

Extra support to safeguard political impartiality in schools

New guidance to support teachers in tackling sensitive issues in the classroom in a politically impartial way is being published today, Thursday 17 February.

Teaching about political issues and the differing views on these is an essential part of the curriculum, helping pupils to form their own opinions and prepare them for later life.

The new guidance will help teachers and schools navigate issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the legacy of the British Empire or societal responses to racism in accordance with the law, which states that teachers must not promote partisan political views and should offer a balanced overview of opposing views when political issues are taught.

It follows commitments made last year to develop specific guidance on this issue.

Practical examples include:

- When teaching about the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK, teachers should not present discriminatory opposing beliefs held at the time in an uncritical manner or as acceptable in our society today;
- Teachers should not present opposing views to the fundamental underpinnings to our society, like freedom of speech and protection from violence and criminal activity;
- When teaching about racism, teachers should be clear that it has no place in our society – but should avoid advocating for specific organisations that have widely contested aims or views;
- When teaching younger students about historical figures with contested legacies, it may be advisable to focus on what these figures are most renowned for and factual information about them, if teachers think pupils may not be able to understand the contested aspects of their lives, beliefs and actions;
- Schools might invite local political figures, including MPs, councillors, or former pupils involved in politics, to talk to pupils, which can be balanced by inviting a range of people with differing views, or by teaching directly about other candidates and political parties; and
- Following a complaint, it may become clear that during a lesson a teacher suggested to pupils that it is an objective fact that the political system of a certain country is the 'fairest' and 'best' in the world. A proportionate response may be to ask the teacher to clarify during their next lesson that this was their own personal political view.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

I know one of the reasons many teachers feel so passionate about the profession is the remarkable role they play in young people's lives, helping them understand more about themselves and their views of the world.

I don't want there to be any barriers – real or perceived – to teachers' vital work in this space, which is why I am reinforcing that no subject is off-limits in the classroom, as long as it is treated in an age-appropriate way, with sensitivity and respect, and without promoting contested theories as fact.

Clearer guidance on political impartiality is just one part of my wider work to give children the best possible education as the government continues to prioritise skills, schools and families, to enable young people to reach the full height of their potential.

In the rare cases where parents or carers have concerns about teaching of politically contentious issues, the guidance will provide a plain English reference point for discussions with head teachers, helping resolve issues more quickly and easily.

The guidance makes clear that in identifying political issues, teachers should be mindful that they sometimes do not relate directly to government policy, for example a campaign for a business to boycott trade with a certain country.

It also clarifies the requirement for teachers to make a 'balanced presentation of opposing views' on political issues does not mean that pupils must be taught about an opposite view to every view which is covered, or that different views must be given equal time in teaching or that those views cannot be critically assessed.

The new guidance is expected to provide reassurance to the vast majority of schools that they are already meeting the legal requirements in place.

Chief Executive of Star Academies Sir Hamid Patel CBE said:

Schools play a crucial role in equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge to debate topical issues in an informed way.

This guidance provides helpful clarification on securing impartiality, with examples that will support teachers in their decision making about the curriculum and its delivery.

Chief Executive of Outwood Grange Academies Trust Martyn Oliver said:

The requirement for schools to act with political impartiality has existed for many years and the vast majority of schools manage this with great sensitivity and expertise.

This guidance is a welcome addition to these duties placed on schools as it provides practical examples and will help school leaders consider political neutrality in their curriculum design.

The guidance does not seek to limit what schools can and should teach to children but helps them when faced with teaching contested events and navigating 'fake news' and clashing opinions and truths.

The guidance applies to all schools, including academies and independent schools, but not early years settings, 16-19 academies, further education colleges or universities. A short leaflet for schools and the full guidance will be available on gov.uk.

Joint statement on UK-Australia virtual summit: 16 February 2022

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP, and the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, met virtually on 16 February (GMT). They reaffirmed the unique relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom, built on shared values and common interests, and sustained by the deep bonds between our peoples. The Leaders reiterated their commitment to support a rules-based international order free from coercion, where the sovereign rights of all nations are respected and disputes are settled peacefully and in accordance with international law.

