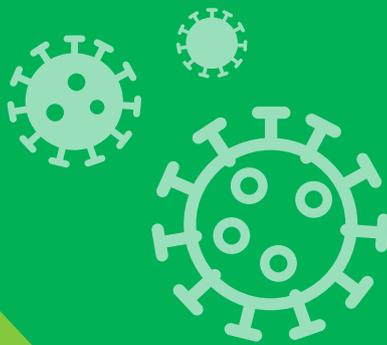


Tips, Resources and Recommendations during **COVID-19**

Aga Khan Development Network *Supporting Secondary School Educators to Help Students Learn*



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Challenge: Our New Reality

COVID-19 has affected all aspects of our lives. It is clear that self-isolation and physical distancing are key strategies in 'flattening the curve' of new coronavirus infections. Consequently, school buildings across the world have been closed. But 'school', in the sense of our 'community of learners', remains open.

With little or no preparation, teachers and school leaders have stepped up to the challenge of distance learning with commitment, skill, perseverance and flair, often without access to technology. We have already seen classroom teachers quickly adapt and innovate to become new pioneers in delivering distance education for millions of children throughout the world.

Yet we know that meeting the demands of supporting students to learn during COVID-19 can be overwhelming for educators. Whether it is navigating thousands of new online resources or managing offline learning needs for children disconnected from the internet, it has become increasingly stressful and tiring for educators to adopt and adapt new online/offline learning materials for their students during the pandemic. Hopefully this resource can help.

Support for Secondary School Educators

We thank and applaud all secondary school educators for what they are already doing during this difficult period. The following resources have been gathered by colleagues from the Aga Khan Development Network to provide secondary school educators with a curated list of practical tips and offline/online teaching resources, to best support secondary school-aged students' learning and psychosocial wellbeing during COVID-19. We hope the following resources can provide you with some actionable ideas for the difficult journey ahead.

I. General Tips to Engage Students

In response to COVID-19, we have gathered **10 tips** to help secondary school educators think about ways to best support their students' learning during this time. We want to reassure educators that there is no right or wrong approach. You know your context and your students and what will work best for them.

1. **Connect with each student:** The personal connection between a student and his/her teacher remains incredibly important during COVID-19. Communications from teachers to their students should be frequent, clear, relevant, and aligned to the different needs of each learner. Consider using live or pre-recorded videos to have your students see you and for you to see your students. If video is not possible, call your students over the phone and ask about their day. It shows respect and sensitivity to agree on a mutually convenient time before connecting one-on-one with your students and their parents/caretakers. Smile and provide lots of reassurance. This will help students feel more secure, cared for and will maintain their motivation for learning from home. It is important to encourage students' perspectives and honour their voices, whether they are learning in school or at home. Therefore, to take time to learn what students are interested in and what is (and is not) working for them. Ask open-ended questions and encourage them to talk about their feelings and experiences. Personal connections with each student lasting even 5 to 10 minutes each day can make a profound difference.
2. **Maintain interactions between students:** Connections between students are very important. Where possible, link students using video conferencing, other technology or by phone so that they can see/talk to each other. Engage students to develop home learning challenges for themselves and for their peers. Peer support programmes where students help each other with learning, interact socially and talk one-on-one about their interests and frustrations (via internet or phone) as well as small group or class calls, are simple ways to maintain social connections and promote learning and wellbeing.
3. **Build relationships with families:** Now is a great opportunity to maintain and/or form stronger connections with your students' parents/caregivers. Connections now will also help improve parent/caregiver engagement in their student's learning during the new normal of the COVID-19 crisis. Clearly communicate how families can best support their students' academic and non-academic needs. Show how parents/caregivers can easily reach out to you with any concerns or questions about their students' learning. Perhaps suggest 'virtual office hours' during which parents can send you text messages or join a group call. Remember to be sensitive to the pressures that families are facing and create structured opportunities for parents to give feedback about their students' remote learning experiences. Educators have a duty to make sure both the students and their families are not being overloaded or overwhelmed.
4. **Maintain consistency and communicate expectations:** Creating a consistent routine for learning helps students (and families) plan and manage their day. Student/class check-ins should be timetabled and regular. It is similarly helpful for students (and you) to maintain a consistent format for distance activities. Layout and style should be predictable and simple to follow. Resist the temptation to over explain or provide too many examples. If you are using technology, stick with a consistent platform. While you may wish to replace face-to-face lessons with continuously live virtual interactions, they will be difficult on a regular basis. Setting and communicating the rules of engagement is also critical. Students need to know what is expected of them, by when and why. Help students organise their learning and assignments including estimating how long a task might take. This will assist them with time management and to work independently.

