

MAYOR OF LONDON

Our ref: CYPMH Headteachers

Date: 11 March 2021

Dear Headteacher,

I am writing to thank you for the important and tireless work you do for young Londoners. The last year has created but also exacerbated so many challenges; to say it has been difficult would be a huge understatement. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the immense amount of hard work that has gone into maintaining remote learning, while continuing to support London's vulnerable children and the children of critical workers in school. As we begin on the road out of lockdown, I want to thank you for all that you and your colleagues have done to support your students through what, for many, will be the most difficult period of their childhoods.

For many of us, the pandemic has had, and will continue to have, a huge impact on our mental health and wellbeing. Young Londoners have faced disrupted learning, cancelled exams, and big question marks about what their future might look like. The toll on their mental health is becoming clear. In January, the annual Prince's Trust survey released worrying results showing that 1 in 4 young people have felt unable to cope during the pandemic.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel as students return to classrooms, the vaccine rollout continues, and restrictions start to ease. Yet the mental health impact on our young people will, unfortunately, be long-lasting, and I want to make sure I am taking the steps I can to support them, and to support you. This includes making sure young Londoners can access tools that can help.

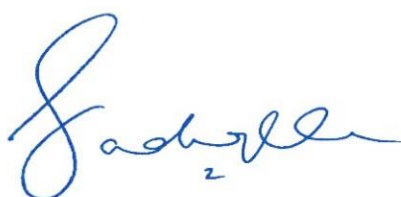
You may already be aware of resources such as Good Thinking – an online wellbeing service to support Londoners with their mental health and emotional wellbeing. I have recently funded an expansion of Good Thinking, specifically aimed at young people aged 13 to 18.

Please find appended, a list of some of the latest support and resources available for young Londoners, their parents, carers and teachers, including Good Thinking. For the latest back to school updates you can visit the City Hall website at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare/back-school-and-college> and for termly updates on our work to support children and young people, please sign up to my schools e-newsletter at: www.london.gov.uk/schoolsnewsletter.

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Finally, as we emerge from the worst of the crisis, I wanted to mention some of the work that is underway in partnership with London Councils to plan for our recovery. Over the pandemic, I have become increasingly concerned about the challenges of food insecurity and the resulting health inequities among London's children. As part of London's Recovery Programme, the 'Healthy Food, Height Weight' mission aims to learn from the brilliant work that is happening within schools to create healthy food cultures. It seeks to build on existing projects to support future generations to be able to enjoy a healthy weight through an improved appreciation and attitude to food. Alongside this, the Recovery Programme's 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Mission' will be working closely with Good Thinking and Thrive LDN to ensure young Londoners and those caring, parenting and teaching them have the support they need to stay mentally well. My teams will be in touch again about this and the wider Recovery Programme soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Joanne McCartney, Deputy Mayor for Education and Childcare
Dr Tom Coffey, Mayor's Health Policy Advisor
Association of London Directors of Children's Services
Directors of Public Health
Healthy Schools London Network

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Tools and resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing:

- **Good Thinking** – an online wellbeing service to support Londoners with their mental health and emotional wellbeing. There are specific resources [aimed at young people](#) (ages 13-18). There is also specialist content for [parents and carers](#) and [education professionals](#).
- **CAMHS Crisis lines** – London's emergency lines are available 24/7 and numbers are free to call when urgent support is needed – [you can find your local line here](#). Young people can speak to a specially trained professional about their mental health concerns in a crisis. <https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/schools-mental-health-toolkit/mental-health-crisis-lines/>.
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid training** – these training courses allow you to identify signs of mental health issues in a young person, providing them with the right support. You can sign up for a free training course [on the Thrive LDN website](#).
- **Psychological First Aid** – In your role supporting young Londoners, you and your colleagues might also be interested in Public Health England's new, free [Psychological First Aid course for supporting children and young people](#).
- **The Mental Health in Schools Toolkit** provides a wide range of information and guidance for school leaders and staff on how to promote emotional wellbeing and mental health within schools. [View the updated toolkit here](#).
- **Healthy Schools London Resource Hub** – available [on the City Hall website](#).
- **Place2Be** – provide child counselling and mental health support in schools, including free mental health training for teachers and school staff. [Find out more here](#).

Additional signposting – different circumstances can require different types of support, here are a few additional options from some excellent organisations:

- [Shout 85258](#) – a free, confidential, anonymous 24/7 text support service. Anyone can text SHOUT to 85258, anytime.
- [Young Minds](#) – provide advice and mental health support, as well as online workshops, blogs and resources. Young people who need urgent help should text YM to 85258 – a 24/7 messenger service. Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544
- [Papyrus](#) – supporting young people who struggle with thoughts of suicide, or if they are worried about someone else. There is a helpline to call: 0800 068 41 41
- [Beat Eating Disorders](#) – support for people worried about eating disorders. Their Youth helpline is available every day of the year: 0808 801 0711
- [Childline](#) – a free counselling service for children and young people. Children can call, chat online or email Childline about anything they are worried about.
- [Child Bereavement UK](#) – supporting children and families to rebuild their lives after bereavement. Their website includes support for children, as well as resources for the education sector.
- [Translated wellbeing guidance](#) from Doctors of the World – available in 27 languages, designed to support migrant communities.