The Prime Ministers discussed the concerning situation on Ukraine's border. They emphasised their unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. They agreed the need for de-escalation and underscored that any further Russian incursion in Ukraine would be a massive strategic mistake and have a stark humanitarian cost.

The Prime Ministers also discussed their countries' shared commitment to promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. They agreed that, together with partners, they would ensure a free, open, inclusive and prosperous region. In that context, the UK committed £25 million to strengthen regional resilience in areas including cyberspace, state threats and maritime security. This complements Australia's deep and longstanding involvement in regional security. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working with ASEAN and other partners in the region to ensure their countries' support meets the region's needs.

Leaders pledged to deepen and intensify cooperation across several key pillars.

Trade and Investment

The Prime Ministers applauded the conclusion of an ambitious, comprehensive and modern Free Trade Agreement – the UK's first entirely new FTA negotiated since leaving the European Union. They welcomed the opportunities this would bring, and pledged to support strengthened ties between industries to realise these prospects. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the FTA entering into force as soon as possible so our exporters, producers, workers, businesses and consumers can enjoy the benefits of this gold standard deal. The Prime Ministers acknowledged and applauded the major bilateral investments between the two countries. Australian superfunds and asset managers have invested tens of billions of pounds in UK infrastructure and renewable energy, supporting the UK's Net Zero ambition and generating substantial returns for Australian savers and pensioners. They strongly encouraged investors to continue to seek out opportunities.

Leaders highlighted significant progress to support critical minerals supply chains, including through the establishment of a Joint Working Group on critical minerals in 2021. Australia and the UK are continuing to identify investment opportunities that would bolster Australia's critical minerals sector and the UK's manufacturing and energy ambitions, while supporting sustainable governance practices and international standards, research and development, and more resilient supply chains. They announced plans for a joint Australia-UK supply chain resilience capability building initiative which will engage interested countries to develop and improve public sector approaches to managing critical supply chain risks.

The Prime Ministers confirmed their commitment to a free, fair, inclusive and rules-based trade and investment environment and opposed the use of economic coercion. They reaffirmed their resolve to uphold and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core.

Prime Minister Morrison welcomed progress made by the UK toward accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Both leaders look forward to continuing to work to complete UK accession as soon as possible.

AUKUS

Prime Minister Johnson and Prime Minister Morrison reaffirmed the commitment of Australia and the United Kingdom to AUKUS, working alongside the United States, as a cornerstone of their shared efforts to promote an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific. Since AUKUS was announced in September 2021, all three partners have made significant progress in their collective endeavour to provide the Royal Australian Navy with a conventional-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability at the earliest possible date.

The Leaders welcomed the entry into force of the Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPIA) on 8 February 2022, making it possible for the United Kingdom and the United States to share naval nuclear propulsion information with Australia. The agreement demonstrates the

commitment of the three AUKUS partners to operating according to the highest standards of nuclear stewardship, in line with their long-standing global leadership on non-proliferation.

Leaders further welcomed the presence in Australia of UK and US officials to provide expert advice on the many facets of nuclear stewardship needed to operate a nuclear powered submarine capability. Significant progress is also being made by AUKUS partners on Advanced Capability collaboration, with officials from the three countries meeting this week in London to discuss cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and additional undersea capabilities. The Prime Ministers expressed their determination to continue to work closely together, in lockstep with President Biden, to make AUKUS a success, and looked forward to the next set of trilateral discussions at the end of the month in Australia.

Security and Defence

The Prime Ministers recalled the excellent collaboration between the Australian and UK navies, in particular during the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Indo-Pacific. They committed to increased joint naval activity in the Indo Pacific: the UK has deployed two Offshore Patrol Vessels to the Indo-Pacific on an enduring basis.

The Prime Ministers committed to build societal awareness and resilience to foreign interference and strengthen our collective toolkits to detect, disrupt and deter current and future hostile activity by state actors, including the use of misinformation and disinformation. They noted that the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) were an important pillar for regional security, and committed to maintain strong cooperation with FPDA partners.

