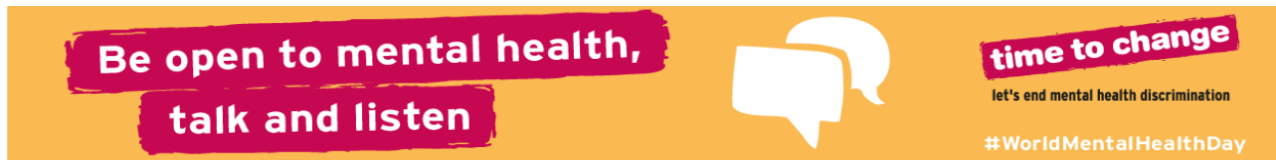




9 October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian



Saturday 10 October is World Mental Health Day.

This year's World Mental Health Day, on Saturday 10 October, comes at a time when our daily lives have changed considerably as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The past months have brought many challenges: for health-care workers, providing care in difficult circumstances, going to work fearful of bringing COVID-19 home with them; for students, adapting to taking classes from home, with little contact with teachers and friends, and anxious about their futures; for workers whose livelihoods are threatened; for those caught in poverty and for people with mental health conditions, many experiencing even greater social isolation than before. And this is to say nothing of managing the grief of losing a loved one, sometimes without being able to say goodbye.

As you will be aware, we are supporting your children in school through our pastoral care systems and making referrals to specialist services for those who need it.

We know that talking about feelings can be difficult for children and young people, however, and so we are delighted that for students living in Berkshire West (Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham) access has been made available to Kooth, a well-established online counselling service for 11-18 year olds which is accredited by The British Association of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BACP).

<https://www.kooth.com/>



For children not able to access Kooth, there is a wealth of advice available online including [Young Minds](#) and [On My Mind](#).

If you need help yourself or are worried about your child, advice can be found on the [NHS website](#).

For something practical to do this World Mental Health Day, children and adults can plan [positive activities](#) to enhance their emotional health using the principles of the **Five Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Be active, Take notice, Learn, Give**. You could even schedule them in to the attached planner!

Above all, we encourage you to take time to talk and to listen.

Your sincerely

Alison Walker
Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding