

Dear Parents and Carers,

We believe it is very important to us to support the mental health of our young people at this difficult time. Children of all ages may be finding this situation worrying, upsetting and challenging for a range of reasons.

Please find below a number of services and strategies available which aim to support the mental health of our young people.

1. Kooth.com

Kooth is free, safe and anonymous online counselling platform for young people living in Hackney or the City that offers young people the opportunity to have a text-based conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from 12noon to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10 pm at weekends. Young people can access regular booked online counselling sessions as needed or 'drop in' for a chat. Outside counselling hours' young people can message our team and get support by the next day.

You can view a short video about the service via this link: [Kooth - Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people](#).

2. Refer your child to trusted support websites and social media

The internet can add to the anxiety around COVID-19, so encourage your child to follow supportive organisations aimed at young people on instagram or other social media, such as [@youngmindsuk](#) and [@themixuk](#). Their websites are also filled with relevant information for young people - [Coronavirus and mental health](#) and [Coronavirus Anxiety for Young People](#) - but also cover non-virus related mental health too. The [Anna Freud](#) website contains advice for young people and parents too.

3. Encourage your child to contact their Tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year if they are feeling worried, down, stressed or would like support for another reason

In term time, trusted adults are available to support as normal, so pupils are welcome to use their school email to contact pastoral staff and arrange a time for a call back. Sometimes it can be helpful for a young person to speak to someone outside of their direct family to talk through a situation or a concern.

4. Continuing with current support

If your child is already accessing support from Aspace or Young Hackney, they are doing their best to continue to offer support to these pupils via email or phone where possible so please encourage your child to continue to access these services. Unfortunately, CAMHS are only able to support with urgent cases at this time.

5. Parenting tips for teenagers during school closures

UNICEF have issued a list of strategies to support children and teenagers, including ideas such as one on one time, tips on how to manage stress and how to talk about the virus. Please find the full list here [Tips for parenting during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). The government have also produced their own guidance found here: [Guidance for parents and carers on supporting young people's mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

Kind regards

Elizabeth Cooke

Designated Mental Health Lead

Dear Pupils,

It's really important that we all look after our mental health at this difficult time. You might be finding this time worrying, upsetting or challenging for a range of reasons. Perhaps someone you know has been ill, perhaps you are concerned about someone getting ill, or maybe you are just really bored of being away from your friends!

Here is a list of helpful links and ways to get support:

1. Kooth.com

Kooth is free, safe and anonymous online counselling platform which offers young people the opportunity to have a text conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from 12noon to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10 pm at weekends, every day of the year. Outside counselling hours' young people can message our team and get support by the next day. You can view a short video about the service via this link: [Kooth - Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people](#).

2. Follow positive, supportive accounts

Follow supportive organisations which will keep you positive and give helpful tips and advice such as [@youngmindsuk](#) and [@themixuk](#). Their websites are also filled with relevant information for young people - [Coronavirus and mental health](#) and [Coronavirus Anxiety for Young People](#) - but also cover non-virus related mental health too. The [Anna Freud](#) website contains advice for young people and parents too.

3. Stay active

Keeping active is a really good way to look after your mental and physical health. I'm sure you've heard of Joe Wicks giving his youtube PE lessons, but lots of sports stars and gyms are offering free insta live sessions for you to follow at home so check out your favourite player's accounts. If you really want to improve your fitness, try a free workout from top gyms like [@barrys](#) and [@thirdspacelondon](#) on instalive! If you are normally a member of a Better leisure centre like Britannia or Queensbridge Sports Centre, you can download the Better UK app ([Google Play](#) or [Apple Store](#)) and access loads of free workouts. Why not arrange a time with your friends to do the same workout online and then you can message about it!

4. Email your Tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year if you would like support for any reason

In term time, your teachers are available to support as normal, so use your school email to contact your teacher. We can always arrange a time to give you a call at home too if you need.

5. Continuing with current support

If you are already working with Aspace or Young Hackney, they are doing their best to continue to support you via email or phone where possible so do reply and let them know how you are doing. Unfortunately, CAMHS workers are only able to support some cases at this time so might not be able to speak to you. If you are worried about this, speak to your Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year.

Kind regards

Elizabeth Cooke

Designated Mental Health Lead