forest”.

The school said in a statement that it had “never reported anyone to Prevent at the school”, though it is “bound by our legal duty under Prevent”.

One protester, who was not named, told Sky News: "The school had a massive Ukrainian flag outside and promoted the fact that they were supporting Ukraine. We have a situation today where Israel is attacking Gaza, (er, *October 7th anybody???*) it has been publicised and recorded by Amnesty International and the United Nations that Israel has been committing war crimes. Why is it that they're not allowing an eight-year-old child to wear the badge of his homeland, his heritage?"



Another protester, a woman wearing a keffiyeh scarf, said: "This is where the whole debate for [the eight-year-old

child] starts is that he is Palestinian and the badge is his cultural and religious identity, and that is why everyone is so enraged about it."

The school had been due to remain open until Friday, but a statement posted online on Wednesday said it would close that day due to "escalating threats against staff and the school, based on malicious fabrications being broadcast by various media outlets. . . This decision has been made after careful reflection and because we need the school to be a safe place for the children and staff," it added.

The school said it had the support of the Department for Education, Ofsted and the police and "will take any and all necessary steps to protect our pupils, staff and values".