



הכנסת אורחים

# Welcoming Israeli Families into our schools

How the UK Jewish community responded  
during the 2023 Israel Hamas war

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## **Preface**

In the first days after October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Jewish world was in deep shock. Never, in the past 70 years, had such terrible slaughter been wrought on the Jewish people.

Once those first days passed, initiatives started all over the world to try to help and support Israel and Israelis. The UK was no exception. This report examines what took place in the UK to support Israeli families who were here temporarily, and wanted their children to attend school while they were in this country.

A great deal of good work took place, with a lot of joined up thinking. What wasn't happening was any systematic documentation of what was happening. So, I offered to gather the documents and evidence, speak to those who had been key individuals in making things happen, and interview some of the head teachers and deputy heads to discuss their experiences of having welcomed Israeli families temporarily into their schools at very short notice.

This is a record of a moment in time. It also points to some lessons learned, which may be valuable going forward for the UK Jewish education community. Most of all, it shows a community working together very speedily to help in a time of need.

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## Executive summary

- The initiatives that took place to support Israeli families temporarily in the UK started within three days after 7<sup>th</sup> October.
- Key organisations in the Jewish Community came together to help: JAFI, UJIA, PaJeS, CST.
- They were supported by other organisations in various ways, e.g. JVN, and by many individuals.
- There was a huge gap between the large number of expressions of interest in school places and eventual places taken up.
- Each Local Education Authority Admissions process was different from each other, and LEAs waived usual procedures to be accommodating and speed up the admissions processes.
- Almost all temporary Israeli families were able to visit their UK school prior to accepting a place and starting school.
- By November, more than 100 children had been placed in schools, mostly in the primary sector.
- Whilst each school dealt uniquely with the situation of having temporary families in their schools, there were many commonalities, e.g. acquiring school uniform, communication, pairing with other Hebrew speakers.
- Relating to the school system in the UK has been a steep learning curve for these families.
- PaJeS has been significantly involved in providing support, especially in admissions advice, Hebrew, wellbeing, funding and resources.
- A concern at the beginning, which was that the regular school population would be disadvantaged by schools accepting these additional families, has not materialised.
- By the beginning of December 2023, although some families are still arriving, the number of Israelis temporarily in UK schools has already begun to decrease.
- Some families who are leaving, want an option to return and want schools to “save” their places for them, which challenges the schools.

## Context

On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, Air raid sirens begin sounding in Jerusalem around 6:30 a.m. local time, warning citizens of an attack in progress and to immediately take cover. An estimated 2,200 rockets were fired toward southern and central Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, by Hamas.

As we know, armed Hamas terrorists entered Israel, slaughtering people at kibbutzim and small towns. Video footage shows Hamas terrorists taking Israeli citizens -- including mothers, children and the elderly -- hostage and carrying them across the Gaza border. Videos posted online show a packed all-night music festival in a desert in southern Israel near the Gaza border being attacked by rockets and armed Hamas terrorists on the ground. The footage shows women and children being dragged away in vehicles and driven back into Gaza..

This was the worst civilian massacre in Israel's history, and the worst Jewish loss of life since the Holocaust.

In response, Israel launched operation "Swords of Iron", declaring war on Hamas. The declared purpose was to destroy Hamas and bring back the more than 200 hostages. By the beginning of December, this goal had been partially met.

Thousands of Israelis living outside the country returned home in the days and weeks after 7<sup>th</sup> October, to fight, to re-join families and to show solidarity with their country.

Many others chose to leave temporarily. These temporary leavers are mostly families with children. Many of them live in areas in the South or North of Israel and have been temporarily displaced. Others are fleeing trauma and fear from any and every municipality. According to the Times of Israel (22.10.23), 200,000 Israelis are in this situation. They have fled to nearby places of safety – Rome, Cyprus, Greece. Hundreds of them have also come to the UK. Family profiles include those with dual citizenship – some of whom were evacuated on government repatriation flights, most have family or friends in the UK, some were re-located to UK branches of their work/businesses and others were Israeli families visiting the UK for Sukkot, who could not, or chose not to return to their homes after 7<sup>th</sup> October. Most of those families have some financial resources on which to draw. There were two other groups of temporary families who came to the UK – first, people from the South of Israel who were displaced, often arriving with one parent only, and often

with no money or resources; and second, war refugees from Russia who had gone to Israel since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war. This group have no connections specifically to the UK, many have one member or more of the family with Israeli passports, and the UK has been seen as the next safe haven. According to the Jewish Agency, the UK has been a place of choice for those two groups particularly due to its' geographical proximity to Israel "*it's not as far as America*".

These families do not know how long they will be in the UK. The vast majority see this situation as very temporary. But while they are here, they want their children to have as settled an experience as possible. Hence the response of the Jewish Community in the UK, which is reported below – the temporary integration of Israeli children into UK Jewish schools.

## **Initial response of the community**

Soon after the events of 7<sup>th</sup> October, families began to arrive from Israel to the UK. UJIA and JAFI took the lead in co-ordinating provision, initially focusing on the provision of day camps. The first group to offer help was the *Tsofim* – the Israeli Scouts Movement. In the first few hours after 7<sup>th</sup> October, they offered to run a day camp for Israeli children who had arrived. 60 families signed up, and only 8 children actually showed up for the camp, which was run in conjunction with JAFI. Vadim Blumin, at the Jewish Agency spoke of the valuable lessons learned. One of these was to charge a fee for any future *Tsofim* camps to ensure commitment from families.

Marc Shoffren, Head Teacher of Alma Jewish Primary School, was involved from the beginning. He had already accepted some Israeli families into his school during the summer of 2023. They know families who were in the UK temporarily as a result of the atrocities on 7<sup>th</sup> and ensuing war and one family in particular came to Marc to ask for his help. A plan to open a class in his school for Israeli children was deemed impractical, particularly when it was clear just how many families there were. The first initiative was to run a day camp for Israeli children of 6 – 11 years old during the half term week which started on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. It was completely organised within four days. Forty children attended. Marc said

*We could have had 60 kids if we had also taken 5 year olds, but we just didn't have the level of staff.*

Parents and teachers from Akiva and Etz Chaim schools helped out. The Jewish Agency and UJIA created a financial structure that enabled the day camp to happen and organised for the *shinshinim* (gap year Israelis working for a year in the UK) to help. Local kosher restaurants donated meals.

During that week, Marc worked with PaJeS (Partnerships for Jewish Schools), UJIA (United Jewish Israel Appeal) and JAFI (the Jewish Agency) who were capturing data on these families. He suggested that the information gathered should also include expressions of interest in school places in Jewish schools when they re-opened after the half term break the following week.

PaJeS sent an initial email to all Head teachers of Jewish primary and secondary schools, to ascertain where there were vacancies in the schools. 19 schools replied to say they had available places. This included three secondary schools, and two schools out of London. We know that since then, at least two further primaries, and one further secondary school have taken in temporary Israeli families. The schools who offered to help spanned the denominational spectrum from Reform, through Pluralist/Community, to modern Orthodox and strictly Orthodox.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October, JAFI, PaJeS and UJIA sent a letter to all Israeli families who had expressed interest, welcoming them to the UK and giving information about applying for a school (see Appendix One). The information letter was in both English and Ivrit, although challengingly, once parents had clicked through to the websites giving information about applying for school places, all of that information and instruction was only in English.

As of 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023, there were 193 expressions of interest for places in the greater London area, 5 for places in Manchester, and 12 in Leeds. There was a significant gap between the large number of families who expressed interest for a school place for their children and the eventual number of places taken up (103).

Whilst the focus for many of the initiatives was London, other centres of Jewish life in the UK were also prompted to action. An example of this is the Leeds Jewish community. Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October, the schools, welfare board, charities and synagogues came together for a community meeting to decide what to do, Sagi Yehezkel, Deputy

Head of Brodetsky primary school, wrote a Handbook for any in-coming families, explaining life in the UK, Jewish life in Leeds and the school and other systems new families would need to navigate (see Appendix Eight). As Sagi said

*The community came together. But there was a lot of panic, because we didn't know how many families would come to Leeds. In the end we realised there were multiple calls related to the same families, so fewer actually came than originally expected.*

PaJeS, meanwhile also contacted all schools to ask what additional resources they would need to accommodate Israeli families at short notice. Answers, received from 14 schools, broadly fell into three categories: financial support, EAL (English as an additional language) support and pastoral support.

In those first weeks after October 7<sup>th</sup>, it was hard for us in the UK to know how to do anything to help. People in the community donated money, goods, and have been in regular contact with friends and family. But overall, there has been a sense of frustration and powerlessness – what else could we do? All of these initial support initiatives, as well as what has followed, has boosted the morale of people who want to do something and has given individuals and institutions in the UK a sense of

*Doing something that's right. We've been able to do something to help.* (HT, London)

*Coming together as a community.* (Deputy HT, Leeds)

## **Securing places in our schools**

Admissions to schools in the UK are the responsibility of school governors/trustees and every school sets its admissions policy. Usually, applications to state-maintained schools are administered by the local education authority in which the school is located. This is generally a long and often an unwieldy process, and families are given dates by which applications have to be made for places the following September. Our Israeli families, however, arrived after the start of the school year, and so their applications to schools had to be dealt with in the same way as normal in-year applications to schools. In some local authorities, this still meant that the applications had to go through the local authority, in



others, the schools were advised that they could accept direct applications, which was a far quicker process. Some local authorities which published strict rules about in-year applications, for example Enfield and Manchester, nevertheless allowed the local Jewish primary schools to process their own applications directly. They then had to complete documentation which was sent on to the local authority. Leeds council waived the usual five-week admissions process, which they shortened to a couple of days. In the Brent local education authority, JFS were able to interview children on a Thursday, and welcome them into the classroom the following Tuesday. The outcome of the shortened processes was that all the children were able to start school only a few days after applications were made. Other local authorities, for example Barnet, were initially very cautious, and reluctant to expedite admissions, but then proved to be very helpful in allowing additional students to be placed in schools.

The PAN (Published Admission Number) is the maximum number of pupils that the admission authority will admit to each year group. Usually, the maximum number of children in a class will be set at 30 students. Each school has a PAN for the whole school. This number will have been agreed with the Local Authority. The published number is divided evenly into each year group to arrive at the PAN for each year group. Some of our schools were able to fill vacancies in certain year groups with Israeli children. Other schools agreed to go over the number of students in their PAN, and some schools went to 31 or 32 children in a class.

An additional challenge was trying to ensure that all children from a family were placed in the same school. It was unreasonable to expect families to have their children split between two or more schools. Apart from anything else, many of the families did not have access to a car to travel from one school to another. Many families were here with only one parent – the father usually being the parent who stayed in Israel. One of the outcomes of keeping families together was that not all children were placed in the year group that they belonged according to their date of birth. With younger children, educationally this was not always a challenge, particularly because Israeli children do not start formal school until later than in the UK. With some older children, the outcome was that in some schools, children who would usually have been placed in year seven in a secondary school, were placed in year six in a primary school, giving them a smaller, more nurturing environment. There was a small intake of Israeli children at secondary

schools, notably JFS, Leeds JFS, and Immanuel College, but the overwhelming majority of children were placed in primary schools.

PaJeS and UJIA explored the possibility of a scheme whereby Israeli children of high school age would be able to access their Israeli school curriculum from the UK. Nothing came to fruition, although some Israeli teenagers have had access to on-line learning, provided by their own schools in Israel. One of the few advantages of the recent global pandemic was that schools and students world-wide became very used to remote and virtual classroom experiences. Many high schools in Israel have reverted to remote learning for all or part of the day since 7<sup>th</sup> October, and learning has been accessible for students wherever they are geographically.

Not all families found places in Jewish schools, and a small minority of families chose a non-Jewish school either because they were unable to secure places for all their children in one school, or because they were not living near a Jewish school. In addition, one Deputy Head Teacher told us about families who took their children out of the Jewish school, moving them to a non-Jewish school because the twice daily journey was prohibitively long.

Most families were able to visit the school they were offered, prior to starting. This was an important part of the induction process into the UK school system. At the same time, PaJeS commissioned the Phoenix Education Consultancy to develop a document in Hebrew to introduce families to the UK and the UK school system (see Appendix Four). This was specifically aimed at the incoming children and the engaging visuals illustrated the text, which was in Hebrew and English.

There was an advantage in that many of the schools were on half term break from 23<sup>rd</sup> October for a week, and this meant that the senior staff in the schools had time to sort out the requests for places, completing the large amount of administration required without the distraction of the normal school day. The fact that they enthusiastically spent a large proportion of their half term break on this task should be applauded by the community.

By the end of October, more than 70 children had been placed in primary schools, and under 20 in secondary schools.