The Leaders committed to deepening cooperation on online safety and security, including: tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse, preventing terrorist use of the internet, and through a future bilateral agreement. The Leaders recognised the economic and social benefits that stem from a safe and secure online environment, as well as the need to proactively mitigate the risks of harm in a rapidly developing technological landscape. They emphasised their continued commitment to maintaining capabilities vital to the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, through tightly controlled lawful access to communications content and appropriate safeguards, and collaboration to address emerging threats. Leaders welcomed the Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership to deter and respond to malicious cyber threats.

Climate and Environment

The Prime Ministers reaffirmed the two countries' shared commitment to drive ambitious action to address climate change and its impacts, including through implementation of the Glasgow Climate Pact and the Paris Agreement, to keep 1.5 degrees of warming within reach, strengthen adaptation and resilience, and mobilise finance. The UK and Australia have committed to taking action this decade, with Nationally Determined Contributions reflecting their highest possible ambition. The UK has committed to reducing its emissions at least 68% by 2030 on 1990 levels and Australia has committed to reducing its

emissions 26-28% by 2030 on 2005 levels, and is on track to achieve a reduction of up to 35% on 2005 levels by 2030.

Prime Ministers agreed to continue to work together to reach net zero by 2050 and agreed to accelerate the development of technologies essential for reaching this goal through our Clean Technology Partnership, and with other countries through the Glasgow Breakthroughs, Mission Innovation and the Clean Energy Ministerial. They emphasised our strong support for efforts to facilitate inclusive, clean energy transitions in the Indo-Pacific and beyond and agreed to work together through country platforms. Prime Minister Johnson welcomed Australia hosting an Indo-Pacific Clean Energy Supply Chain Forum in mid-2022, to help develop and preserve diverse, resilient and competitive clean energy supply chains.

The Prime Ministers reaffirmed their countries' commitment to nature based solutions and emphasised support for the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

Health

The Prime Ministers also set out their determination to overcome the current pandemic and to be better prepared for the future. Leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to expanding access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, – advancing toward vaccinating 70 per cent of the population in all countries by mid-2022 – including through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) and potential contributions for the upcoming CEPI replenishment. They recommitted to helping build a more responsive and resilient global health system, with a sustainably funded World Health Organization (WHO) at its core. They committed to work to ensure the new international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response that empowers a stronger, more independent WHO. They reaffirmed support for efforts to identify the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Science and Technology

Leaders recognised the breadth of science and technology cooperation between the two countries, and its importance to their mutual strategic advantage. They acknowledged the first anniversary of the UK-Australia Space Bridge agreement, and successful partnerships across climate, agriculture, cyber-security and communications. They agreed to enhance the agreement with a UK commitment to £1m for Earth Observation in Agroclimate to support global climate resilience. The Prime Ministers championed wider science and technology collaborations, through a Science Partnerships Series. This Series will bring our research communities closer together to co-create world class innovation and ground breaking science. Leaders agreed to pursue closer cooperation on quantum science and technology, as we develop our own national strategies.

Indo-Pacific cooperation

Building on recent discussions at AUKMIN, Leaders renewed their commitment to

an open, inclusive, resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific and committed to strengthening collaboration in the region. Leaders agreed on the importance of advancing gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

Prime Minister Morrison welcomed the UK's 'Indo-Pacific Tilt' and leaders made clear their long-term commitment to the region. Leaders welcomed the recent publication of Indo-Pacific Strategies by the United States and European Union and reaffirmed their commitment to work with these partners.

Leaders highlighted cooperation between Australia and the United Kingdom in support of Tonga following the recent eruption and tsunami.

Leaders welcomed deep cooperation with ASEAN, including the establishment of the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, ASEAN's first, and the UK's status as an official ASEAN Dialogue Partner. Leaders reiterated both countries' strong support for ASEAN centrality, ASEAN-led regional architecture and ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific. They expressed grave concerns about the situation in Myanmar and called for the immediate cessation of violence against civilian populations, the release of all those arbitrarily detained, including Australian Professor Sean Turnell, and unhindered humanitarian access. They urged the Myanmar military regime to implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.

Leaders expressed grave concerns about credible reports of human rights violations in Xinjiang, and called on China to protect the rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

Leaders further underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and expressed support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations, as a member where statehood is not a prerequisite and as an observer or guest where it is.

Leaders recognised the importance of countries being able to exercise their maritime rights and freedoms in the South China Sea consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Leaders reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral actions that could escalate tensions and undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order, including militarisation, coercion, and intimidation.