- 5. Plan carefully:** Distance learning will be a new experience for most of your students, so plan for less, not for more. Ensure that all your students have access to any content that you provide. You may need to use different delivery approaches for different students based on their circumstances. Some students will need more support and time than others. For many students, although not for all, distance-learning tasks will take longer to complete at home, than they would in a normal classroom environment. Consider project-based activities that integrate different subjects, allow students to deeply explore a topic and help them develop critical 21st century skills. Project based activities also give students a break from the screen.
- 6. Provide feedback and assess:** Timely, brief and frequent feedback and learning 'checks' are even more important than usual when there is a physical distance between teachers and students. Reassurance and acknowledgement of effort, progress and achievement will go a long way to sustaining students' levels of motivation, engagement and overall learning when they are isolated in their homes. It will give them a sense that their learning is purposeful, taken seriously and that they are on the right track. Ensure assessments are practical, manageable and give you a window into a student's progress and understanding. Encourage students to keep personal learning portfolios that can be used as a resource, once they are back at school.
- 7. Test and check:** If possible, have home learning resources checked by colleagues or even some students themselves before you use them. Review processes should pay attention to spelling, punctuation, layout and grammar, intellectual property and the accuracy of the content being provided. The quality assurance of distance learning 'kits' or new content is particularly critical. Once resources are sent out, they are like a spaceship – if something was not on board when it was launched, it will be difficult to complete the mission. It is also important to regularly check what is working for students and what is not; what they want more or less of. If students do not like or understand something, offer them an informal, easy way to let you know. Try a survey, telephone call or question on WhatsApp. Based on their feedback, consider modifying your programme. Don't forget to test and re-test the functionality of the technology you use to increase familiarity and minimise frustrations.
- 8. Monitor students' levels of engagement:** Monitor absences closely. Not every student will attend or engage in distance learning. Some may lack the necessary support or resources, while others may struggle to sustain motivation. The challenge in distance learning is that students who don't participate tend to 'disappear' and can be hard to track down or re-engage. In response, try to intervene early and make direct contact with families when students do not attend regularly. Consider linking them with another student and spend extra time to understand the situation and provide support.
- 9. Pay attention to safeguarding:** Whether students are at school or at home, their safety and yours, remains the top priority. There are new concerns emerging over safeguarding in online environments as more students are connected in virtual experiences. Make sure students can complete all offline and online activities without harm to themselves or to others. It is wise to establish protocols for communication between you and the students. Thoroughly check the suitability of a website or a link before recommending it. Make sure to click through all the links and read/watch the entire resource through to the end. Finally, remind parents of the available resources to help students remain safe online. [Click here.](#)

10. Pay attention to the students' understanding of COVID-19: Check with your students what they are hearing about COVID-19. There is a lot of misinformation circulating and you might be challenged by student questions and concerns fuelled by unreliable, and sensationalised information. Share trusted and reliable resources with students. Consider carefully what content is best for students at this time. Research projects about COVID-19 are probably not a good idea due to the amount of disinformation that is being shared.

II. Offline and Online Resources

This section includes a list of **50 suggested online/offline resources** to support secondary school educators in providing their students with quality distance learning opportunities and informed psychosocial support. This is not an exhaustive list. While there are many online resources available, it can be difficult to sift through and access those that are of high quality and appropriate for secondary school-aged students, especially those relevant to low-resource contexts. Furthermore, many students do not have reliable internet access or the necessary technology hardware to support many of the available online resources. Therefore, the resources provided below are separated into four sections that provide secondary educators with a range of suggested teaching and learning activities during COVID-19:

- a. 5 Suggested Offline Teaching Resources to Help Students' Learning
- b. 31 Suggested Online Teaching Resources to Help Students' Learning
- c. 8 Offline Resources to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing
- d. 6 Online Resources to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing

