

# Critical Incident Psychological Safety Plan



Emergency Response Initiative Consortium

## Welcome to the Emergency Response Initiative Consortium's (ERIC) Critical Incident Psychological Safety Plan.

**Every critical incident will be unique but there are some principles that apply to all of them in terms of psychological safety. Leadership, appropriate communications, sensitivity and emotional intelligence are key values that need to be held in mind during recovery from an incident of this nature.**

What follows are key actions that schools can take to ensure the psychological safety of students and staff following a critical incident. For a response plan after a suspected suicide, please see the original ERIC Guidance on Support After Suicide. [https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources\\_for\\_secondary\\_schools](https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources_for_secondary_schools)

For support on other aspects of security and critical incident planning, please refer to

CST's Southern Regional Security Department at [regionalsecurity@cst.org.uk](mailto:regionalsecurity@cst.org.uk) or for northern communities [northregionalsecurity@cst.org.uk](mailto:northregionalsecurity@cst.org.uk)

We are living in uncertain and anxiety-provoking times. Although the thought of an adverse incident occurring that impacts students at Jewish schools is something none of us want to think about, we hope these key tasks and ways of working will offer support to schools in the event of such an occurrence.

A critical incident is usually an event that entails significant adversity of some form that has the potential to cause high levels of distress to people who have witnessed or been impacted by them. As in cases of suspected suicide, planning always starts with a strong team who will take leadership of the situation. The team will have defined roles and responsibilities which have been agreed in advance.

**PRODUCED BY** EMERGENCY RESPONSE INITIATIVE CONSORTIUM (ERIC)

**CO-ORDINATED BY** JAMI

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH** NORWOOD, CST, JBCS, GRIEF ENCOUNTER, PaJeS

# Jami

For when mental illness  
and distress makes  
everyday life a struggle

**NORWOOD**  
Taking on life together

**CST**  
PROTECTING OUR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY

**JBCS** Jewish Bereavement  
Counselling Service

**gr'ef  
encounter**  
supporting bereaved children & young people

**PaJeS**  
Supporting Jewish Schools

# Critical Incident Team (CIT)

## Make-up of the team

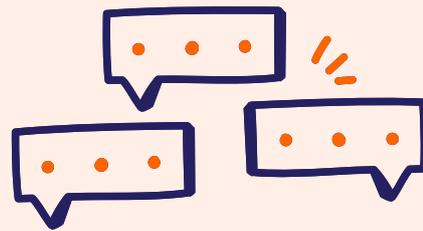
- The team should consist of five or six people
- The team should have a nominated leader and deputy
- The team should include the headteacher and other appropriate personnel, such as pastoral care staff



## Establish communication methods of the CIT

Options include:-

- WhatsApp group
- School broadcasting system
- Telephone and email contact



## Assigning roles

- All roles/tasks in the team should be assigned to more than one person in case the lead/other members are not available
- The team should be able to work effectively under pressure, ensuring they always maintain compassion and empathy



# Tasks to be covered by the CIT in the event of a critical incident

Schools must allocate these tasks in advance to named personnel so that actions can run smoothly in the event of a critical incident. Many of these actions can then flow simultaneously with allocated people.

## 1. PRACTICALITIES ON SITE

### Coded message to staff

Call to police and follow their advice around managing staff and students on site. If appropriate, the named person with responsibility for managing the scene should secure area and arrange for students to be diverted away and back to classrooms. Any areas in school that may be useful for police investigations must be undisturbed. These would include areas where the critical incident occurred.

Support witnesses. Police will take statements on arrival.

Be mindful of relationships in the school (siblings, best friends) if a student has been harmed.

## 2. ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Inform relevant parents and carers.

Share information with local authority, staff, governors and other key stakeholders (including informing other Jewish schools).

Enter names of key stakeholders and contact details here:

### Call CST hotline 0800 0328477 to alert the ERIC team.

(We will send a group of trained first responders to support students and staff as soon as possible.)

**Information that needs to be shared about the critical incident should not be done in whole school assemblies.** It is very difficult to monitor and then manage students' reactions in this environment.

### Help staff by providing guidance for sharing information.

(See key principles for communications in this document.)

**Prepare email communication for parents of students and include ERIC Critical Incidents Parent and Carer leaflet.**

**Manage press queries with help from local authorities.** (Every local authority has a media centre that can support critical incident information sharing. Add these details to your list of stakeholders.)

**Manage social media as far as possible. Dispel rumour and fake news in official communications.**

**Monitor known vulnerable students and staff.** If students and staff are struggling psychologically, exposure to a critical incident can seriously impair coping mechanisms and lead to acute distress. Inform services you work with, such as local CAMHS and voluntary sector relevant services. Ensure all staff are regularly updated and seek opportunities for in-person communication.