PM to boost historic UK-Australia partnership

- UK to strengthen partnership with Australia in defence, security, climate and trade
- The Prime Minister will speak to Scott Morrison in a video call this

evening to agree new bilateral cooperation

- UK expected to announce £25m to support security and resilience in the Indo-Pacific, as well as new defence and climate-science projects

The United Kingdom and Australia are expected to agree new measures to boost bilateral cooperation and work more closely together in the Indo-Pacific, in a leaders conference call this evening [Wednesday 16th Feb].

The Prime Minister will speak to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison via secure video call to discuss shared defence and security issues, including the current situation in Ukraine, as well as trade and technology collaboration.

As part of the UK's tilt to the Indo-Pacific, the Prime Minister will announce £25m for regional projects to strengthen resilience in cyberspace, state threats and maritime security. The UK aims to be the European partner of choice in the Indo-Pacific and we are committed to working with Australia to promote peace and security in the region.

Following the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement signed in December, the Prime Minister will also highlight opportunities for British workers, businesses and consumers to reap the benefits of the comprehensive and wide-ranging deal.

He will welcome two major new investments, with Australian fintech firm PEXA expanding into the UK as its first international market and UK financial services company Octopus Group developing a major greenfield renewables project. In a boost for UK-Australia collaboration on clean tech, Octopus Australia is partnering with an Indigenous business group to create Desert Springs Octopus, a project worth £26bn over ten years that will deliver wind, solar and hydrogen energy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK and Australia are working together to enhance regional security in the Indo-Pacific, drive innovation in science and green technology and boost opportunities for our businesses and citizens.

Our nations are forging a new partnership from a historic alliance, fit for the next century and grounded in our shared priorities on security, democracy and free and fair trade.

The leaders are expected underline their personal commitment to the AUKUS partnership, including the collective endeavour with the United States to provide the Royal Australian Navy with a conventional-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability, and to commit to increased joint naval activity in the Indo Pacific.

The UK and Australia will also boost cooperation on science and technology through a new Science Partnership Series to bring our world-class research

communities together. The UK will enhance the UK-Australia Space Bridge Agreement, agreed a year ago, with a new £1m commitment for Earth Observation in Agroclimate to help farmers deal with a changing climate. Both countries will recommit to delivering on the Glasgow Climate Pact and Paris Agreement to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.

[Home Secretary call with Italian Interior Minister](#)

News story

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel discusses the current situation in Ukraine with Italian Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese.



This afternoon (16 February 2022) Home Secretary Priti Patel spoke to Luciana Lamorgese, Italy's Interior Minister, to discuss the current situation in Ukraine.

In what was a constructive discussion, both ministers reasserted that like-minded states must co-operate in their response to the situation in order to ensure that innocent lives are protected.

Moreover, they underlined their desire for a diplomatic resolution to be found.

The Home Secretary and Minister Lamorgese agreed that the safety of UK and Italian citizens still in Ukraine was uppermost in their minds and that it was also important to ensure that the interests of Ukrainian nationals in their respective countries were also protected.

The discussion also touched upon a variety of other matters, including in the field of cybersecurity.

The ministers agreed to speak again in the coming days.

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[Change of British High Commissioner to New Zealand: Iona Thomas](#)

Press release

Ms Iona Thomas OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to New Zealand and Governor of the Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands.



Ms Iona Thomas OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to New Zealand and Governor of the Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands in succession to Ms Laura Clarke OBE. Ms Thomas will take up her appointment during August 2022.

Curriculum Vitae

2019 to present	Islamabad, Political Counsellor
2017 to 2018	FCO, Additional Deputy Director Middle East and North Africa Directorate
2015 to 2017	Tunis, Deputy Head of Mission Tripoli and Libya Office
2012 – 2015	New York, Spokesperson and Head of Press and Public Affairs UK Permanent Representation to the United Nations
2012	FCO, Private Secretary to Baroness Warsi, Minister of State
2010 to 2012	FCO, Afghan Department, Team Leader – Political Internal
2006 to 2010	Department for Communities and Local Government, Private Secretary to the Secretary of State and Team Leader, Prevent

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