## Opportunities and challenges

As soon as schools knew they would be welcoming Israeli families, a variety of strategies were put in place to deal with different elements of the situation. As we were told

*Schools are becoming the hosts and the Israelis are the guests. First, we want them to feel comfortable.* (PaJeS, London)

Practical considerations were the first issues to overcome once Israeli children were accepted into schools. Who would cover the costs they immediately incurred? This included school lunches (which are subsidised for all children by the Mayor of London for 2023-4 in all State funded schools in the capital city), school uniforms, stationery and resources. One school responded as follows:

*We're giving them free school meals and we have a collection of second-hand uniforms – we've given them those. We're not expecting them to have sweatshirts with the school logo on – Asda plain blue is fine.* (HT, London)

All schools have collections of second hand uniform and all schools I spoke with said that the new Israeli families had been given uniform items from these collections. Class representatives in several of the schools whatsapped their groups, sending messages explaining who would be joining the class, so that families would welcome the new children and their parents immediately. Israeli and Hebrew speaking parents already in the class especially were encouraged to reach out and make connections with the new families. In one school, Israeli children had a slow induction into school, starting with attendance for a couple of hours, and slowly increasing that over a week or so until they were in school for a full school day.

Most of the Israeli children speak some English. One of the reasons for their re-location to the UK is having a family connection here, although there are some who had been re-located due to work, and others who have no links to family or work in the UK. Many of them, regardless of the fluency of their spoken English, have poor English reading and writing skills. They have required additional support in the classroom. None of our schools have capacity within their current resources to cope effectively with the extra demand. Schools asked their staff and parent body for names of anyone they knew who would be prepared to volunteer in school, temporarily. One headteacher asked staff at PaJeS for help, was re-routed to JVN (the Jewish Volunteering Network) and was provided with four

Hebrew speakers to help support temporary children in our schools. JVN has not traditionally worked to provide volunteers for schools, and this has been a good way of connecting with them. Other schools have had ex-teachers returning as volunteers, as well as parents stepping up to help support Israelis in their classrooms. But all schools are under-resourced to deal with these additional, overseas guests, even with these extra elements in place.

Part of the challenge is that our primary schools do not have sufficient EAL (English as an Additional Language) capacity. The Bell Foundation (2018) summarises best practice in integrating new arrivals with EAL into a primary school. They acknowledge that new arrivals are a very diverse group, and that children learn best when they feel secure and valued, so the first challenge is to make these children feel welcome and help staff to make appropriate plans to include them. Our schools did just that. One school arranged home visits, in the same way as they would for any new student. This gave individual families opportunities to be able to discuss specific needs with a teacher from their child's new school.

At one secondary school, the EAL co-ordinator was the person responsible for managing the intake of temporary Israeli children. The advantage of a school which already had processes and structures in place to accommodate and support Israeli students contributed to the fact that the integration of the temporary children was able to happen very smoothly:

*There was nothing dramatic about it. It's all been very low key. (HT, Secondary school)*

All the schools have put in place whatever they have been able to do to integrate and support the children. In one school, the Israeli children meet in a group for half an hour every morning, with an Ivrit speaking volunteer or teacher. Another school has a *shinshinit* (Israeli gap year student) running a Hebrew book club twice a week. Children in several schools have been paired with Hebrew speakers already in the school. In another school, one to one support with a Hebrew speaker has been put in place daily, as a check-in.

Generally, however, our schools have inadequate EAL material and human resources to deal with an additional influx of EAL children. As one teacher observed

*It's like having two schools in one room*

The majority of the children have said that they miss home. One interviewee said:

*None of them really want to be here*

Some have been very unsettled in the classroom, and many have challenging behaviours exacerbated by the situation in which they find themselves. Many are anxious and can't bear loud noises. The bangs from fireworks for many days before and after Guy Fawkes Bonfire night on November 5<sup>th</sup>, and during Diwali, made many children nervous and upset. To mitigate for this, one school which was having a planned fire practice, made sure the children knew about it in advance, which was not usual practice, and the planned invacuation drill that the school should have been having was cancelled so as not to cause panic amongst the Israeli children.

One child keeps asking her teacher:

*Where is the safe room? Where is the safe room?*

The children have had no preparation for life in a new school, let alone one in a different country. Some of the children are confused. They have felt they have been uprooted. They are not happy to be in the UK and they miss home. One interviewee told us that the children frequently talk about who they miss – their fathers and grandparents, as well as their friends, left in Israel. Many of them worry about their pets, left behind. The teachers think that the sharing sessions with Hebrew speaking adults are really helpful for the children as this is where they can express themselves in an accepting environment.

The teachers have observed that the Israeli children are far more politically aware than their British peers. Politics are part of their lives. One teacher said that a primary school child asked her "*Do you like Bibi?*", and others talked about having joined the protests and demonstrations before the war with their parents. The teachers are careful not to be drawn into political discussion. They don't talk about the war, or the hostages. They do tell the children a little about life in the UK to help them understand what they are seeing around them – Remembrance Day, Diwali, Bonfire night. The sessions now also discuss how the children will reintegrate when they return to Israel, as some of the families who are still here plan to return to Israel in a few weeks. The children are asked what they will miss from their time in the UK. They say "*their friends*" and express a firm desire to stay in touch with the new friends they have made here in the UK. Out of tragedy can come new links between Israel and the diaspora.

Most of the Israeli children and their parents find much that we take for granted in UK schools alien, for example not using teachers' first names, not having access to teachers' phone numbers. Some of the alienation relates to structures and routines, for example the timing and length of the school day in the UK, breaks and lunchtimes, expectations of behaviour in the classroom and so on. The schools appear to be very quiet and very strict, compared to the ones they have left in Israel. The level of Jewish education and the religious make up of the school community is also an aspect that has been complicated for Israeli families to understand – orthodox schools, for example, where most students are not orthodox in their family practice. These issues and cultural gaps are a challenge for Israeli families who join our schools at any time. The emergency nature of this situation just makes these challenges more acute: families who choose to locate to the UK at the start of a school year on *shlichut*, for work, or for other reasons, generally investigate schools prior to arrival, and have time to consider all the options and issues. They have usually found out something about the structures and processes in advance. How much harder it is for these temporary families to navigate our systems.

*Many rules are so foreign – for example you don't text your child's teacher at midnight!* (JAFI representative)

There have been various support initiatives put in place to help the families:

The Jewish Agency has allocated one of their team members to be a contact person for the Israeli families. She was someone to whom any of the temporary Israelis has been able to reach out. Sometimes, people have phoned with questions, just so that they could speak to someone, in Hebrew, who would understand their worries.

PaJeS has addressed distinct areas of need related to integrating Israeli families quickly:

- a) In partnership with the CST, the police Counter Terrorism Unit, and clinical and education psychologists, an online event titled 'The War in Israel: How to Support your Children', took place to provide advice for parents on supporting children with their physical safety and mental wellbeing. More than 2500 parents registered to attend. Since then, PaJeS has developed and brought together resources to support teachers (see Appendix Two).
- b) A zoom support group for all schools and teachers to share challenges and to discuss solutions. For example PaJeS ran a session focussing on new Israeli students attending our schools due to the war in Israel - challenges and opportunities in Ivrit

lessons. (28.11.23). The purpose was to support schools and to share challenges and good practice (Appendix 7)

- c) PaJeS Ivrit team held a meeting of Ivrit teachers to discuss the challenges and opportunities that have arisen as a result of new Israeli students attending our schools due to the war in Israel.
- d) A zoom meeting took place for parents of temporary Israeli children in our schools, to focus on daily routines in UK schools and to explain enrolment. Of the 36 families on the call (20.11.23), around half of the families were zooming in from Israel, finding out about UK schools, ahead of deciding whether or not to relocate to the UK.

Some of the Israeli children have integrated very smoothly – they have made friends; they enjoy classroom activities; and they are emotionally settled in their new environment. The schools, however, are very aware that even these children who are not exhibiting anxieties, may still need counselling and welfare help.

## **Wellbeing and Mental Health**

To address that need, PaJeS has also set in motion initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing. Apart from the zoom meetings mentioned already, and PaJeS sending wellbeing letters sent to Head teachers (see Appendix Five) and to Chairs of Governors (see Appendix Six) Julia Alberga and Jessica Overlander-Kaye, wellbeing managers at PaJeS, have been working with Dr. Talya Greene, a professor of Clinical Psychology, on resources for parents and schools, as well as on actions that families and schools can take to support these children and their carers. They commissioned the newly formed CISJS (Critical Incident Support for Jewish Schools) to write a guidance document for welcoming new Israeli children into Jewish schools in the UK (see Appendix Three). Julia and Jessica are working on a range of initiatives including offering Head Teachers group supervision, working with designated safeguarding leads and wellbeing leads in schools, running joint zoom sessions with CST (Community Security Trust), organising training which will take place in January to support the Head Teachers. Julia and Jessica have organised a group of educational psychologists who will be providing webinars, online, and in-person help, as well as specialist support for individual children.. They reflected that much of what they have provided is organic and reactive, and that they have

empowered schools to be able to deal with the situations in which they have found themselves.

From their perspective, the entire school community has been affected psychologically and emotionally by the war in Israel. The Head Teachers are suffering from heightened anxiety due to the huge weight of responsibility for hundreds of children and tens of adults at a time when security concerns in the UK for the Jewish community are so heightened. The responsibility for additional children in school, who, themselves are in an unfamiliar environment, adds to their stress levels. The members of staff in a school may be preoccupied with family, friends and events in Israel, the high level of ensuing anxiety making it hard for them to concentrate in school. As Julia observed

*The non-Jewish staff are navigating a world they did not expect.*

Parents have been “*shaken and dysregulated*”, and many children are fearful, according to reports that Julia and Jessica have received from schools. For those in secondary schools, this may take the form of fear of anti-semitism and anxiety about travelling to and from school on public transport. Whilst this level of anxiety is not directly related to the additional Israelis taken into the schools, having these families in our schools brings the war closer and affects everyone in school in a more personal way than otherwise.

Interviewees were able to see some positive outcomes of this time. Apart from the often-repeated observation of how the community has come together in a more cohesive way than usual, I heard how schools have been “*real centres of activism*”, from raising money for Israel, to writing cards to soldiers, to taking care of their Israeli families.

## **Across the Atlantic**

As shown already, most of the families who came to the UK had a family connection to Britain, often because one or both parents grew up here. Many more families re-located to North America. What could we in the UK learn about this phenomenon, through the lens of a North American context? Benjamin Cohen, Principal of the Bialik pre-K through grade 8 (4 – 14 year olds) school in Toronto spoke to me about his experiences of integrating temporary Israeli families into his school of 1,500 students on two campuses. By the end of October, he had accepted 95 students across the two campuses. Other Jewish schools



in the Toronto area also welcomed temporary Israeli families. Each child wanting a place at Bialik had a pre-acceptance interview with Benjamin or with a senior colleague. His school Board had agreed that an additional two children maximum could be taken into to any one class. Benjamin admitted that the school went beyond that in some cases. The majority of the new students were in the younger grades – grade 3 and below – 9 year olds and younger. Similar to the British experience, all had some kind of pre-existing local connection – a family member living in Canada or one parent at least who had grown up in Canada before making Aliyah. The families included some “whole” families – both parents and all siblings – and some part families – one or no parents, and not always all the siblings. Some came over to escape the rockets, some because the schools in Israel were closed, some because they were afraid. Again, this reflects the UK experience. As Benjamin stated

*No two stories have been the same.*

The fees of Bialik school are \$400 per week (generally, the school fees are subsidised). The new Israeli families were asked to pay whatever they could afford, and this ranged from the full fee to nothing. In addition, the UJA Federation paid the school \$50 per day per child, for additional needs and support. In the UK, UJIA invited applications for small grants to help support schools. PaJeS has also secured charitable funding to give small amounts to schools who have received students. Generally, the families both in North America and the UK who have arrived have been secure financially. In the UK, a small minority of the Israeli families secured places at fee paying Independent Jewish schools, primary and secondary. Those families were asked to pay at least a percentage of the school fees. In addition, financial help was available where needed, through bursaries from those schools.

Being secure financially in the normal course of one’s life, does not mean that material support is not necessary in these circumstances. Paying rental on an apartment in Toronto or London in *addition* to paying rental for your home in Ashkelon, for example, is prohibitive for most. Ensuring all other living expenses – food, transport, suitable clothing, phone, laptop etc etc can be hard to manage when faced with an unexpected and unprecedented situation.

Benjamin told me about all the support from the Jewish community in Toronto.

