



2021-0045149POSoS

**Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

Annabelle Jeffery

By email: [17SI9958@launcestoncollege.org.uk](mailto:17SI9958@launcestoncollege.org.uk)

28<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Annabelle,

Thank you for your letter of 4 October, congratulating me on my recent appointment as the Secretary of State for Education, and about mental health for young people. I would be grateful if you could share my response with Kerry and Xavier.

It is an absolute honour to be appointed to this position, and I am delighted to be leading a department that does such vital and important work. It is a privilege to be able to work with our brilliant teachers, college staff, lecturers, social workers and support staff who are making such a difference to people's lives with their commitment and professionalism. By working collaboratively, we can face the challenges of the day and ensure every young person has the opportunity to realise their full potential.

I am always pleased to hear from young people who are interested in their education and appreciate you taking the time to share your suggestions.

We know that the mental health and wellbeing of young people has been affected by the pandemic, and that being back in school and college plays a central role in promoting wellbeing for pupils. That is why we worked so hard to ensure that schools were first to reopen in March 2021.

We understand that the £17 million funding alone isn't sufficient to support all schools and am pleased to inform you that this is in addition to more funding we are investing in children's wellbeing. The funding you mentioned in your letter is in addition to the £79 million to boost children and young people's mental health support we announced in March, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams in schools and colleges to around 400, to cover approximately 35% of pupils in England by 2023.

In the long-term, through the NHS Long Term Plan we are expanding children and young people's mental health services to support an additional 345,000 children and young people by 2023-24, backed by record investment of an extra £2.3 billion per year. Funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than overall NHS and adult mental health spending.

We are also investing £3 billion to boost learning, including £950 million in additional funding for schools which they can use to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

I appreciate you providing me with your research findings, our own research also indicated similar patterns. We know that the pandemic and the associated measures and restrictions, such as social distancing and the recent school closures, has been impacting on the mental wellbeing of some children and young people.

Evidence that children and young people with particular characteristics, such as pre-existing mental health needs, or from disadvantaged backgrounds may have experienced more negative effects due to the pandemic has also been used to inform the support measures put in place by government.

We are working across government to understand the data and evidence as it emerges. There is a summary of published sources in the UK Health Security Agency Surveillance report which is available at: [tinyurl.com/zksYP9e6](https://tinyurl.com/zksYP9e6).

Furthermore, in your letter you mentioned the importance of getting support and staff training. As of September 2020, all primary schools are required to provide Relationships and Health Education and all secondary schools are required to provide Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). At primary level, the focus is on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing, and at secondary level, there is a strong focus on mental wellbeing in Health Education.

My department is committed to supporting all schools to deliver RSHE, which includes a range of specific teaching requirements on mental health and wellbeing. A mental wellbeing teacher training module and implementation guidance have been published for the new curriculum to help subject leads and teachers understand what they should teach, as well as improving their confidence in delivering mental wellbeing as part of the new curriculum. To bring together information about the various mental health support offers and training available to schools and colleges, we have recently published guidance which is available at: [tinyurl.com/zrYkdsxf](https://tinyurl.com/zrYkdsxf).

Thank you for writing on this important matter and I wish you all the best in your future education.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
**Secretary of State for Education**