

The bishops of the Church of England have formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

During the annual residential meeting of the College of Bishops, which is taking place in Oxford, they agreed a joint statement endorsing the

IHRA definition of antisemitism – including all of its examples – on behalf of the Church.

They also issued a call to everyone in public life to reject any language or actions which could cause "prejudice, stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, culture, origins, identity or beliefs".

The Church of England's interfaith team and national advisers already use the IHRA's definition of antisemitism as the benchmark in their work and ministry.

However, the bishops noted the "necessity of making explicit" the Church's adoption of and adherence to the definition without qualification or exemption.

Last week the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, also spoke of the need for the Church of England to adopt the definition formally.

The Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, said: "The Jewish community, among whom I live in Salford, carry with them the vivid memory and scars of the Holocaust; they know all too well that antisemitism is never far below the surface of our society.

"Today's statement from the Church of England bishops assures them that we will continue to reject such prejudice and bigotry firmly, in line with our practice over 75 years.

"At the same time we will continue to speak out critically when governments here and elsewhere act in ways that our faith calls us to challenge."

The full statement adopted by the College of Bishops reads:

*"In the context of 75 years of friendship marked by the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews, the Church of England's College of Bishops now notes the necessity of making explicit its adoption of and adherence to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, including all examples, without qualification or exemption.*

*"We urge anyone involved in our political, spiritual and national life to reject all language and activity that leads to prejudice, stigma or hatred towards people on the grounds of their religion, culture, origins, identity or beliefs."*