*Everyone’s stepped up – it’s real social activism*

This support mirrors the types of support that has been provided in the UK, from sourcing warm winter clothes to mental health professionals being deployed via the UJA, to teachers working “*incredible hours*”, to provide extra support in and out of the classroom. As in the UK, Israeli parents and Hebrew speakers in the school community have supported the new families. Benjamin reported that whilst many challenges have been “*micro*” challenges, there has been limited help from social workers specifically for families who are exhibiting symptoms of psychological trauma, having been separated from family, friends and home.

At Bialik school, there has been a “*silver lining*”. These new families have been “*incredibly enriching*” for the community. Benjamin acknowledges that it is wonderful that the Toronto Jewish Community has been able to provide support. Students have made especially meaningful connections with Israeli peers, which they say they will retain when the families return to Israel. This contrasts with one of the UK schools, who told me that once the Israeli visitors return to their homes, they feel that no ongoing connections will happen. At Bialik, they speak of these temporary Israelis as a “*blessing*”.

Going forward, Benjamin sees a lack of clarity. Of the 90 families who started at the school in October 2023, only 60 remain at the start of December 2023. Of those, he expects the majority to have returned home by the end of December., leaving a

*handful of long-term families – maybe 15%?*

We can already see in the UK that some of our temporary families are also returning to Israel.

## **What did we learn?**

- The Jewish community in the UK can come together to respond at speed, when needed.
- A coalition of organisations: UJIA, JAFI, PaJeS and others can work together, highly effectively, and fast, contributing complimentary elements for a common goal.
- Organisations which have not in the past generally involved themselves with schools, e.g. JVN, can help schools by providing volunteers.

- Jewish primary schools generally have a lack of preparedness and capacity to deal with EAL children, compared to many multi-cultural schools.
- Whilst UK families have been enormously welcoming, the lack of ability in Hebrew language in our schools has limited engagement with these visiting families. We might hope that this episode has shown a compelling reason for learning Modern Hebrew in school.
- The UK Jewish school community has shown how strong the bond can be between Britain and Israel. Out of tragedy, there is an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned to further strengthen that bond going forward.

## End Note

The situation is changing all the time. As of 28<sup>th</sup> November, the numbers of Israeli children temporarily in UK schools has decreased from 103 to 92. That does not mean that numbers of temporary Israelis have decreased in every school. In 4 schools, numbers have increased since October, notably from 6 to 18 in one London school. The perception of the Jewish Agency is that whilst a minority of families have already returned to Israel, more families are arriving. According to the Jewish Agency there are approximately 30 new families in the UK in the past few days. Most stay with family or friends on arrival, but that is not a satisfactory long-term strategy. Whilst schooling is one of the urgent factors in their lives, as described earlier in this report, financial resourcing is as important. As Vadim said,

*A major issue we haven't been able to solve is rent.*

There is no solution yet, although face book groups and other forms of social media are being used to try to find spaces in large family homes, and loans of empty flats and houses. This has implications for schooling because families are generally wanting accommodation close by the schools that their children are now attending, which reduces the possibilities.

Families who have the right to work in the UK may well stay in the UK long-term. If they do not have the right to stay, they will need to leave within six months.

By the beginning of December, all the schools which had welcomed temporary families were reporting that some families had already left to go back to Israel. Whilst others are still arriving, the situation for Israeli families is less acute than it was in October. Schools in Israel are re-opening, and many families are desperate to return home. A challenge for some of the UK schools is that some families who are returning to Israel now, want the option of returning to the UK and are asking the schools to keep their places for them.

At the time of writing, as we enter Hanukkah 5784, the future is uncertain. Whilst this report has shown how the Jewish community has welcomed its' temporary visitors, we fervently hope and pray that families in Israel will not continue to need the UK as a place of refuge.

To better times. *Am Yisroel Chai.*

## Appendix One

10 Cheshvan 5784

25 October 2023

### Shalom, dear families!

Thank you for signing up to the form and expressing your interest in a school place for your child. There are a range of Jewish schools in the UK, some of which currently have vacancies for children. There are Jewish schools in London and in different areas of the UK including Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham etc. Primary schools in the UK are for children from ages 4 to 11, however some schools also have a nursery for younger children.

In the UK you need to apply for a place by contacting the school - you will normally also need to send an application into the local authority. In London, there are a many Jewish schools in Barnet, and some in Enfield, Redbridge, Brent, and Wandsworth (South London). You will need to provide evidence that you are living in the UK: if you are staying with a UK family, they may be able to write a letter for you stating that you are living with them at the time of application.

Applications for places in private schools are normally done directly to the school.

We recommend you read carefully the [guide to applying to a Jewish school](#) which has lots of useful information. It is important to know that in most UK Jewish schools you will be asked to make a 'voluntary contribution' to the costs of Jewish learning. This might include money for Hebrew teaching or other activities in the school. This is because in England the government doesn't give schools money for this. In many schools this money is also used to support the costs of security, which the UK government gives a grant for. Whilst schools appreciate this support these are voluntary donations, and all children receive the same provision irrespective of whether a parent donates.

You can find additional information about the different schools [here](#) and on their websites:

- Barnet Primary school (age 4-11) [in year applications](#)
- Barnet Secondary (age 11+) school [in year applications](#)
- Brent [in year applications](#)
- Enfield [in year applications](#)
- Redbridge [in year applications](#)
- Schools outside London
  - Manchester [in year applications](#)
  - Leeds [in year applications](#)

For additional assistance – you can contact us through email: [deborab@jafi.org](mailto:deborab@jafi.org)

י' חשוון תשפ"ד 25  
אוקטובר 2023

שלום רב!

תודה על התעניינותך ברישום לבית ספר לילדך. בבריטניה קיים מגוון רחב של בתי ספר יהודיים, ובחלקם יש כרגע מספר מקומות פנויים. ישנם בתי ספר יהודיים בלונדון ובאזורים שונים בבריטניה, לרבות מנצ'סטר, לידס, ברמינגהם ועוד. בתי הספר היסודיים בבריטניה מיועדים לילד □□ מגיל 4 עד 11, ובחלקם יש גם פעוטון לגילאים צעירים יותר.

הבקשה לרישום לבית ספר ממלכתי (ציבורי, ללא הבדל בין ב"ס יסודי, חטיבה או תיכון), בדרך כלל מוגשת באמצעות המועצה המקומית (Council) במקביל לבדיקה ישירות מול בית הספר, שאכן יש לו מקומות פנויים להשמה. להבדיל מִישראל, לא מדובר במועצה העירונית (קרי, עיריית לונדון) אלא במועצה אזורית (עפ"י חלוקה לשכונות - Borough). וכך העיר לונדון מחולקת ל-32 שכונות, ולכל אחת מהן – מועצה. כל השמות להלן הם למעשה שמות של שכונות/מועצה מקומית. ישנם בתי ספר יהודיים רבים בשכונות: בארנט, וחלקם באנפילד, רדברידג', ברנט וונדסוורת' (דרום לונדון). על מנת להגיש את טפסי הרישום במועצה, יהיה עליך לספק הוכחה למגורים בבריטניה (למשל: מכתב מהמארץ □□ שלך המציין שאת □ מתגורר □ אית □ בזמן הגשת הבקשה; מסמך המאשר שכירות ארוכת תווך; וכיו"ב). בקשות הרשמה לבתי ספר פרטיים נעשות בדרך כלל ישירות מול המוסד הפרטי.

מומלץ לקרוא בעיון את [המדריך להגשת מועמדות לבית ספר יהודי](#) שמכיל הרבה מידע שימושי. חשוב לדעת שברוב בתי הספר היהודיים בבריטניה תתבקשו לתרום סכום מסוים לטובת מימון עלויות הלימוד. זה עשוי לכלול את תחום הוראת עברית או פעילויות אחרות בבית הספר שאינן ממומנות מהתקציב הציבורי (למשל, במקומות רבים התרומות מסייעות לכיסוי הוצאות האבטחה). עם זאת, נדגיש כי אמנם בתי ספר מעריכים את התמיכה הזו וזקוקים לה, מדובר בתרומות מרצון, וכל הילד □□ יקבלו את אותו היחס ללא קשר לתרומה.

מידע נוסף על בתי הספר השונים ניתן למצוא [כאן](#) ובאתרי האינטרנט של כל ב"ס:

- בית ספר יסודיים בבארנט (גילאי 4-11) [רישום במהלך שנת הלימודי ה](#)
- בתי ספר תיכוניים בבארנט (גיל 11+) [רישום במהלך שנת הלימודי ה](#)

בתי ספר מחוץ ללונדון:

- ברנט – [רישום במהלך שנה"ל](#)
- אנפילד – [רישום במהלך שנה"ל](#)
- רדברידג' – [רישום במהלך שנה"ל](#)
- מנצ'סטר – [רישום במהלך שנה"ל](#)
- לידס – [רישום במהלך שנה"ל](#)

לפרטים ושאלות נוספות - ניתן ליצור איתנו קשר באמצעות דוא"ל: [deborab@jafi.org](mailto:deborab@jafi.org)



כדאי להביא בחשבון קרבה גיאוגרפית למקום המגורים, אפשרויות תחבורה ציבורית, והצביון הדתי של ביה"ס.	1. לזהות בית ספר מהרשימה שמתאים לכם
שימו לב לכיתה הרלוונטית. ר' להלן טבלת גיל-כיתה-תאריך לידה	2. לפנות לביה"ס במייל או בטלפון לברר שיש מקום
למשל: מכתב מהמארחים עמם אתם שוהים כרגע; אישור שכ"ד מבעלי הנכס / Airbnb	3. להמציא אישור שהיה עם כתובת מקומית
בכל בי"ס יש אחראי/ת רישום. רצוי להקפיד על תקשורת כתובה בדוא"ל ולא רק בטלפון.	4. לבקש להירשם ולהשאיר פרטי קשר לביה"ס
הליך מקוון ואוטומטי. כדאי להיעזר בסיוע מקומי / דוברי אנגלית. זה יקל על מילוי שאלון הרישום ומושגים מקומיים לא מובנים.	5. להגיש בקשת רישום מסודרת במועצה המקומית
במועצות המקומיות יש מספר טלפון ישיר של יועצי השמה המטפלים ברישום.	6. להתקשר לאחר יממה ולוודא שהבקשה נקלטה
ניתן להגיש בקשה למספר בתי-ספר במקביל. מרגע שתתקבל תשובה – חשוב להשיב עליה בהקדם (לאשר או לדחות).	7. לאשר/ לדחות הצעת מקום

Date of Birth	School year 2023-2024	Age
September 2007 - August 2008	Year 11	15 - 16
September 2008 - August 2009	Year 10	14 - 15
September 2009 - August 2010	Year 9	13 - 14
September 2010 - August 2011	Year 8	12 - 13
September 2011 - August 2012	Year 7	11 - 12
September 2012 - August 2013	Year 6	10 - 11
September 2013 - August 2014	Year 5	9 - 10
September 2014 - August 2015	Year 4	8 - 9
September 2015 - August 2016	Year 3	7 - 8
September 2016 - August 2017	Year 2	6 - 7
September 2017 - August 2018	Year 1	5 - 6
September 2018 - August 2019	Year R	4 - 5

# Appendix Two: PaJeS Resources to support Israelis in UK Schools

[https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources\\_for\\_schools](https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources_for_schools)



## **PaJeS Support for Heads and SLT/DSLs**

[ERIC Critical Incident Psychological Safety Plan](#)

[ERIC Helpful Conversations to Reassure Children](#)

[Supporting your Children with their Emotional Well-being and Physical Safety Presentation](#)

[Presentations from the recording above:](#)

[Dr Talya Greene – How can we support children and young people in the UK to cope with the situation in Israel?](#)

[Dr Hannah Abrahams – How can we help our children when they are feeling anxious?](#)

[Trauma Informed Response to the Current Situation Presentation](#) – for DSLs and Wellbeing Leads  
[Accompanying Resources](#) and [Annie Chappell notes](#)

## **Other Support for Heads and SLT**

[Letter to headteachers and governors](#) – Board of Deputies of British Jews

[CST Security Bulletin](#)

## **PaJeS Primary Resources**

[Supporting primary school children](#)

[Praying for Israel](#)

[Resources to aid conversations and strategies to help young people](#)

[Israel Social Story](#) – for autistic/SEN children

## **PaJeS Secondary Resources**

[Supporting secondary school children](#)



[Guidance for Headteachers](#)

[Tracks CPD “Teaching Controversy in Jewish Schools”](#) given by Glenn Bezalel

[PaJeS Modern Jewish History Curriculum](#)

## **Other School Resources**

[UnitEd Jewish Education](#) Here you can find materials concerning the war. Be aware – these materials were not developed solely for educators, so use discretion when thinking of using these sources

[War In Israel Education Hub](#): a selection of important sources to help you navigate all the information out there – Ignite

[Talking Points: Suggested Responses to Frequently Asked Questions About Israel](#) – Ignite

[Advice to Jewish teachers and non-teaching staff in mainstream schools](#) – Stand Up!

