



Solutions Not Sides



# BUILDING RESILIENCE

*To Polarisation*



## SENIOR LEADERSHIP RESOURCE



A guide for senior leadership on resilience in the face of school polarisation

# INTRODUCTION



**This document has been created to help schools' Senior Leadership teams and other educational bodies respond to polarisation in the school setting with advice and support**

As educators, we will uphold the right of young people to learn about political issues in an impartial space. We will keep that space free from hate, inequality and violence. We will teach skills of critical thinking, communication, active listening and conflict resolution so they can learn to navigate these issues for themselves.



# CULTURE OF EMPATHY

With school communities, including both staff and students, experiencing deep differences of opinion over the issue of Israel-Palestine, the emotional fallout can feel like the school community is being painfully fractured.

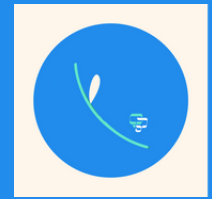
As a school leader, there are ways to ensure that the topic is not shut down, and that you can steer a clear course that allows for the school's values to take precedence, and a culture of empathy to be created.

This can be done through focusing on five key skills:

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Critical thinking
- Social and emotional learning
- Conflict resolution



# OLIVE BRANCH SCHOOL



Becoming an 'Olive Branch School' with SNS means you can put the following steps in place to create this transformative culture:

1. Get training for the school senior leadership on recognising antisemitism and Islamophobia around this topic, then draft a clear policy for the school community regarding this. The policy should strike a balance between ensuring that Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, and Israeli people are protected from hate, but that freedom of expression is also upheld.
2. Create a charter of values for discussions around this issue, and promote it within the school community.
3. Procure the assistance of a professional mediation company to assist in enabling staff members who disagree to talk to one another about their perspectives. SNS can point you to a company that specialises in mediation on this issue.
4. Hold regular educational activities for students that provide diverse perspectives, critical-thinking skills and encourage empathy. These activities should also empower students to understand what kind of action they can take in the UK on political issues they care about.
5. Encourage student leadership and empower a student committee to promote dialogue and conflict resolution among members of the school community.



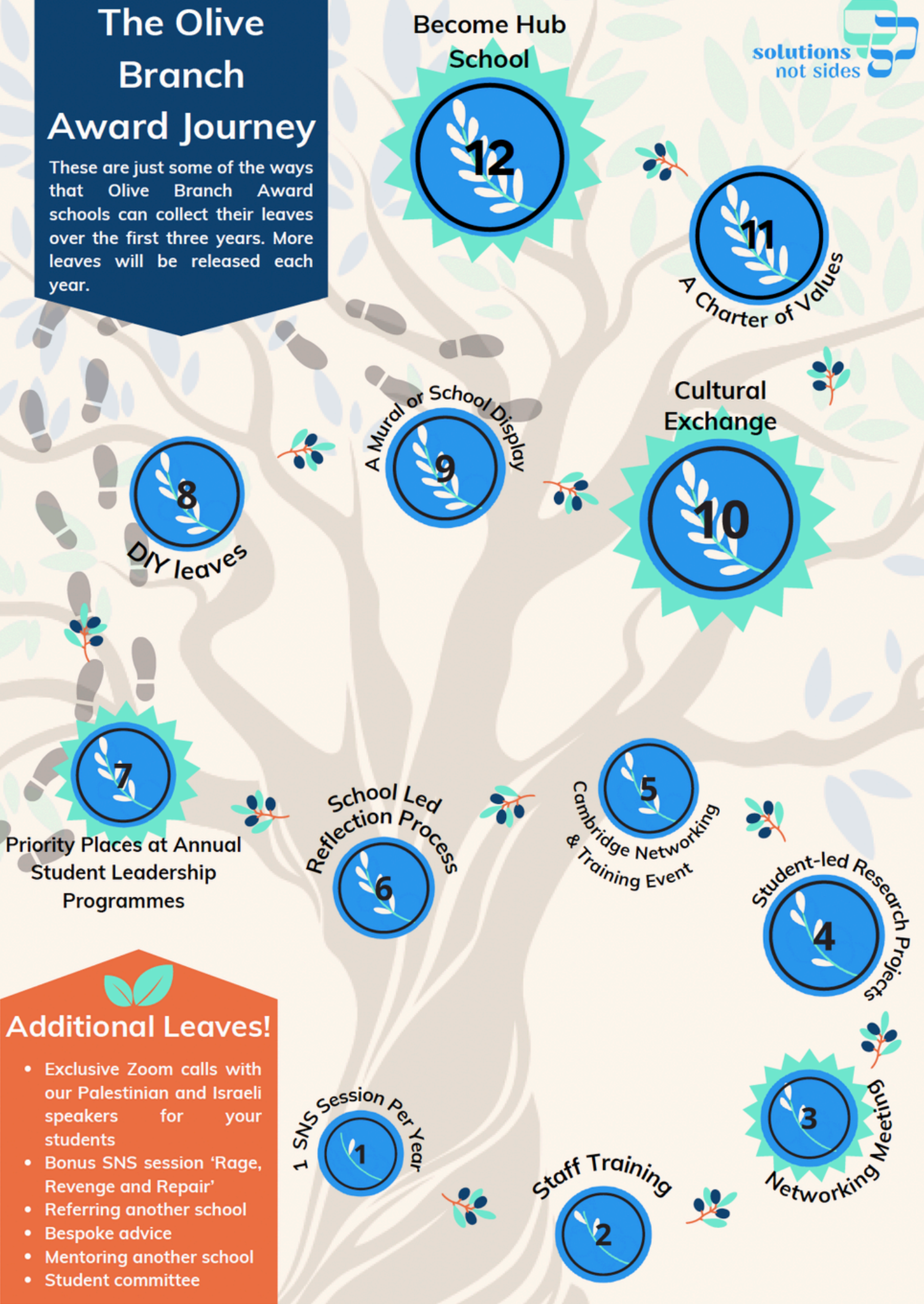
6. Get tough on misinformation and disinformation. Do a fact-finding exercise when there is controversy or conspiracy theories about something, lay out the school's findings and position officially, and stick by it (SNS has a couple of guides on this you can check out on our website).
7. Create visual reminders around the school about the values and approach of your school to difficult conversations.
8. Connect up with other teachers in schools that are also implementing measures to create safe and brave spaces to exchange best practice.
9. Point to extracurricular activities for your students that are empowering and based on humanitarian action, human rights, and conflict resolution.
10. Encourage creative thinking and come up with yet more ideas that are unique to your school!

Please contact SNS if you are interested in becoming an Olive Branch School.



# The Olive Branch Award Journey

These are just some of the ways that Olive Branch Award schools can collect their leaves over the first three years. More leaves will be released each year.



Become Hub School

12

11  
A Charter of Values

Cultural Exchange

10

A Mural or School Display

9

8  
DIY leaves

7  
Priority Places at Annual Student Leadership Programmes

School Led Reflection Process

6

5  
Cambridge Networking & Training Event

4  
Student-led Research Projects

## Additional Leaves!

- Exclusive Zoom calls with our Palestinian and Israeli speakers for your students
- Bonus SNS session 'Rage, Revenge and Repair'
- Referring another school
- Bespoke advice
- Mentoring another school
- Student committee

1 SNS Session Per Year

1

Staff Training

2

3  
Networking Meeting



*Thank You*

## Contact Us



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