



# Whole School Wellbeing Policy

2023-24

**Date last reviewed** | June 2023

**Review period** | Annually

**Lead Reviewer(s)** | Primary & Secondary Vice Principals



***“Empowering students to aspire, create and excel in the world that is, so they can help create the world that will be”***



The Science of Learning



Social Enterprise



Student Agency and Innovation

## Purpose

At GEMS Wellington Academy Al Khail, we are committed to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of every individual through our school ethos and vision. Children, staff, parents and visitors should always feel secure and safe within our school environment. We fully support the UAE National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031, with the aim of creating an environment where students and staff can flourish, connect and thrive.

As educators, we understand that the best teaching and learning is underpinned by trusting and respectful relationships, as well as positive mental and physical wellbeing of all stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a shared understanding of wellbeing, who it encompasses, and the processes and systems in place to support wellbeing within our school community.

## Aims and Expectations

This policy aims to:

- Support the psychological, cognitive, social and physical wellbeing of students, being aware that this can change over time
- Support the development of student resilience and confidence
- Ensure students feel valued and their accomplishments celebrated in school
- Encourage students to have agency and lead on initiatives to support their own wellbeing and that of their peers
- Empower parents with the knowledge and understanding to support wellbeing both inside and outside of school
- Prepare students for life beyond school
- Ensure that staff understand their role in supporting student wellbeing
- Provide a supportive learning and working environment for all



## Wellbeing at The Academy

The KHDA include the OECD's definition of wellbeing in their recent 2022 'Wellbeing Matters' framework:

*The psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life.*

At the Academy, we also recognise that the wellbeing of staff and parents can affect student wellbeing and aim to put measures in place which protect wellbeing for all. For more information around staff wellbeing, see our Staff Wellbeing and Communications Policies.

## Responsibilities of all Staff

All staff are responsible for supporting the wellbeing of students, staff and visitors. In addition, we have a dedicated Pastoral Team who lead on wellbeing matters and who can offer specialist support/expertise:

- Designated Safeguarding Leader – Ashley Robbins
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader – Stacey Bradwell
- Vice Principal for Student Culture and Experience (Secondary) – Ashley Robbins
- Vice Principal for Student Culture and Experience (Primary) – Paula Phinn
- Assistant Principal for Pastoral Care (Secondary) – Emma McCulley
- Assistant Principal for Pastoral Care (Primary) – Georgina Bradley
- Director of Inclusion – Stacey Bradwell
- School Counsellors – Michelle Hughes and Susanna Johnson
- School Doctor – Anum Anwar Ali
- Student Agency Leaders – Farrah Clarke and Emma McCulley
- MSCS & Wellbeing Leaders – Laura Kennedy and Jenna Young

Class Teachers (Primary) and Form Tutors (Secondary) are ultimately responsible for the social and emotional wellbeing of the students in their classes. They are also responsible for raising any concerns related to a students' wellbeing, whether this is short- or long-term. Teachers are encouraged to raise initial concerns with parents, where appropriate, taking advice from their line manager. Where additional support or advice is needed, teachers must reach out to Heads of Year or a member of the Pastoral Team.

For concerns regarding a students' psychological or social wellbeing, the School Counsellors will be key in offering advice, guidance and, where needed, either group or one-to-one intervention.



Specialist Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Learning Support Assistants and Support Staff must raise any student wellbeing concerns directly with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor.

Where any staff are concerned about a students' safety, protection or safeguarding, the matter must be kept confidential and reported on our internal system, Guard. This will be addressed, as appropriate, by a member of our Safeguarding Team. For further guidance, see the Safeguarding Policy.

## Wellbeing and the Curriculum

Wellbeing is embedded in the formal written curriculum as well as the 'hidden curriculum' and extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school. Our Science of Learning pillar supports students in realising how they learn best and, in turn, experience greater success as a learner; this contributes to building student self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The Moral, Social and Cultural Studies Curriculum, along with the Wellington GroWell Curriculum, support the development of positive wellbeing, providing clear progression and continuity as students move through each phase.