[Advice for parents of Jewish children in non-Jewish schools and teachers working in non-Jewish schools](#) – Board of Deputies

[Teaching tefillah in troubling times](#) – Herzog Global, 5<sup>th</sup> November

[Crisis in Israel](#)- Herzog College

[Tefillah Resources](#) - Torah Live

## **Speakers and Training**

[Stand Up! Education against discrimination](#) – goes into mainstream schools to tackle antisemitism.

[Streetwise Sessions for Schools](#)

[Peace through Knowledge](#) – Meedu

## **Additional Support and Guidance**

Educational Materials, Resources and Activities on the War for Jewish Day Schools – [UnitEd](#)

Hub of different collated resources – [Lookstein Centre](#)

More links to other resources – [UJIA](#)

LSJS resources – collated list of organisations and resources – [LSJS](#)

Responding to Crisis – [Jewish Education Center of Cleveland](#)

Unpacking the War With Your Students – [Unpacked for Educators](#)

Israel Information Portal – [ILC](#)

Latest News from Israel – [BICOM](#)

## **Appendix Three: PaJeS/CISJS Welcome to our Schools**

PARTNERSHIP OF  
JEWISH SCHOOLS



IN COLLABORATION WITH

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT  
FOR JEWISH SCHOOLS

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# Guidance for welcoming Israeli children and young people into UK schools

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Acknowledgements

# INTRODUCTION

This guidance aims to support UK schools welcoming Israeli children who have fled the current Israel-Hamas war, to successfully integrate into their new school environments. It aims to help school staff create ‘schools of sanctuary’ using trauma-informed principles. We want schools to feel proud in extending a warm welcome to all new Israeli families and to be able to treat them as equal members of the school community.

This guidance is not focused on psychoeducation about trauma and the general impact of war on the wider Jewish community. This has been offered elsewhere.

It acknowledges that school staff might be feeling anxious and under-prepared to support these families. It acknowledges that many, but not all, school staff may also be experiencing their own anxiety or trauma because of the current Israel-Hamas war. It recognises that when adults feel anxious or stressed it is harder for them to think clearly, to plan and organise tasks, to reflect on what skills they already have and what resources already exist within their school communities.

This guidance offers evidence-based tools and strategies that are currently being used and can be delivered in schools. It will signpost to some practical and usable resources that are safe and effective for school staff to use.

*Please remember, research has shown that giving children who have fled war the opportunity to attend school is ‘the best medicine’. By simply opening your doors to these children you are already supporting them to feel safe, feel connected and to process any trauma they have experienced, or continue to experience.*

## 02. TAKE AWAY MESSAGES

There are five evidence-based Guiding Principles that reduce trauma and create the best environment for recovery. Support your school community to:

Feel calm

Be Safe

Be In Control

Be Hopeful

Feel Connected

1

Look after yourself first

If you want to be able to offer support, listen and co-regulate with children and young people, then you need to first be well-regulated yourself. What are you doing to look after yourself?

You can be the emotionally available adult they need

2

Respect children's rights not to talk about recent events, but create opportunities to listen to them, play with them and get to know them.

3

Engage with 'watchful waiting'

This means looking out for concerning behaviours and vulnerability factors by observing carefully, communicating with parents/carers and keeping records of what you see and hear. If you are particularly worried, seek advice.

## 03. LOOK AFTER YOURSELF FIRST

“We cannot pour from an empty cup”

(Dr Tina Rae, Child Psychologist)

We know that if we want to be able to offer support, listen and co-regulate with children and young people, we need to first be well-regulated ourselves. This means ensuring school staff are thinking about their own self-care and are given the support they need to do so.

Self-care will look different for different adults and it's important that each member of staff is able to think about what kind of self-care works best for them. Consider ways you can connect, be active, learn, give to others and pay attention to the moment ([NHS 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing](#)).

A helpful approach for school staff is the '30-3-30 approach' (developed by [4 Mental Health](#)). Choose an activity of your choice that can help you stay calm, focused and able to cope based on the time you have available:

- ◆ 30 seconds: deep breaths; sips of water; counting backwards from 20; notice one thing you see, hear, smell and feel; positive self-talk (remind yourself of a favourite quote/song lyric).
- ◆ 3 minutes: have a hot drink; draw a picture; listen to a song; talk to a colleague; send a message to a friend; note down urgent tasks on a post-it.
- ◆ 30 minutes: read; get some fresh air or exercise; enjoy some cooking; watch a favourite TV show or listen to a podcast; call a friend or family member; phone a helpline.

Senior Leadership should take time to ask staff about their wellbeing. In these challenging times, when some members of staff may be experiencing their own trauma from the war, find small ways to support staff by ensuring the staff room is a warm, welcoming and well-stocked area. Are your systems for ensuring there is always milk in the fridge working? Could you be offering fruit/biscuits more frequently? Is there enough seating and somewhere to eat lunch? Share ideas at a staff meeting or on a notice board to create your school's own 30-3-30 approach. Ensure all staff know about your Employee Assistance Programme.

## 04. SUPPORTING TRANSITION, INTEGRATION AND A SENSE OF BELONGING

“Ask me about my favourite football team, my favourite games and books.”

(Voice of a Refugee Child)

Starting a new school is difficult for all children. Israeli children joining your school may have additional challenges including recent/ongoing trauma, speaking no English or having English as an Additional Language (EAL) and having no familiar faces amongst the other children or school staff. Your task is to make them feel welcome, provide support, encourage friendships and make sensitive assessments about their language, learning and wellbeing.

Some advice will apply to younger children, and some applies to older students, but most applies to children and young people of all ages and can be adapted to be age-appropriate.

This section provides ideas to support with:

1. Asking for help and support
2. Providing a successful induction
3. Making use of other children and families
4. Creating a climate where Israeli children feel welcomed and valued
5. Making the curriculum accessible
6. Classroom organisation
7. Nurturing resilience and supporting emotional wellbeing

This section has been informed by the National Education Union’s [‘Welcoming refugee children to your school’](#) resource.



## 1. ASKING FOR HELP AND SUPPORT

- ◆ Identify people within the school community who speak Ivrit. This may include teaching and support staff, office staff, security team, parents or grandparents of other children and students at your school. Consider how each person is best placed to support your community, e.g. by acting as a key emotionally-available adult, supporting reading, supporting translation of resources, liaising with parents or helping connect families and services. Explore opportunities for new volunteers to join your school community. This may be through your parent body
- ◆ or the Jewish Volunteering Network. Ensure your volunteer policy is up-to-date and ready to use.
- ◆ Identify resources available in Ivrit to support children to access books, games and the curriculum. This might include e-resources, such as Ivrit audio books.
- ◆ Clarify the level of in-school support which can be available for Israeli children and draw up a timetable for small group and/or individual support, including who will plan and deliver this support.
- ◆ Find out about specialist resources and support which may be available through your local authority/NHS Trust (e.g. Educational Psychologists; supporting children with English as an Additional Language), your Trust or Academy group, local synagogues or other organisations.
- ◆ Identify mental health professionals who may be able to assist if children and young people are showing signs of significant or prolonged traumatic stress.
- ◆ Identify organisations and services that can help Israeli families with, for example: living arrangements, finding work, medical services, holiday camps, childcare, finances and mental health and wellbeing.

## 2. PROVIDING A SUCCESSFUL INDUCTION

*Before they arrive, consider the following:*

Do the children have appropriate school uniform, including school shoes and PE kits?

Do they need any school equipment such as school bags, lunch boxes, pencil cases, textbooks or current texts being studied?

- ◆ Do they need anything allocated to them and named around school, e.g. coat pegs, trays, desks and lockers?
- ◆ Have they been added to all class lists and resources?
- ◆ Have they been added to all school systems, e.g. Google classroom, Tapestry, etc.?
- ◆ Do they have any special dietary requirements, including allergies? Have they
- ◆ been allocated a buddy? Or a key adult?

Consider ways in which the school environment can be made welcoming, such as welcoming posters in English and Ivrit, or labelling rooms in Ivrit too (e.g. dining hall, medical room, Head Teacher's office or playground).

*A welcoming first day:*

- ◆ Make sure all adults know their name, how it is pronounced and spelt. Ensure
- ◆ they know the names of the key adults and other children they will meet. This includes adults who may help them at break or lunchtime.
- ◆ Check that they know some key school and classroom vocabulary and if necessary, label rooms and items in Ivrit. For example: toilet, book, bag, desk and playtime.
- ◆ Take them for a tour around the school, if possible, with other children or adults who speak Ivrit.
- ◆ Ask them where they would like to sit in the classroom and if there is anyone they would like to sit with.
- ◆ Check-in on how they are feeling regularly, especially after break, lunchtime and at the end of the day. Update parents at the end of the day.

Respect pupils' right to not talk about any recent events in their life. This may last many days or even weeks. Give them opportunities to talk in private about their family and recent events.

“Treat me as an individual, not as part of a group.” (Voice of a Refugee Child)

### *Getting to know your Israeli students:*

As with any new student, you will gather some information through admission forms. Other information you will need to find out once they have started. Here are some important questions your staff should be able to answer. Remember not to make assumptions about any child, their family or their experiences of the war to date.

- ◆ **Language levels** - do they speak any English? Do they understand any English? What other languages do they speak/understand? What language is being spoken at home? Observation and informal assessment can be carried out from day one, but any formal assessment of the pupil’s English should be postponed for two to three weeks. Once a child has had a chance to settle, then consider conducting a standalone baseline initial assessment of their English proficiency using appropriate assessment tools, e.g. The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework.
- ◆ **Previous educational experience** – have they been to nursery or school before, or is this their first educational experience? What year were they in before and what support did they have?
- ◆ **Additional needs** – medical information; glasses or hearing aids? Any known or suspected special educational needs or disabilities?
- ◆ **Exposure to trauma** – direct exposure to war; recent bereavements; family members in service; missing family members who stayed in Israel. Many children may have been out of education for an extended period when they join your school. Many may be in a ‘flight/fight/freeze’ mode. Many will also be resilient and able to connect, engage and build positive relationships. Some will have had little knowledge or experience of the war.
- ◆ **Variety of current living circumstances** – are they with wider family? Are they staying with strangers or do they have their own home? Do they have toys, books or sporting equipment? Are they accessing any extra-curricular or community activities?
- ◆ **Parent wellbeing** – Do their parents/carers have access to support and a local community? Do they have additional needs you need to know about? Are there any other family factors important to know about?

### 3. MAKING USE OF OTHER CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Introduce Israeli families to other Israeli families in their child's class or year group or from across the school.

- ♦ Establish a 'buddy' system which has status, is supervised and monitored (by teaching staff and playground supervisors). Involve a wide range of children for
- ♦ different tasks, for example, to support the Israeli children in class, going to lunch or at playtime.

Encourage Israeli children who are older or who have been at school for longer to support younger children or those that have arrived recently.

- ♦ Involve other children in making a welcome card, transition book, video or film about the school that can be sent to new or prospective Israeli children and their families.

### 4. CREATING A CLIMATE WHERE ISRAELI CHILDREN FEEL WELCOMED AND VALUED

- ♦ Give current students an opportunity to talk about welcoming Israeli students before they join their class, or away from the new Israeli students. They are likely to have questions such as: 'can we talk to them about the war?', 'can we ask them about their family?', 'what should we play with them?', 'how can we help them?'
- ♦ Encourage all students to use some Ivrit when it is appropriate to do so. This might include teaching children how to say hello and goodbye.
- ♦ Involve Israeli children in creating signs and resources for their classroom and for around the school. Help them create Ivrit/English dictionaries, particularly for subject-specific vocabulary. Even if they speak English, they may not know maths and science vocabulary.
- ♦ Ensure that adults are using precise language in 'easy to hear' sentences. Support oral information with visual information, use additional gestures and concrete materials and resources.
- ♦ Adopt a 'can do' attitude, a child-centred approach and have high expectations focused on the child's strengths. Be interested: 'what do you already know about this?', 'what are you interested in?', 'what are you good at?'