5 Offline Teaching Activities to Help Students Learn at Home:

1. **Encourage Project-Based Learning for Young People:** Choose project-based learning activities that take place over extended periods of time, as they can reinforce the concepts of creativity, exploration, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Projects allow for students to integrate elements of many subjects including Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Language to solve real-world problems. Most importantly, projects can be fun, increase student's levels of motivation and deepen learning. Secondary school educators will need to allocate additional time with students to discuss and reflect on what they have learned from their projects to gain the most from this distance teaching and learning methodology. Examples can include:
 - a. **Become journalists and creative writers:** Have students interview grandparents, parents and friends (over the phone if not in the same place) about their day or their experience with COVID-19 and write an article, news briefing or headline and/or create a radio broadcast. Use the phone, a voice recording or even text messaging to have students present their work to their peers. Templates and tips on writing news stories will improve the quality of the work.

- b. Inspire a class debate about current issues:** Pose a challenge facing society today through text message or phone calls asking students to identify and articulate both sides of the issue. Encourage the students to come prepared to argue pros and cons over the phone. This activity provides a virtual debate space and enables you to check a student's understanding of different perspectives. Other students can also listen into the debate or receive a recording of the conversation so that they can add their ideas about the topic. This exercise can be repeated with different topics.
- c. Challenge students with real-world problems to solve:** Consider some of today's headlines about the future of schools and the future of secondary school students during COVID-19. Introduce a variety of writing prompts that can encourage students to compose essays or journal entries about how they would solve these big issues. For example, you could ask students about what ways should schools re-open while maintaining social distancing measures? Can it be done?
- d. Ask students to become designers of their future:** Ask students to map their home or community including people, places, and areas of interest. Over the course of the week, ask students to become 'design thinkers' and reimagine these spaces in ten years. What is different? What should be changed? What new challenges will need to be addressed through the re-design process? Encourage students to interview one or two other people in their house, community or class over the phone. Encourage students to document the perspectives from others and integrate them into their re-design for the future. Invite presentations over the phone or via photographs sent over WhatsApp or text. This exercise encourages students to think beyond the present and address multiple subject areas in their reimagination of homes and communities over the next decade.
- e. Create a new self-help book for others:** You can ask your students to design a book to help others learn how to manage being at home during COVID-19. It could provide instructions about exercises to keep family members moving during the day or a new family cookbook that illustrates specific nutritional benefits of various meals and highlights family favourites.
- f. Form your own country:** Ask students to imagine creating a new country from scratch. Provide a set of 'independent study' instructions for students that invite them to have fun while creating a new nation. The instructions could include talking with fellow students and outlining the new country's: a) form of government; b) design of a flag; c) currency; d) special traditions; and even e) a new language. There are many variations of the [create-your-own-country](#) project – it can be an extended lesson/unit that grows over time.
- g. Suggest collaborative poetry:** Challenge your students to read poetry and then write their own. Show your students both the intrinsic beauty of poetry and how it can be used to learn about other cultures, places and times. Students can collaborate with others to read, discuss and co-write poems. Consider building a virtual poem chain via WhatsApp/text messaging where each student contributes a sentence or verse before 'passing it on' to another student.
- h. Challenge your students to design new solutions to environmental issues:** Are people doing enough to ensure that the next generation inherits a healthy planet? Challenge your students to answer that question by diving into an independent project about the environment and use household items to represent the challenges and potential solutions facing their homes and communities.

- i. Pitch a new business idea or invention to help society:** Challenge students to create a new business plan or innovative invention to pitch to you over the phone as their potential imaginary investor. Where possible, encourage other students to hear the pitch through recorded messages and send their questions to the ‘entrepreneur’ to help refine the presentation. Consider providing a form of recognition for the most creative and innovative ideas that emerge. This encourages collaborative thinking, communication, creativity and problem-solving as well as integrating a number of subject-specific skills such as those used in social studies, science, maths, and writing.
- 2. Supplement television and radio learning content with more interactive, personal learning activities:** In many countries, national ministries of education and private providers are airing curriculum-aligned learning content through television and radio while schools are closed. Unfortunately, only so much learning content can be covered through mass media. However, these programmes can reduce your need to develop new content and instead focus on designing learning extension activities, checks for understanding, and follow-up questions by students. Consider building on the content of the national radio or television learning programmes through interactive activities. Be sensitive to students who may not have access to either the radio or television.
- 3. Provide a Menu of Offline Independent Learning Activities for Young People:** Caitlin Tucker a certified Google Innovator and Teacher of the Year in California in 2010. has compiled a list of independent learning activities that encourage students to think critically and creatively. Consider modifying these ideas or creating new ones that are contextually relevant and age appropriate for your students:

