

# Primary school embroiled in Palestine row may be forced to close

*This is Barclay School in Leyton, not my old school from 60 years ago but nearby. I posted about the threats that caused them to [close early over Christmas](#). Leyton is east London, the other side of the Greater London area to Michaela School in Brent (west London) also facing intimidation and threats from aggressive Muslims. While Michaela School is a secondary school taking students from age 11 to 18, who can be said to know their own minds, Barclay is a primary school, 4-11; ie children who will be directed by parents and adult siblings.*

A second school accused of Islamophobia may be forced to close its doors over its headteacher's decision to ban children from wearing pro-Palestinian badges, [The Telegraph](#) can reveal.

Barclay Primary School in Leyton, east London, sent a letter to parents warning that it may have to "revert to online learning" if the safety of children and staff cannot be guaranteed after it had received bomb threats over the policy.

Protests at Barclay Primary were triggered on Dec 21 after a TikTok video alleging that an eight-year-old pupil was being bullied by teachers for being Palestinian went viral.

The protests forced the school to shut two days early at the end of last term because of "escalating threats against staff" caused by "malicious fabrications" The backlash has continued into the new year, with police officers stationed at the school amid "allegations of anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia towards staff members".

In a letter seen by The Telegraph, Lion Academy Trust, which runs Barclay Primary School, wrote to all parents on Jan 10,

warning that measures were being taken “to secure the school for the benefit of children and staff” amid “despicable threats”.

It said that over the Christmas period, “a serious threat was received in writing” and shared with police, and that on Jan 9, an anonymous caller “made a series of racial slurs and a further threat to commit criminal damage (arson) against the school and to individual staff”

Among the measures being taken are hiring private security, securing additional support from the Metropolitan Police, closing the main reception and installing CCTV.

The letter added that “further measures” are being considered if “this situation does not revert to a normal mode of operation” or if “the safety of children or staff cannot be assured”. This means that officials will “close the school and revert to online learning for as long as we believe it is necessary”.

It concluded: “This is the option of last resort – but please be aware that, should staff continue to be threatened, then we will have no option but to close the school. Additionally, if any parent or individual is proven to be involved in instigating this campaign against the school, via their actions online or in-person, we will act to ban those individuals from attending the site(s).”

On Jan 8, Justin James, the executive head teacher of Barclay Primary School, had written to parents saying that no evidence to support any allegations of bullying or misconduct had been found through either an external or internal investigation. “Staff have been subject to a severe degree of misconduct and harassment, which now forms the basis of a series of criminal investigations that are currently taking place,” he wrote.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a concerned staff member

at the school said: “Barclay Primary School is currently being targeted by a group of parents who are pushing a political agenda and accusations of Islamophobia by not adhering to the school’s uniform policy. Staff are being intimidated, bullied, abused, threatened and confronted as a result of misinformation and manipulation of the trust for this agenda.

“The bomb threat that was made during the Christmas holiday led to the police being at the school in January for the first week of school, with more anxiety for staff. This has been further escalated by a recent arson threat and severe threats of violence and abuse of staff over the past weeks.

“I personally am scared for my safety and all staff within the school. I am shocked that this is happening to a primary school. I chose to work at this school because it is one of the best in the country and I value its dedication and hard work. What has been happening is unacceptable for the staff and children – no school should be subjected to this.”



Before Christmas, masked men had climbed the school’s fence at night to hang Palestinian flags around its perimeter and protesters gathered

outside the school chanting: “Barclay, shame on you” and “education is under attack”.

Barclay Primary School and Lion Academy Trust declined to comment.

*I found this post of mine in the [archive from 2015](#) when Barclay School led other primary schools in the area (including the one I attended) in banning such young children to take part in Ramadan fasting as it was detrimental to their health and ability to learn at such a young age. I don't know if it was the same head teacher or not.*