## 5. MAKING THE CURRICULUM ACCESSIBLE

By prioritising emotional wellbeing ahead of learning, children and young people will

- be better placed and more able to then engage with education. Ensure your goal or target for the lesson is as clear as possible.
- Consider topics or resources which could be triggering to new students. This may include topics linked to warfare, bereavement or family separation. Make judgements about what can continue to be used and what could be adapted.
- Use more drama, puppets, art, pictures, photographs, charts, flow diagrams, storyboards, maps and photographs than normal. Support teaching with everyday items – toys, food, equipment, newspapers/magazines. Hold up equipment needed as instructions are given, e.g. ‘you will need your whiteboard and a pen’.
- Notice achievements in subjects that are less reliant on language, such as maths, art and PE and celebrate these.
- Assess English language and literacy skills in a sensitive way to ensure materials can be adapted as necessary. [The Bell Foundation](#) provides evidence-informed guidance for school staff about supporting children who use English as an Additional Language.
- Use bilingual dictionaries and web-based translators and apps; maximise the use of technology.
- Have available a range of games that are likely to be familiar or easy to learn, e.g. a pack of cards, dominoes, noughts and crosses, board games, Jenga, Kerplunk, etc.
- Have available art materials, construction toys (e.g. Lego) or colouring/puzzle books (e.g. dot-to-dot; spot-the-difference) so that these can be enjoyed if the lesson is too challenging, or they need some quiet time within the classroom.
- Play more music and songs than usual to support your lessons.
- Use books with lots of visual content, or no words, for all year groups.
- Have available a wide variety of maths equipment and resources for the children to access as they need them.

The [Bell Foundation](#) have a [Great Ideas resource page](#) which has many ideas for supporting EAL students in the classroom. For children new to English, collaborative activities, drama and role play, translanguaging and using visuals/graphic organisers are some of the most helpful tools and strategies. They also provide a number of teaching resources linked to the National Curriculum.

## 6. CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

Consider how children are grouped or seated within the classroom. Would they benefit being seated with other children who speak Ivrit, with good English

- language role models, or with children who will naturally include them in their conversation and play?
- Encourage the Israeli children to bring in photographs, toys or items related to their favourite hobbies or interests. Help them share these with their class.
- Prioritise activities that encourage collaboration to help with English language acquisition.
- Support all children with listening and speaking skills. Create opportunities for regular circle times or form room discussions. Set up extra clubs at lunchtime such as art, board games or Lego clubs.
- Prepare children for any changes or unexpected events to their timetable, including if their usual teachers won't be available. Let them know what will stay the same as well as what will change, and how the change will last.

## 7. NURTURING RESILIENCE AND SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

“Listen to me when I need to talk and give me time to play and get to know others.”

(Voice of a Refugee Child)

There are many interventions and strategies that schools already have in place to support the emotional wellbeing of their students. Many of these can be used to support the emotional needs of Israeli children joining your school. Here is a reminder of some of the things you may already have available and can draw upon:

Trauma-informed practice (see [Trauma Informed Schools UK](#))

- ◆ Mental Health awareness; Mental Health Leads
- ◆ Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) (see [ELSA Network](#) – Emotional Literacy Support Assistants and [Resources for Emotional Literacy Support Assistants](#))
- ◆ [Emotion Coaching](#)
- ◆ [Zones of Regulation](#)
- ◆ Providing calm corners and safe spaces – using tents, screens, blankets and beanbags (see Dr Tina Rae’s 15-minute video on [Creating Calm Corners and Safe spaces](#))
- ◆ Using outdoor spaces and opportunities to exercise
- ◆ Whole class ‘brain breaks’ and breathing exercises (e.g. [‘Star of David deep breathing exercise’](#))
- ◆ Create opportunities for children to have control and power. For example, give them choices over where to spend break and lunchtimes, when to have support in class, what lessons to take part in and when to have a break.
- ◆ PSHE and SEND resources that build self-esteem, resilience and self-confidence.
- ◆ Support friendships: buddy systems and benches, lunch clubs, play leaders, paired work and Circle of Friends.
- ◆ Choice boards, visual timetables, emotion key rings and scales.

You do not need to be a trained therapist to be an emotionally available adult who can listen and create safe spaces for children and young people.

## 05. TALKING ABOUT THE WAR

“Don’t assume I want to talk about the war and my experiences. Sometimes I just want to be treated the same as other children.” (Voice of a Refugee Child)

By avoiding talking about the war, children can become more anxious and less able to regulate their emotions and process any trauma they have experienced. Adults need to be able to talk about the war with the children they support, both at home and at school. Current students and new students may need separate spaces for these conversations.

Key principles of good practice:

- Use school to provide routine, structure, opportunities to connect with others and exercise / time outdoors.
- Adults need to accept, validate and affirm children’s feelings. Scripts such as, “this is scary, but you are safe” and “there is hope” are important.
- Be curious about what they know, what they want to know and how they feel. Don’t dismiss their questions and conversations as this can lead to trauma being stored and unprocessed. If their timing isn’t great then acknowledge the question, write it on a post-it with the child and agree when you will return to the conversation.
- Ensure information is fact-checked and use scripts such as “that’s a great question, I don’t know but I’m going to find out for you” if you are unsure of an answer or want to check out the information they have told you.
- Build in daily opportunities for creativity and play.
- Point out ‘helpers’ and opportunities to help so that students can notice the good that is being done to support others and contribute as appropriate.
- Create ‘time away’ – ensure there are moments of joy, laughter and gratitude.

Dr Tina Rae has summarised evidence-based approaches to talking to children about war into a helpful [‘Talking about War Plan’](#).



## 06. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Send a clear communication to all parents that your school is proud to be welcoming Israeli children. Explain briefly what the school is doing to ensure these families feel welcomed, safe and supported. Emphasise that it is the responsibility of the whole school community to welcome new families.

You may wish to hold a parents' meeting at school for new families to explain the school's ethos, expectations and support available. This should be in English and Ivrit.

Ensure new parents are added to any school communications, email lists and class WhatsApp groups. Ask class reps to ensure that new families know about how birthdays are celebrated at school, any upcoming events at school or birthday parties which may have already been organised.

You may want to offer further support for all your parents/carers at this time. We recommended the UK Trauma Council's 'Critical Incidents in Educational Communities – working together with parents & carers'. Other resources for parents are given at the end of this guide.

## 07. SUPPORTING YOUR EXISTING STUDENTS

Welcoming Israeli children who are fleeing war is an opportunity for your current students to learn about empathy, sharing and caring, respect and kindness.

Most children will be familiar with other children joining and leaving their class. Most children will be resilient to these experiences and will naturally include new children in their play, support them with learning and be able to say goodbye if or when the children return to Israel.

Be aware of existing students who may be vulnerable at this time. This includes students who you know already have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), as well as those students who may currently have family living in Israel, serving in the IDF or know someone who has died or has been taken hostage. See Appendix One for more information on the importance of 'watchful waiting' and responses to trauma.

## 08. FURTHER SUPPORT FROM PAJES AND CISJS

**Tier 1** This guidance and the associated webinar have provided schools with a trauma-informed summary of evidence-based practice that will support school staff to welcome Israeli children and families into their school communities.

**Tier 2** Trauma-informed systemic psychological consultations will be available for schools who have welcomed Israeli families fleeing the current war. These are free for schools to access and will be delivered by Jewish Educational Psychologists (EPs). They are being funded by PaJeS, at a special discounted rate. The consultations aim to help Senior Leadership Teams explore how they are supporting Israeli families, and the impact this support is having on their school. A Consultation can be requested by emailing [wellbeing@pajes.org.uk](mailto:wellbeing@pajes.org.uk) using the subject: 'Integrating Israelis Tier 2 Consultation'. An EP will be in touch to arrange a convenient date and time for a session.

You can also contact your Local Authority Educational Psychology Service for advice, or you may choose to discuss

**Tier 3** We recognise there may be some situations where more specialist support is required either for individuals, or groups of students or staff (see Appendix One). We recommend the flow-chart and advice from 'Section 4: When to seek specialist help' of the new [UK Trauma Council's Childhood Trauma, Migration and Asylum Toolkit for Educational Communities](#).

We are creating a directory of services which schools may wish to use to access more specialist support. Please note: we are not endorsing or recommending services or professionals listed. You can also contact specialist services you already work with, such as CAMHS or private counsellors/therapists.

## 09. REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESOURCES

### *Supporting trauma and children fleeing war:*

The UK Trauma Council has published guidance for professionals and for young people impacted by trauma, war, migration and asylum (November 2023). This includes a toolkit for educational communities and an animation and self-help guide for Young People in Hebrew: [Childhood Trauma, War, Migration and Asylum - UK Trauma Council](#)

### *Welcoming refugee children into schools*

[Welcoming refugee children to your school \(National Education Union\)](#)

Excellent free webinar by Dr Tina Rae aimed at school staff: [How to talk to children and young people about war | Understanding and supporting our Refugee children \(A free webinar by Dr Tina Rae\) – Evidence for Learning](#)

Phoenix Group offers helpful and relevant resources e.g. [A resource bank for non-clinical professionals to support children who have escaped from war, conflict and persecution](#)

For information on Schools of Sanctuary see: [Home - Schools of Sanctuary \(cityofsanctuary.org\)](#)

### *Supporting children using EAL*

[The Bell Foundation - Changing lives and overcoming exclusion through language education](#)

[NALDIC | EAL National Subject Association](#)

### *Support for parents who want more information about looking after their children after trauma*

[Looking after your child following trauma - a guide for parents.pdf \(penninecare.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Helping Your Child with Loss and Trauma: A self-help guide for parents: Amazon.co.uk: Trickey, David, Lawson, Vicky, Cooper, Prof Peter, Waite, Polly: 9781472138637: Books](#)

# APPENDIX ONE: ‘WHEN TO WORRY ABOUT THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA’ TOOL FOR SCHOOLS

*What is trauma?*

*‘A psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience, often involving a sense of intense fear, terror and helplessness’ (Perry, 2011)*

Every child will respond differently to trauma. This will depend on their developmental level, previous life experiences, level of exposure to trauma, parental reactions and their change in living circumstances. **Most Israeli children will be resilient** however some children may be showing signs of trauma and post-traumatic stress. **We recommend a ‘watchful waiting’ approach.** This means looking out for behaviours and vulnerability factors through observing children carefully and communicating frequently with their parents/carers and teachers.

*Below are some indicators that children may be experiencing traumatic stress:*

- ◆ Being more clingy than usual to parents or trusted adults
- ◆ An increase in crying and wanting more hugs and physical contact Finding it
- ◆ hard to concentrate and focus
- ◆ Becoming withdrawn from social interactions
- ◆ Not sleeping as well as normal / having nightmares Not
- ◆ eating as well as normal
- ◆ Having strong feelings and becoming angry, irritable, tense or more fidgety than normal. This could lead to them being aggressive towards others or hurting themselves
- ◆ Complaining of stomach aches and headaches more than normal Hypervigilance
- ◆ – being very aware of everything happening around them and ‘jumpy’ at loud noises or being surprised
- ◆ Being preoccupied with thoughts and memories of traumatic events. This may include showing feelings and re-enacting experiences through play Behaving like
- ◆ a much younger child, which may include bed-wetting or thumb sucking

If you are feeling particularly worried about a child or young person, the following questions might help you gather more information that you can then use to talk to mental health professionals.

*Please note, the questions below are designed to only be used at least one month after a traumatic event has happened. However, for children fleeing an ongoing conflict, it is likely they are experiencing ongoing trauma while the war continues. It is not possible to clinically treat trauma whilst is ongoing.*

Gather information from more than one source if possible, including your own observations, talking with the child or young person (if appropriate) and talking with their parent/carer. If language is a barrier, try to use an interpreter to support these conversations.

1. Was the child directly exposed to traumatic events? What was the nature of these (e.g. prolonged violence, loss of family, culture, separation, exposure to adversity as they flee their country). Could these be ongoing?
2. Did they witness something happen to another person or learn that something happened to a family member or close person? Note the details of this.
3. Are they having distressing memories or images that keep coming up? How often and what is the impact?
4. Are they experiencing distressing dreams that are related to the event? How often and what is the impact? What is the quality of their sleep like?
5. Are they experiencing flashbacks? How often and what is the impact?
6. Are they easily startled and are they demonstrating hypervigilance (i.e. continuously scanning the environment, searching for anything that could mean danger or pose a threat?) Are there any key triggers for this? What is the impact of this?
7. Does the young person have strong waves of feelings about what happened? Does the young person avoid situations, people, and conversations which may remind them of the event?
8. Does the young person have intrusive thoughts about the event and think about it, even when they don't want to?

These questions have been taken from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Wellbeing Team 'Support for Trauma' tool. They have been adapted from the Child Revised Impact of Events Scale (CRIES), which is also the recommended screener within the UK Trauma Council's toolkit for educational communities.