 - a. It’s All Fun and Games:** Play a game–board game or card game with family members then design a rebranded cover for the game. The goal of your new cover is to appeal to people looking for a distraction while stuck at home.
 - b. Weird Science:** Design your own at-home science experiment using everyday household items. Begin with a question you want to answer. Write up a materials list and a step-by-step description of the procedure. Check-in with a parent for feedback on your proposed plan. Conduct your experiment and document what happens! You can host a class science fair with students sharing the results of their homemade science experiments and discoveries over text message or phone calls.
 - c. Sell, sell, sell!** Think about an item or product in your home that has been unexpectedly useful while you have been stuck at home. Design a musical jingle that could be used in a commercial to advertise the benefits of this random item or product. If you play an instrument, compose a musical score!
 - d. Build A Creative Set of Dominos with Household Items:** Design your own Rube Goldberg machine that performs a simple task in an overly complicated way. If you need to see an example or just need some inspiration, [click here](#).
 - e. Look and You Will Find:** Create a themed scavenger hunt. Choose your favourite sport, movie, book, or subject in school and use that as inspiration to create a scavenger hunt with clever clues. Once you have created a scavenger hunt, invite someone in your family to try to figure out the clever clues.
 - f. Let the Dancing Begin:** Imagine you are entering the 2020 Tik Toc Dance Challenge. Select a song and design dance moves to go with that song. Practice your moves and teach a parent or sibling your dance.

4. **Encourage students to engage in continuous, collaborative and cooperative learning:** Build cooperative and collaborative learning strategies by encouraging students to work together on their home learning tasks. If internet is available, invite your students to use safe and creative platforms like [Scratch](#) or [Minecraft](#) to interact online. This allows them to not only engage in creative content but engage in problem-solving and computational thinking with others.
5. **Invite students to become a teacher for a day:** Assign students to prepare a lesson to share with their classmates about something they would like to teach others within 30 minutes. This could include a dance routine, a poem, a new language, how to doodle, or even tips about taking care of younger siblings. This challenge enables students to think about what they already know. It also encourages young people to learn new things about their classmates that they perhaps would not have otherwise known. Consider working with your students to create step-by-step guides using the technology available to teach what they know to others. This exercise also creates empathy between students and you as the educators about the challenges of teaching and learning while observing proper physical distancing rules.

31 Suggested Online Teaching to Help Student's Learning at Home:

Online Teaching Tools for Secondary School Educators

1. **Google Classroom:** Allows teachers to connect with students, create assignments, design quizzes, and link to curated spreadsheets, documents, and YouTube. Also allows other language inputs, if used in combination with Google Translate. A mobile friendly website. The App is available on Playstore. [Click here.](#)
2. **Edmodo:** Online learning platform that allows teachers to connect with students, assign tasks, create assessments and administer quizzes. Can connect with Google Drive, OneDrive, and Office365. Edmodo has also uploaded a toolkit for distance learning with recorded webinars about how to use online resources. It is a mobile friendly website. [Click here.](#)
3. **Schoology:** Online learning management system with tools that can be used by teachers to create classes and groups with learning objectives, assign tasks with links, and create assessments. It is multi-media friendly. It also has public resources from other teachers, like downloadable worksheets. The website is not optimized for mobile screens. Available as an app on Playstore. [Click here.](#)
4. **Classdojo:** This is a free communications platform specifically designed to enable teachers to communicate with students and parents to build an online classroom. [Click here.](#)
5. **Scrcastify:** One of the most used online tools for teachers to personalize their online teaching/ learning sessions for students. It allows teachers to bring themselves into the screen (most important element of keeping the relationship with students and the teachers), and offers a variety of screen options – zooming in, writing, etc. It is a free extension on Chrome. Works on desktops/laptops and is compatible with Chromebooks and some tablets. Not compatible with Android phones. Free for up to 5 minutes of each recording; paid upgrade required if single recording is more than 5 minutes. [Click here.](#)

6. **Buncee:** Supports educators to create and share visual representations of learning content and assignments with students, including media rich lessons, reports, newsletters, and presentations. [Click here.](#)
7. **PearDeck:** Helps educators engage with student's solutions in learning and formative assessments. Facilitates the design of engaging instructional content with various integration features. [Click here.](#)
8. **Multiple Web-based Teaching Tools:** Caitlin Tucker provides a curated list of useful web-based tools to support educators to introduce blended learning for distance education. [Click here](#) for the list.

