Mental Health First Aid Just Got a Lot Simpler for UK Schools

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A new initiative called Second Aid is bringing mental health first aid into UK workplaces and schools using simple QR code posters to give anyone immediate, free access to structured mental health support.

Second Aid: The Mental Health First Aid Kit Every School Should Know About

British schools have long been required to maintain physical first aid kits stocked and ready for cuts, sprains and minor injuries. But when a pupil, teacher or member of support staff experiences a mental health crisis, the immediate response options are far more limited.

What Is Second Aid?

Second Aid operates on a simple principle: what first aid is for physical health, second aid is for mental health. Developed by British social entrepreneur Hakeem Javaid, it uses QR code posters displayed alongside traditional first aid kits to provide free, instant access to structured mental health support.

Scanning the code gives users guided exercises and support services for panic attacks, burnout, stress, conflict and depression. No app download, no account, no waiting list.

Why This Matters in a School Setting

Mental health pressure on pupils and education staff is well documented. Young people face exam stress, social anxiety and personal difficulties, while teachers and support staff manage increasing workloads with limited pastoral resource.

> *Stress, depression and anxiety accounted for 22.1 million lost working days across the UK in 2024/25, according to the Health and Safety Executive.*

How It Works

Users self-administer psychological first aid using established techniques including CBT, cognitive load regulation, abdominal breathing, emotional regulation and visualisation exercises.

For those who need more, Second Aid connects directly to the Samaritans. The platform is anonymous, with no accounts, no cookies and no advertising.

Free for Schools and Public Services

Second Aid is free to use for schools, public services, nonprofits and community organisations. QR code posters and stickers are downloadable directly from the Second Aid website.

> *“I want to see Second Aid in every office in the country. It can normalise mental health assistance, just as first aid is normal for physical health.”*
>
> *— Hakeem Javaid*

A Practical Step Schools Can Take Today

Second Aid is not a replacement for professional mental health services, diagnosis or crisis management. But as a visible, accessible first point of contact, it represents a practical, low-barrier step any school can take.

In the same way a fire extinguisher signals that safety is taken seriously, a Second Aid poster signals that mental health is too.

For more information and to download the free posters, visit secondaid.com.