*We recommend the flowchart and advice from 'Section 4: When to seek specialist help' of the new [UK Trauma Council's Childhood Trauma](#).*

**Migration and Asylum Toolkit for Educational Communities.**

This guidance has been written by Jewish Educational Psychologists who are all registered with the Health Care Professionals Council, and all have significant experience working with school communities both through Local Authority employment and privately. We all have experience offering Critical Incident support to schools and are also members of the British Jewish community. We have recently created a new working group 'Critical Incident Support for Jewish Schools' (CISJS).

**This guidance has been written by the following members of CISJS:**

**Gemma Handelsman, with support from Ben Levy, Hannah Morris, Hannah Abrahams and Gemma Levy.**

This guidance has been informed by several resources, including some written in recent years to support refugee children who have joined UK schools from Ukraine, Afghanistan and other countries experiencing war and conflict.

It has also been informed by conversations with Head Teachers and teachers at Jewish schools who have already welcomed Israeli children into their classrooms. CISJS thanks those who have contributed.

Version PARTNERSJEWI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PaJeS  
Supporting Jewish Schools



**Appendix Four: Phoenix Education Consultancy**

# Welcome to our schools

Sarah Johnson



# ברוכים הבאים לבתי סיפרנו

שרה ג'ונסון



How do I find out which school I am going to?

An adult has to apply for a school for you. There may be lots of different schools in an area and which school you go to depends on the number of places available. To apply for a school place you can do this online using a website and then the admissions authority will allocate a place for you. This might be quite difficult, especially if you aren't confident in reading or speaking English.

You can ask for extra help to apply for a school. You might have a keyworker that can tell you how to apply.

After you have applied, you will be allocated a school to attend.

This booklet is to help you think of some of the things you might need to know about getting to school, what you will learn, and what you should wear.



# ספר אני שייך/כת ?

יתכן ובאזורך יש כמה בתי ספר לשרותכם. הבית ספר שיוקצה לך תלוי במספר המקומות

הפנויים בוגר ימלא טופס הרשמה עבורך במייל, והנהלת בתי הספר תפנה אותך לבית הספר המתאים לך. זה יכול להיית קצת קשה, במיוחד אם אין לך בטחון בקריאת וכתובת השפה

האנגלית

אם עבור ההרשמה, או לקבל מלוח שתעזור לך להרשם. אחרי שהגשת בקשה, יוקצה לך בית ספר ללמוד בו

ספרון זה יעזור לך לדעת מה יתכן ותצטרך/כי לדעת לפני תחילת הלימודים; איך להגיע

לבית הספר, מה לומדים, מה לובשים



How do I get to school?

You will be allocated a school to attend. Sometimes you might be able to walk to school, or you might need to get a bus. Finding out the journey might be quite difficult so you may need extra help!



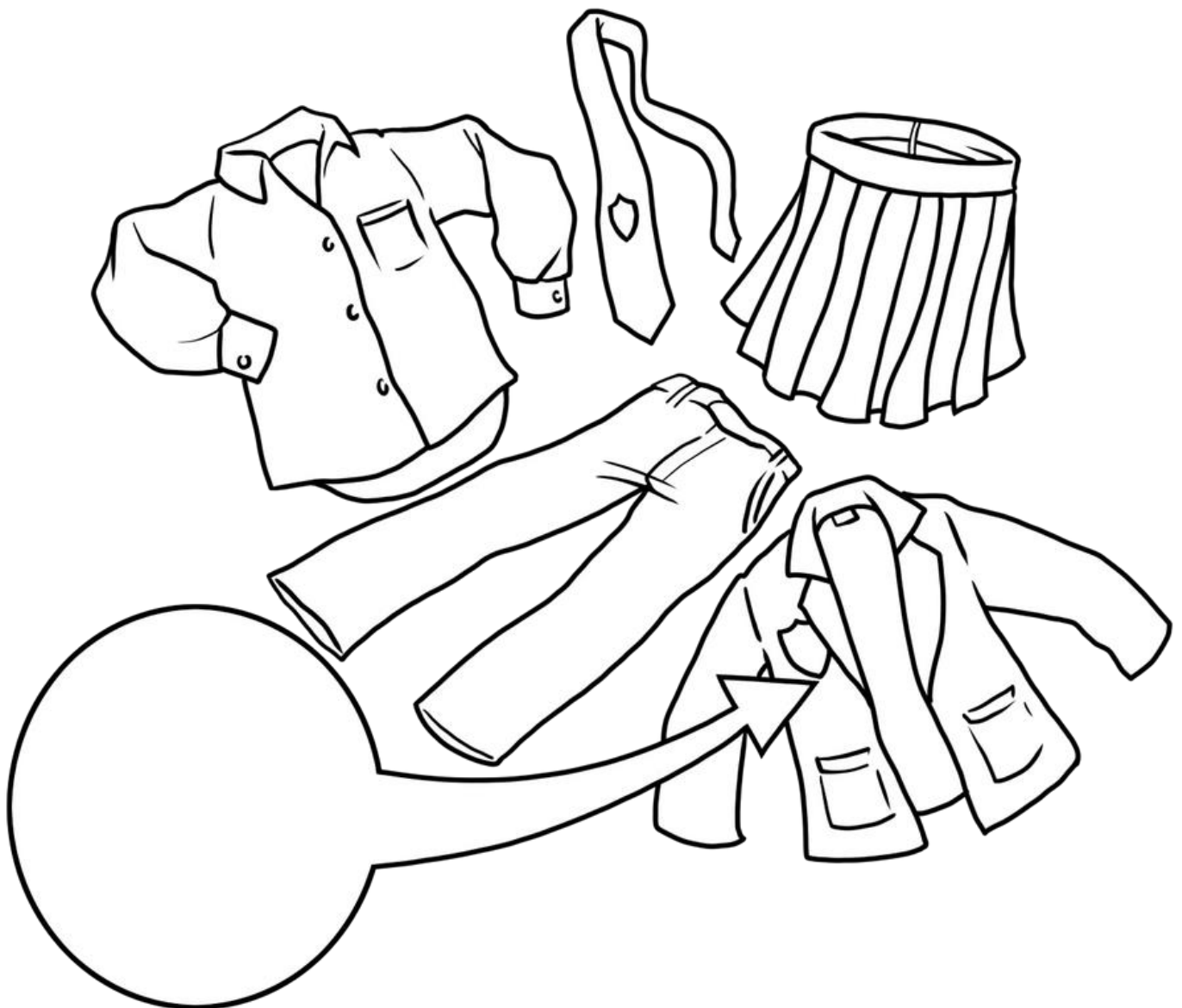
# הספר?

יוקצה לך בית ספר ללמוד בו. יש בתי ספר שמגיעים אליהם ברגל, אבל לפעמים חייבים לקחת אוטובוס. יכול להיית שתצטרך/כי עזרה למצוא את הדרך בהתחלה!



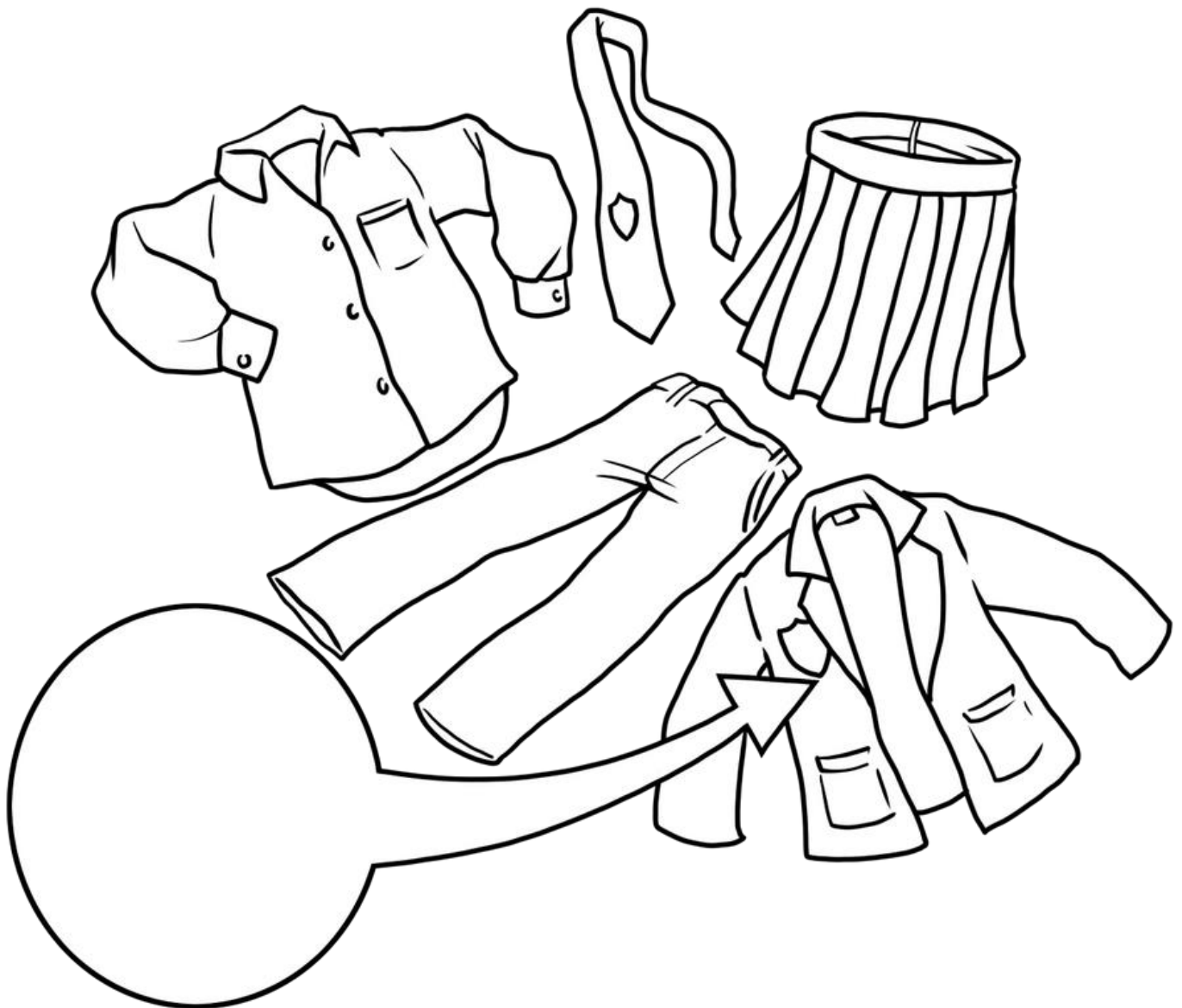
What do I wear at school?

Schools in the United Kingdom often have school uniform. These are matching clothes such as a shirt, trousers or a skirt that you wear during class time. For Physical Education (PE) you often get changed into a PE kit. This means it is more comfortable to run, jump and do other sports.



# הספר?

ברוב בתי ספר באנגליה יש תלבושת אחידה. אלו הם בגדים תואמים כמו חולצה, מכנסיים או חצאית שלובשים בזמן השיעורים. יש תלבושת מיוחדת לשיעורי התעמלות (PE), שיותר נוח לרוץ בהם, לקפוץ או לעשות ספורט אחרים.



# How do I feel about starting a new school?

You may have lots of different feelings about going to a new school. This might be especially difficult if you have not had experience of attending school in this country. You might find that one moment you are really excited, the next you are nervous or worried. Some people might only have one feeling that is overwhelming.

Think about your new school.

- How do you feel?
- Why do you think you feel that way?
- Can you use this to help share some thoughts with a trusted adult?





# בית ספר חדש?

אולי יש לך רגשות מעורבים להתחיל בית ספר חדש. זה יכול להיות קשה אם אף פעם לא הלכת לבית ספר באנגליה. רגע אחד את/ה ממש מתרגש/ת, וברגע הבא את/ה מרגיש/ה עצבני או מודאג. יש תלמידים שפשוט מרגישים המומים.

תחשוב/תחשבי על בית הספר החדש שלך.

- איך את/ה מרגיש/ה?
- למה את/ה חושב/ת שאת/ה מרגיש/ה ככה?
- האם את/ה יכול/ה להתחלק בהרגשתך עם מבוגר שאת/ה סומך/כת עליו?



# Getting to know staff

In primary school for most of your lessons you are likely to stay in one class with one teacher and perhaps a teaching assistant. In secondary school it can often be quite different. You might move from class to class and teachers are more likely to be teaching specific subjects.



What is the name of your form tutor?



If you are worried about something is there a specific member of staff that you can talk

to?



If you feel sick or poorly is there a specific person that you go and tell?

# היכרות עם הצוות

בבית ספר יסודי נשארים בכיתה אחת עם אותו מורה ואולי עוזר אחד במשך כל השיעורים. בבית ספר תיכון זה קצת שונה. לכל מקצוע יש מורה ספציפי ואולי כיתה ספציפית. אז ייתכן שתעבור/תעברי מכיתה לכיתה.