Online Teaching and Learning Resources for Secondary School Educators

Multi-Subject Online Learning Resources

9. **We are Teachers:** 1000+ learning at home resources listed by grade/subject curated by teachers for parents and teachers. [Click here.](#)
10. **Amazing Educational Resources:** 1000+ crowdsourced resources for educators to use for distance learning during COVID-19 that are searchable by subject, age, and class. [Click here.](#)
11. **Khan Academy:** Provides a range of subject and grade specific teaching and learning resources for children; including independently sequenced learning modules with recorded guided teaching assistance for students. Also provides tutorials for teacher professional development and tips for delivering distance education. [Click here.](#)
12. **Past Exams from the IB Curriculum.** These resources can support teachers to develop writing prompts and distance exam questions for their students across subjects; the documents of past IB exam papers are available in multiple languages. [Click here.](#)
13. **Dealing with Educational Inequities in Distance/Online Learning:** This Facebook group has been created to demonstrate real solutions in distance/online learning that can provide solutions for all learners. [Click here.](#)
14. **Learn at Home Middle School:** The materials on the 'Learn at Home' pages are designed to provide supplementary learning resources for students in Math, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies. For each activity, there is a description and/or instruction for the activity, information about both content and practice that the activity supports and one or more discussion questions that will help deepen the learning of the activity. [Click here.](#)
15. **Learn at Home High School:** The materials on the Learn at Home pages are designed to provide supplementary learning resources for students in Math, Science, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and College/Career Planning. For each activity, there is a description and/or instruction for the activity, information about both content and practice that the activity supports and one or more discussion questions that will help deepen the learning of the activity. [Click here.](#)
16. **Common Sense Education:** A curated list of ten useful, free websites for providing online resources for high school education ranging from 'big history lessons' to 'civics education' to encouraging media literacy. [Click here.](#)

STEM-Related Online Learning Resources

17. **CK12 Mathematics worksheets:** CK12 has a variety of well-curated, downloadable, and printable math worksheets for students K-12. [Click here.](#)
18. **STEM:** A selection of curated resources on STEM subjects aimed at students aged 14-16. There is advice and guidance from subject specialists for teachers and students. Practical experiments and resources are applicable for home learning and are clearly sign-posted so that they are easy to navigate. [Click here.](#)
19. **Spark:** Provides videos and teaching notes to support secondary school teachers to effectively create interactive science experiments and learning environments with everyday household objects with an emphasis on physics. Teachers can also connect to online webinars, tutorials, and professional development workshops. [Click here.](#)
20. **Phet Colorado:** This website has materials, teacher notes, and interactive games for physics, chemistry, biology, maths, and earth science. [Click here.](#)
21. **YouCubed:** A free math resource from the Stanford Graduate School of Education, with resources, especially around developing mathematical mindsets and problem-solving skills for students. Educators can use the activities (downloadable pdf files) for designing their lessons. [Click here.](#)
22. **Coding:** Explore how to code at either Code.org ([click here](#)) or Code Academy [Click here.](#)
23. **TypingClub:** Encourage young people to learn and master typing. [Click here.](#)
24. **TeachBanzai:** Encourage high school students to learn financial literacy. [Click here.](#)

Language and Reading Online Resources

25. **Duolingo:** Learn a foreign language through an interactive downloadable app. [Click here.](#)
26. **ABDO Digital Secondary School Bookshelf:** Free access to 1000+ secondary school-aged level reading materials in English available until June 2020, searchable by topic. [Click here.](#)
27. **Discovery Audible Stories:** A library of 1000+ audible stories for children and young people searchable by topic and age. [Click here.](#)
28. **Teaching English:** Find practical teaching resources for secondary school-level English language instruction. The materials are for different levels ranging from Beginner to Advance. They are written by experts in English language teaching and are free to download. [Click here.](#)
29. **So English:** Simple, fun and creative activities for building learners' skills in language, creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. [Click here.](#)