## 3. CARE AND SUPPORT

Extra support will be needed for students who may be vulnerable psychologically due to special needs, mental health conditions or due to a challenging domestic set-up or are looked after children i.e children with unpredictable home lives and fragile or inconsistent support networks.

Contact families as appropriate and as soon as possible if any students have been adversely affected.

Comfort affected students and staff who may have witnessed events or have become distressed. ERIC first responders will continue to provide support on arrival.

Parents/carers of students who are deeply impacted by the incident should be spoken to regarding arrangements for children.

### i) Support rooms for ERIC team

Ensure there is a large space for group work and smaller spaces to support individuals or small groups.

Ensure water, tissues, art materials and snacks are available.

## SENSITIVITIES AND AREAS TO THINK ABOUT

Following a critical incident, the CIT team needs to offer guidance to staff about managing sensitivities in classrooms and throughout the school. For example, if a person has been adversely affected, thought needs to go into seating plans and other areas of school life if people will be missing or absent.

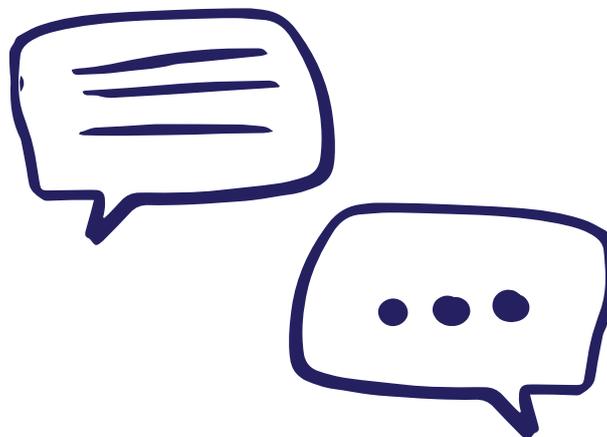
Likewise, mailing lists may need amending or any other lists where communications are automatised.

Families need to be treated sensitively if they have been affected and if a death has occurred. Follow the advice given regarding arrangements in the full ERIC guide which can be found here [https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources\\_for\\_secondary\\_schools](https://www.pajes.org.uk/resources_for_secondary_schools)

A high level of emotional intelligence must be deployed by the school in interactions with parents, students, staff and others. We need to be mindful, however stretched we may be feeling, that we do our utmost to treat others with kindness and patience. Ask teaching staff to also be mindful about subjects that may contain triggering content at this time.

### Suggestions for letters and scripts – key principles

- Acknowledge what has happened with clarity and kindness sharing essential information.
- Let stakeholders know what the school are doing to offer support to students/teachers/parent carers (differentiate as applicable).
- Provide further information for parents on how to support their child (see guide for parents).
- Signpost to authoritative sources for external enquiries.
- Acknowledge the challenge the critical incident has presented and reflect on the emotions people may feel as a result. That may include fear, confusion, anger, or even grief and how that can be difficult to manage. Remind people what help is available inside and outside school. For example, if ERIC first responders are called in, you can let parents know about that and other support systems in the school.
- Reassure students and parents that the school routine will be upheld and that the school must be notified of any students unable to attend. Remind parents of the value of routine for young people's mental health.
- End with a message of hopefulness and compassion. Acknowledge the school community's resilience and how everyone will come together to provide comfort and strength at a difficult time.



## Further resources

Research local statutory and charitable organisations offering support services

**Jami** – provides practical and emotional mental health support

Adult, and children and young people's mental health services

Support for parent carers

See our website for more information

[www.jamiuk.org](http://www.jamiuk.org)

[www.qwell.io/jami](http://www.qwell.io/jami)

**Norwood** – provides psychotherapy services for young people and support for their families

[www.norwood.org.uk](http://www.norwood.org.uk)

020 8457 4745

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

## Crisis support

**NHS Mental Health Crisis helpline for under 18s**

24 hours, every day 0800 151 0023

**SHOUT**

24/7 text-based support.

Text Jami to 85258

**Papyrus Hope Line UK**

0800 068 41 41

Text 07860 039967

[pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

## Support after bereavement

**Grief Talk Helpline**

0808 802 0111

[griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk](mailto:griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk)

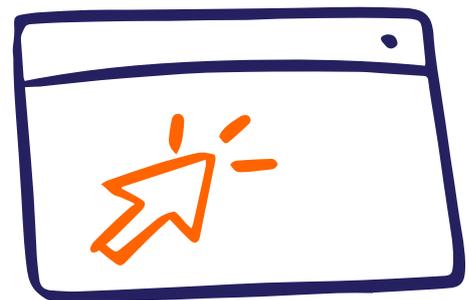
(Supporting bereaved children and young people)

**JBCS** (Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service)

020 8951 3881

[www.jbcs.org.uk](http://www.jbcs.org.uk)

[enquiries@jbcs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@jbcs.org.uk)



**eric**

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