אם משהו מדאיג אותך, יש מורה ספציפי שאת/ה יכול/ה לדבר

איתו?



איך קוראים למחנך כיתה שלך?



אם את/ה לא מרגיש/ה טוב, יש מישהו שאת/ה יכול/ה לספר לו?

What do I need to bring with me?

In primary schools, you should bring a water bottle to make sure you have something to drink. The teacher will give you a pencil or pen to write with. You will have a PE kit as well as your uniform.

In secondary school, you will need to bring other equipment, such as pens, pencils and other equipment.

You will also need a PE kit.

Use the box below to find out the things that you need to bring. Do you have them or do you need help getting them?

## Things to bring



# מה אני צריך להביא איתי?

בבית ספר יסודי את/ה מביא/ה בקבוק מים כדי שיהיה לך משהו לשתות. המורה ייתן לך עיפרון או עט לכתוב איתו. תהיה/יהיה

לך תלבושת בית ספר ותלבושת התעמלות (PE).

בבית ספר תיכון תצטרך/כי להביא ציוד נוסף, כמו עטים,

ועפרונות ותצטרך/כי גם תלבושת התעמלות (PE).

במשבצת המצורפת את/ה יכול/ה לכתוב מה צריכים להביא. יש

לך את הדברים בבית או שתצטרך/כי עזרה להשיג אותם?



## דברים להביא

# School detective



- Does the school have a website that you can find out information?

---

---

- What time does school start?

---

- What time does school finish?

---

- Are there any days where the start or finish times are different?

---

- What's the name of the head teacher or principal at the school?

---

- What are the main colours of the school uniform?

---

---

- Are there any after school clubs or activities during the day that you would like to join?

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# בלש בית ספר



האם לבית הספר יש אתר שבו תוכלו למצוא מידע?

•

באיזה שעה בית הספר מתחיל?

•

באיזה שעה בית הספר מסתיים?

•

האם יש ימים שבהם בית הספר מתחיל או מסתיים בזמן אחר?

•

מה השם של המנהל/ת?

•

מה הצבעים של תלבושת בית הספר שלך?

•

האם יש חוגים או פעילויות אחר שעות בית הספר שתמצאו להצטרף אליהם?

•





# Thinking of feelings

Have a look at the pictures below. How do you think the students are feeling?

What advice would you give them to help them?



# חשיבה על רגשות

תסתכל על התמונות למטה. איך את/ה חושב/ת שהתלמידים מרגישים?

איזו עצה היית נותן/נת להם כדי לעזור להם?



What advice would you give to these children?

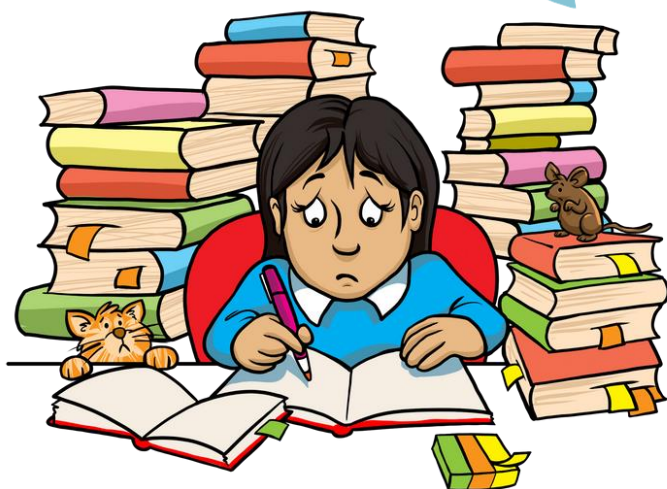
My new school is really big! I am worried that I won't be able to find all my classes and that I could get lost. I have been given a map but I am still quite confused.

I don't know anyone at the school, what happens if I don't make friends?

I used to be able to walk to my school. Now, I have to get a bus. I am not used to getting buses. I am worried about being late.

I speak some English, but what happens if it takes me a really long time to improve my English and understand what is happening in class?

I am really excited about starting my new school! I actually really like the school uniform and think it will be fun to start loads of different clubs.



# לילדים האלה?

בית הספר החדש שלי ממש גדול! אני דואג שלא אוכל למצוא את כל השיעורים שלי ושאלך לאיבוד. קיבלתי מפה אבל אני עדיין מבולבל.

אני לא מכיר אף אחד בבית הספר, מוז קורה אם אני לא מצליח להכיר חברים?

אני מדבר קצת אנגלית, אבל מה קורה אם לוקח לי המון זמן לשפר את האנגלית שלי ולהבין מה קורה בכיתה?

בבית הספר הישן שלי יכולתי להגיע לשם ברגל. עכשיו, אני צריך לקחת אוטובוס. אני לא רגיל לקחת אוטובוסים. אני דואג לאחר לבית ספר.

אני ממש מתרגש להתחיל את בית הספר החדש שלי! אני דווקא מאוד אוהב את תלבושת בית הספר וחושב שיהיה כיף להתחיל חוגים חדשים



# What do I want my teachers to know about me!

I am really good at...

I am worried about...

I am really looking forward to...

One way I like to relax is...

I am most excited about...

My hobbies are...

I am most excited about...



# מה אני רוצה שהמורים שלי ידעו עלי!

אני דואג/ת לגבי...

אני ממש טוב ב...

אני ממש מצפה ל...

אני אוהב להירגע עם...

אני הכי מתרגש מ...

התחביבים שלי הם...

אני הכי מתרגש מ...



# Finding out about your new school

What is the name of your new school?

Does anyone you know go or is going to the school?

How long will it take to travel your new school?

How will you travel to your new school?

# Appendix Five: PaJeS Wellbeing Letter for Head Teachers



Dear Headteacher,

It has been our privilege at PaJeS to have worked closely with you and your staff, as you have supported your school through the past challenging three weeks. All our schools have close connection with Israeli families. Some have had bereaved members of staff or have suffered the loss of former pupils; enlisted fathers have returned to Israel; traumatised children from Israel are taking up vacant places in our schools.

As always, Headteachers have risen to these challenges and supported staff, parents and pupils while managing their personal challenges, such as parents or siblings or children in Israel.

So, we are writing to offer our support for your wellbeing at this time.

A letter has been sent to your Chair of Governors highlighting the support available and encouraging them to give you the time needed to engage with this important support.

We would also recommend that ALL schools subscribe to an [Employee Assistance Programme](#). Education Support are offering **a reduced rate of £8.50 per staff member per annum for all PaJeS subscribed schools.**

At this reduced cost, your school can sign up to their full programme where school staff can access a range of emotional and practical support including,



- A range of counselling options including telephone, online or face-to-face sessions, and a mindfulness module
- A dedicated coaching service for line managers, aimed at developing soft skills and building confidence for handling challenging situations
- Financial, legal and practical support from qualified professionals on a range of personal issues
- Access to online health and wellbeing resources and a specialist information service

Your school will benefit from,

- Improved staff retention and reduced sickness absence
- Improved organisational efficiency and enhanced management capacity.
- Colleagues who are confident that you care for their welfare and meet your duty of care for their mental health.

### **Some ways in which you can be supported:**

#### **Supervision**

Supervision provides an agreed framework between the Headteacher and the Supervisor for addressing challenging circumstances and how they affect their work. It is protected time to consider and discuss complex problems leading to greater confidence in decision making and better working practices.

***PaJeS will provide funding for group supervision for Headteachers through Education Support.*** Please contact us if you would be interested in joining one of these groups.

Click [here](#) to watch a video that explains about the service.

If your school subscribes to the *Smart Clinic Employee Assistance Programme*, they offer a unique course of stress management, designed as an early intervention support service for staff showing symptoms of unmanageable stress. The specialist service will prescribe some techniques, exercises and thought patterns that will help staff to get on top of their stress. Please click [here](#) for more details.

#### **Coaching**

Personal coaching provides Headteachers with an opportunity to talk to someone about their personal and professional development in a safe and confidential space.

For new Headteachers in their first 2 years, *Ambition Institute* provide an offer of Early Headship Coaching alongside the NPQH. This includes personalised, tailored support with an experienced Headteacher who works within a similar setting.

For further information click [here](#) or [here](#) to watch a video that explains more about the service.

***PaJeS can recommend Personal Coaches for Headteachers and Senior Leaders in Jewish schools.***

### **Mentoring**

Several of our new heads have mentors from other Jewish schools.

***If your head would like a mentor from within the community, please contact PaJeS.***

### **Support for the integration of Israeli children into Jewish schools**

PaJeS would like to offer support and guidance to the schools that are welcoming Israeli children into their schools in the coming weeks.

We have a small group of private Educational Psychologists who will be providing the following services.

1. A webinar aimed at Head Teachers/Senior Leaders, with a guidance document containing some recommended resources. This webinar will offer a trauma-informed systemic approach to the transition and how we can successfully support and integrate new children into our schools. These children may have experienced or continue to experience trauma, either through bereavement, being uprooted or from their own experience of the war.
2. The second phase will be a more targeted approach to some schools that may need further guidance. This may be in person or online and may involve the headteacher, the senior leadership team and/or particular class teachers and support staff.
3. The third phase will be specialist support aimed at supporting individual children or young people that may need further intervention. We will be working with this group

of Educational Psychologists to create a list of mental health professionals that we can call upon to help.

These 3 stages will be funded by PaJeS and more information will be shared with those schools welcoming Israeli children as it is available.

**Support for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching:**

***On November 14<sup>th</sup> at 8pm, PaJeS will be offering an important webinar for ALL school staff (both teaching and non-teaching), focusing on supporting personal wellbeing as well as how to support students and colleagues in these challenging times. Please distribute the attached flyer to all teaching and non-teaching staff.***

PaJeS will also be offering ***a limited number of fully funded CPD accredited group training for Wellbeing leads/DSLs delivered by TIS [Trauma Informed Schools](#).*** Demand will be high for these places so please let us know if this is of interest to you or a designated person at your school.

We have also put together a [website](#) with a wealth of information and resources available for you as educators. We are available to chat through any challenges, suggestions you may want to share.

Thank you for all YOU are doing. ***PaJeS is of course here for YOU too, so please continue to be in touch. [Susy.stone@pajes.org.uk](mailto:Susy.stone@pajes.org.uk)***

**For further information contact – Susy Stone, Julia Alberga or Jessica Overlander-Kaye at PaJeS**

# Appendix Six: PaJeS Wellbeing Letter for Chairs of Governors

Dear Chairs

It has been our privilege at PaJeS to have worked closely with your Heads as they have supported their schools through the past challenging three weeks. All our schools have close connection with Israeli families. Some have had bereaved members of staff or have suffered the loss of former pupils; enlisted fathers have returned to Israel; traumatised children from Israel are taking up vacant places in our schools.

Our Heads, as they always do, have risen to these challenges and supported staff, parents and pupils while managing their personal challenges, such as parents or siblings or children in Israel.

So we are writing to offer our support for their wellbeing at this time.

You may also need to assign additional budget in this area and on a very simple level, just remember to ask them how they are.

We would also recommend that ALL schools subscribe to an [Employee Assistance Programme](#). Education Support are offering ***a reduced rate of £8.50 per staff member per annum for all PaJeS subscribed schools.***

At this reduced cost, your school can sign up to their full programme where school staff can access a range of emotional and practical support including,

- A range of counselling options including telephone, online or face-to-face sessions, and a mindfulness module
- A dedicated coaching service for line managers, aimed at developing soft skills and building confidence for handling challenging situations
- Financial, legal and practical support from qualified professionals on a range of personal issues
- Access to online health and wellbeing resources and a specialist information service

Your school will benefit from,

- Improved staff retention and reduced sickness absence
- Improved organisational efficiency and enhanced management capacity.
- Colleagues who are confident that you care for their welfare and meet your duty of care for their mental health.

## **Some ways in which your Headteacher can be supported:**

### **Supervision**

Supervision provides an agreed framework between the Headteacher and the Supervisor for addressing challenging circumstances and how they affect their work. It is protected time to consider and discuss complex problems leading to greater confidence in decision making and better working practices.

***PaJeS will provide funding for group supervision for Headteachers through Education Support.*** Please contact us if your Headteacher would be interested in joining one of these groups.

Click [here](#) to watch a video that explains about the service.

If your school subscribes to the *Smart Clinic Employee Assistance Programme*, they offer a unique course of stress management, designed as an early intervention support service for staff showing symptoms of unmanageable stress. The specialist service will prescribe some techniques, exercises and thought patterns that will help staff to get on top of their stress. Please click [here](#) for more details.