Physical Education Online Resources

- 30. Open Online Physical Education Network:** Provides downloadable PDF worksheets for young people in middle school and high school to follow with suggested fitness activities, personal wellness plans, and physical education lessons for teachers to use to help students stay healthy at home with limited or no exercise equipment. [Click here](#).
- 31. Fitness Blender:** Videos featuring a range of exercises and workouts. You can choose exercises by: degree of difficulty, type, gender and whether equipment is needed or not for your students. [Click here](#).

8 Offline Resources to Help Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing

- 1. Identify remote psychosocial support in your country:** Many countries are providing increased remote support for children and adults to reach out when they have anxieties or psychological needs. It is recommended that teachers identify what is available and advise students about how these services can be accessed. These may be provided by government or non-government providers.
- 2. Identify local counselling professionals:** Many of our communities have trained counsellors, even paraprofessionals within them. Where you identify a need with a student or family, consider linking them to a professional to provide more personal support.
- 3. Small Group Interactions:** Organize video or phone calls with small groups of students, where you can talk about their day, how they spend their time, and other questions they may have about non-academic issues. Listen for social or emotional stress including within the family and, if required, connect them with your designated supervisor for follow up.
- 4. Physical Exercise:** Include examples of physical exercises as part of the learning routine/package for your students and encourage families to provide opportunities to exercise at least twice daily. This could be dancing to a favourite fast tempo song or creating their own fitness routine. Focus on activities that don't need additional resources; and remember to exercise different parts of the body - twisting, stretching, curling, jumping, lifting, pulling, etc.
- 5. Family routines are important:** Encourage families to keep a routine. It can be as simple as always having breakfast together or sharing quiet reading time every afternoon. We all respond well socially and emotionally to a sequence of experiences that we can anticipate. Extend empathy and understanding to students who may find it difficult to keep a strict routine.
- 6. Health and Safety are important:** Promote proper handwashing techniques as a general health and safety recommendation either as a reminder when speaking to students or through health, science or social studies education that can cover the study of viruses, disease transmission and the importance of vaccinations, the history of pandemics and the evolution of policies on public health and safety. To minimize stress, remain sensitive about what information is shared and how you share it. See more on age appropriate discussions [here](#), and information on how to avoid the risk of infection [here](#).

- 7. Supporting Connections:** Model a calm, safe learning experience through your tone of voice when communicating with students over the phone or via voice messages. Invite students to work through challenges and encourage them to take breaks when it feels overwhelming. Let students know you are thinking about them. A personal message via phone may help a student stay connected to you and their learning goals. Incorporate personal interests of students to encourage a response. Streamline communication and reduce volume of information sent to students.
- 8. Lead a Mindful/Meditation Session:** This can be a simple 10-minute session with students. Have the students sit up straight, close their eyes and imagine they are in an open field. Have them smell the air around them deeply. Then the students should imagine they are blowing out a candle at their birthday party. Smelling the air and blowing out a candle is a simple way to get students to breathe deeply.

6 Online Resources for Secondary Educators to Help Learner's Well-Being/ Psychosocial Support

- 1. Caring Schools Network:** The Caring Schools Network have developed many resources for educators and families. These include strategies to help ensure every student is connected to an educator, creating a caring environment, and supporting the psychosocial needs of students to cope with the uncertainties and school closures caused by COVID-19. [Click here](#).
- 2. Children's Society:** Very useful information to demystify psychosocial illnesses and issues and provides concrete tips on how to support young people suffering from these. [Click here](#).
- 3. MindEd:** Teachers will need to register. Once registered, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of psychological wellbeing issues and practical ways to support young people [Click here](#).
- 4. Rise Above:** Designed for young people, this resource has videos and tips for dealing with psychosocial issues including anxiety and coping strategies from other young people's testimonies and perspectives. [Click here](#).
- 5. The Child Bereavement Network:** This website provides support and ideas for educators about how to enable young people to best cope during the grieving process. There are links to many other useful relevant websites. [Click here](#).
- 6. Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families:** Provides a downloadable guide to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students during periods of disruption. [Click here](#).