### **Coaching**

Personal coaching provides Headteachers with an opportunity to talk to someone about their personal and professional development in a safe and confidential space.

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***PaJeS can recommend Personal Coaches for Headteachers and Senior Leaders in Jewish schools.***

## **Mentoring**

Several of our new heads have mentors from other Jewish schools.

***If your head would like a mentor from within the community, please contact PaJeS.***

**Support for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching:**

***On November 14<sup>th</sup> at 8pm, PaJeS will be offering an important webinar for ALL school staff (both teaching and non-teaching), focusing on supporting personal wellbeing as well as how to support students and colleagues in these challenging times. Details to follow.***

PaJeS will also be offering ***a limited number of fully funded CPD accredited group training for Wellbeing leads/DSLs delivered by TIS [Trauma Informed Schools](#).*** Demand will be high for these places so please pass onto your school asap.



We have also put together a [website](#) with a wealth of information and resources available for you as educators. We are available to chat through any challenges, suggestions you may want to share.

Thank you for all YOU are doing. ***PaJeS is of course here for YOU too, so please continue to be in touch. [Susy.stone@pajes.org.uk](mailto:Susy.stone@pajes.org.uk)***

**For further information contact – Susy Stone, Julia Alberga or Jessica Overlander-Kaye at PaJeS**

# Appendix Seven: Israeli Students in UK Schools – Challenges and Opportunities

Slide 1



Israeli students in UK schools, due to the war in Israel-  
Challenges and Opportunities  
28.11.23

Presenter:  
Dalia Wittenberg - PaJeS

Guest presenters:  
Dr. Talya Greene - Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at UCL  
Galia Sher - Wolfson Hillel Primary School

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Slide 2



### Objectives

- To gain a better understanding of some of the social and emotional needs of Israeli pupils coming to the UK since the war.
- To have some useful strategies in coping with **some** of your own specific Ivrit needs.

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## Slide 5

 **al responses to extreme events**

**In general children may:**

- Have difficulty sleeping
- Feel sad, scared, angry, worried, overwhelmed, guilty
- Feelings of isolation or loneliness ('other people don't understand what I'm going through')
- Have difficulty concentrating, difficulty with work/school.
- Avoid social interactions.
- Have headaches, tummy aches, other pains
- Feel tired and unmotivated
- Have changes in appetite
- Find it hard to share their feelings
- Have feelings of threat

**Israeli pupils may also:**

- Feel different/isolated
- Have trouble making friends
- Miss their familiar surroundings – friends, family, home
- Feel scared about people in Israel
- Have parents dealing with anxiety, depression.
- School feels (and is) very different
- Language barriers
- Culture barriers
- Uncertainty – how long are they staying, what does 'home' look like now?

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## Slide 6

 **Guiding principles**

- Hobfoll et al. 2007
- Five essential elements of responses to disasters and mass trauma

1. A sense of safety
2. Calming
3. Self and community efficacy
4. Social connectedness
5. Hope

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## Slide 7



### Sense of safety

- Help kids to understand the ways in which these events do and don't impact on them
- Disentangle threats (personal threat in the UK/people they know in Israel/Israel in general, physical vs psychological)
- Remind them that they are here, in the UK, not in Israel (this can make things better and worse... but it is also objectively true!)
- Are they worried about their personal safety? Talk about the things that the CST/police are doing (and regularly do) to help us to stay safe, and what they are now doing differently
- Acknowledge and validate their worries, anxiety, and sadness about the situation and about people they know - don't try to 'minimise'/say it will all be ok.
- Maintain a warm, positive and welcoming atmosphere in community spaces
- Maintain structure and routine
- Help kids to learn how to reduce exposure to the media

## Slide 8



### Calming

- Initial rise in arousal and anxiety.
- For some this doesn't subside and can impact on functioning and generalization of threat
- Normalise
  - It is ok to feel all these feelings
  - It is ok to not be ok.
- Find ways to create calm environments
- Teach kids (in general) ways to calm themselves.
  - E.g., Breathing techniques, grounding techniques (e.g., finding objects in the environment to correspond with letter of the alphabet), tensing and releasing muscles.
- Encourage kids to think about what has calmed them down in the past
- Talk about emotions
- Think of ways to also access positive emotions
- Distraction can be also be helpful (some of the time)

## Slide 9



### Connectedness

- Social support and sense of belonging are key
- Check in – group level and individual level
- Create a sense of community
  - In the school as a whole – nurturing supportive place.
  - Create mini communities (other newly arrived Israelis, but also within the class, with other families/buddies).
- Emphasise kindness and empathy in the school
- Jewish identity and feeling part of the Jewish people
- Encourage communal activities and group activities.
- Volunteering (Helping is really important to give a sense of purpose and control)
- Contacting Israelis, fundraising, supporting Israelis in London, vigils, etc.
- Twinning with their school or community in Israel?

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## Slide 10



### Self and collective efficacy

- Focus on the things are in control
- Sense of agency, competency and self-belief
- Empowerment - we have the resources and knowledge to cope
- Respect and empower people and their choices
- Give clear goals, roles, responsibilities – a sense of mission and also feel valued
- Find ways to have them actively contributing – sharing their Israel expertise (teaching, demonstrating, listening to younger kids reading Hebrew).
- Reflect on the positives. What have we/they managed to do as a community?

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## Slide 11



### Hope

- Often feel a sense of hopelessness in the beginning – even despair.
- Shattered world assumptions (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).
- Need to cultivate hope.
- We won't be in this situation forever
- Shared good news – positive stories.
- Focus on helpers
- Remind them that there have been many difficult times before and the Jewish people know how to rebuild
- Be honest – the hope is not 'we will all return to normal' – but 'together we will get through this'.

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## Slide 12



### Conclusion

- All students are different
- Make sure to involve the affected pupils and their families in decision making. Don't assume you know what they need
- Be aware that situations change fast
- Plan for integration of new pupils in the future
- Parallel process planning – that they all stay and that they all leave.
- Remember also to look after yourselves

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## Slide 13

TN<sup>1</sup>

### PaJeS' findings

**Background:**

- Number of schools involved: 5.
- Some with a small number of new Israeli students 1-4, some with 12-16.
- DW spoke to Ivrit teachers and/or HoDs

**General comments:**

- Despite the challenges this situation bring with, ALL Ivrit staff are doing their role with 100% commitment and willingness to help and support the students.
- The students are being received with warm welcoming.
- Students are generally happy and in their new schools in the UK.

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## Slide 14

TN<sup>1</sup>

### PaJeS' findings

**Challenges:**

- Staff -
- Space -
- Teaching Ivrit as a second lang. and as a native lang. in the same classroom – *'like having two schools in one classroom'*.
- No written objectives - What students need to achieve by the end of...
- Progress statements for the new Israeli students- Programmes and suitable resources –
- Those who speak English – their reading and writing skills are poor.
- Students who don't speak English
- Behaviour issues.
- Students are missing their families, friends, school, experiencing fear and worry.  
( where is the safe room; don't like the noise).
- How to help the students integrate well.

*Any other challenges you would like to add? – write in Chat*

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Slide 15

**Suggestions to help with these challenges**

- **Dalia**

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Slide 16

**Share your own good practice**

- **Participants**

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# Slide 17



Galia Sher  
Wolfson Hillel school

תנ"ך

- In the beginning?..
- Tour at school on a Sunday
- Morning meetings – share some details of the conversations taking place; students' answers and more
- Focus – 'feel safe'
- Share examples of activities and tasks for the Israeli students in Ivrit lessons

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## Appendix Eight: Welcome to Leeds



Leeds

**JEWISH**

Community

# Welcome to Leeds

Key Information to help you settle in.



# Jewish Schools in Leeds

## For **Brodetsky nursery** (age 2+)

contact [nursery@brodetsky.org](mailto:nursery@brodetsky.org)

For Brodetsky Primary school

admissions contact

[office@brodetsky.org](mailto:office@brodetsky.org)

For Leeds Jewish Free school

(High school) admissions contact

[daibi@ljfs.org](mailto:daibi@ljfs.org)

## For **Menorah School**

admissions contact

[office@leedsmenorahschool.org](mailto:office@leedsmenorahschool.org)

## For **Kollel Creche**

admissions contact

[flowertotsleeds@gmail.com](mailto:flowertotsleeds@gmail.com)

# Youth provision The Zone



## For **The Zone** for general youth

enquiries contact 0113 2172531 or

email [raina@1zone.org.uk](mailto:raina@1zone.org.uk)

[alex@1zone.org.uk](mailto:alex@1zone.org.uk)

[phoebe@1zone.org.uk](mailto:phoebe@1zone.org.uk)

Zone Mental health and additional needs support  
provision enquiries

contact 0 [7936362908](tel:7936362908)

The Zone cafe is open from 9am Monday -Thursday



Leeds

**JEWISH**  
Community

# Youth school holiday provision

For Brodetsky school Camp Achlah

admissions contact

[tbarel@brodetsky.org](mailto:tbarel@brodetsky.org)

## For kids (Chabad) Day Camp

[office@judaismlive.com](mailto:office@judaismlive.com)

The Zone drop in times

Monday -Thursday 9am-7pm for ages 9+ (Year 5 onwards)

# Informal daytime provision

The Zone drop in times

Monday -Thursday 9am-7pm

Contact The Zone for Youthmovement information 0113 2172531

Leeds Jewish Welfare Board Playgroup 0-5 Years

Contact the WelfareBoard 0113 2684211

Please note- Children must be

accompanied by an adult during these sessions.

# Synagogues In Leeds

Beth Hamidrash Hagadol (Orthodox)

[deborah@bhhs.co.uk](mailto:deborah@bhhs.co.uk)

Chabad

[office@judaismlive.com](mailto:office@judaismlive.com)

Etz Chaim (Orthodox)

[office@etzchaim.co.uk](mailto:office@etzchaim.co.uk)

[Masorti congregation](#)

[eva.frojmovic@ntlworld.com](mailto:eva.frojmovic@ntlworld.com)

Queenshill Chassidische Shul

[simon.phillips@ljha.co.uk](mailto:simon.phillips@ljha.co.uk)

Sinai (Reform)

[info@sinaileeds.uk](mailto:info@sinaileeds.uk)

United Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox)

[alicia@uhcleeds.com](mailto:alicia@uhcleeds.com)

# Shuls near Leeds

Bradford Reform Synagogue

[synagoguebradford@gmail.com](mailto:synagoguebradford@gmail.com)

York Liberal Community

[info@jewsinYork.org.uk](mailto:info@jewsinYork.org.uk)

Harrogate Hebrew Congregation

[romacohen@gmail.com](mailto:romacohen@gmail.com)

## Donations In Leeds

If you are in need of any  
clothes or other items

please contact

[naomi.goldman@ljfs.org](mailto:naomi.goldman@ljfs.org)

# Kosher food In Leeds

You can purchase Kosher food from  
Gourmet Foods

584 Harrogate Road, LS17 8DP

Mazcc Cafe and restaurant

311 Stonegate Road

LS17 6AZ

0113 2684211

Street Lane Bakery 399

Street Lane. LS17 6HQ



# Kosher food In Leeds cont.

The Zone cafe and take away

Most local supermarkets also have a Kosher section.

There is (free) emergency food provision available via Chabad.

[www.JudaismLive.com/ShabbatDinnerPacks](http://www.JudaismLive.com/ShabbatDinnerPacks) and

[www.JudaismLive.com/aruchot](http://www.JudaismLive.com/aruchot)

Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB)

LJWB is here to support the whole community. For any general enquiries, including our wide range of Community Support Services, as well as activities for adults and children please call 0113 268 4211

LJWB is based at the Marjorie & Arnold Ziff Community Centre (MAZCC). At the Community Centre we run a Kosher café & restaurant and also offer a 2 course subsidised lunch for £5.50 each weekday.

Please get in touch for specific details on any of the above.

T 0113 268 4211

W [www.ljwb.co.uk](http://www.ljwb.co.uk)

E [theboard@ljwb.co.uk](mailto:theboard@ljwb.co.uk)

## **Additional support**

For advice and support with housing requests contact

Leeds Jewish Housing association  
0113 320 7777

JPride is the LGBTQ+ organisation in Leeds.

For more information contact  
[jprideleeds@gmail.com](mailto:jprideleeds@gmail.com)

## Other activities

The Leisure Club meet fortnightly at Etz Chaim.

Contact [office@etzchaim.co.uk](mailto:office@etzchaim.co.uk) or  
[deborah@bhhs.co.uk](mailto:deborah@bhhs.co.uk) for more information.

For information on The UHC Wednesday  
club

Contact [alicia@uhcleeds.com](mailto:alicia@uhcleeds.com)