## Supporting Psychological Wellbeing

- All staff promote self-esteem in their daily interactions with students. Positive praise and feedback are key.
- As a High Performance Learning school, the House Points system is linked to the Values, Attitudes and Attributes ensuring that students are praised linked to specific learning behaviours
- Students' strengths and achievements are celebrated regularly through displays, certificates, awards, home communication and assemblies
- Teachers use effective methods for differentiation and scaffolding to ensure that students' self-efficacy is promoted
- Staff encourage independence and risk-taking to support confidence building across the school
- Teachers promote student agency and innovation across the curriculum, valuing students' views and creative ideas
- Teachers explore ways of motivating students, taking into consideration their interests, and preferred ways of working
- Staff create a trusting ethos where students are confident to speak to adults about any concerns that they may have
- Teachers build in opportunities to support emotional literacy and resilience as they arise. This may include, but is not limited to, Circle Time, the use of class worry boxes or Talk Time, at the teacher's discretion.
- The School Counsellors are introduced regularly in key school events and assemblies to raise their profile. School Counsellors host parent events to destigmatise key issues related to mental health and raise parent awareness.
- Mental health days feature in the school calendar to raise awareness of psychological



health amongst students, staff, parents and the wider community.

- All staff celebrate cultural diversity across the year, valuing each student's cultural background and heritage.
- All students and staff are treated fairly and equally, regardless of gender, background, religion, race or educational needs.
- Our Behaviour for Learning Policy provides clear expectations for all students, parents and staff.
- All staff are willing to offer care, guidance and support as students grow, learn and move through the school.

### Supporting Social Wellbeing

- Staff strive to maintain positive, professional relationships with all students, other staff members, parents and visitors, ensuring that individuals feel respected, valued and have a sense of belonging. Staff model positive social interactions and social skills at all times.
- Cooperation and collaboration are encouraged across the curriculum, supporting the development of key social skills.
- Flexible friendships are promoted, reminding students that they may have different friends relating to their different interests. We encourage students, and staff, to have wide friendship groups.
- Self-regulation techniques are encouraged from FS1-Y13, with Teachers talking to students about their changing feelings and resulting actions/choices. We promote restorative practice to support students' in making the best choices in the future.
- Through games and sports activities, students learn to cope with both winning and losing from a young age.
- Social skills are explicitly planned for and taught where individual children are experiencing particular difficulties in this area. This is supported by the inclusion team.
- The Academy has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. All instances or accusations of bullying are recorded on Guard, and the Safeguarding Team follow up with individual students/families.

### Supporting Physical Wellbeing & Health

- Specialist Physical Education lessons support the health curriculum, with two lessons per week from FS2 onwards; this includes swimming for all students.
- Squads and 'aspiring squads', promote a love for competitive sport, as well as skills in teamwork and further leadership opportunities
- The extensive ECA offer includes a range of physical activity and healthy living activities for all year groups
- Our catering provider, Slices, offer healthy food daily and staff encourage students to make healthy choices
- Treat Tuesdays allow students to bring or purchase a treat on Tuesdays, supporting the idea of a balanced diet over 'bad foods'
- Healthy food initiatives feature as part of the Early Years curriculum to encourage young children, and their families, to try new healthy foods



## Promoting Safety

- Staff, students and parents can access training and awareness videos through our National Online Safety accreditation.
- Our Computing Curriculum and our GroWell Curriculum teach the students about online safety.
- We teach our Primary students about 'stranger danger' and people who can help us in the community via wellbeing lessons and assemblies
- The Student Council lead on our annual road and transport safety drive
- Cultural awareness and safety training is carried out with Secondary students during key transition times, e.g. when travelling internationally with the school or when accepted for international universities.
- In Secondary, we address the dangers of smoking, including social 'vaping' and 'shisha'. Vape Detectors in the Secondary school deter this type of activity in secluded areas such as student toilets.
- Students are involved in risk assessments and health and safety walks to raise awareness of everyday dangers and risks

## Assessment of Wellbeing

Staff formatively assess student wellbeing on a daily basis, through their everyday interactions, conversations and observations. In addition, students take part in daily check ins, using Upstrive from Y3-Y13.

Summative measures of student wellbeing include:

- All student from Y1 onwards taking part in the annual PASS survey
- All students from Y5 to Y13 taking part in the Dubai Schools Wellbeing Census
- Ongoing student voice surveys linked to school life and curricular areas
- Pupil Progress meetings between class teachers and senior leaders

Assessment data is analysed at school, phase, year group and class level to identify trends and create actions to improve wellbeing. Our Pastoral Team and leaders actively support and monitor class teacher interventions. Where teachers are concerned about individual students, as a result of wellbeing assessment, parents will be informed, and the school will work with the family to create and take next steps to support the child.

## Middle and Senior Leader Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the leadership team to:

- Provide an enabling environment, including timetables, routines and resources which promote wellbeing
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that families and staff can plan ahead



- Set the highest expectations for wellbeing for all, and model this in everyday routines, interactions and practices
- Promote the school rewards and House systems
- Ensure that the efforts and successes of students are recognised and celebrated and that senior leaders are involved in these celebrations
- Promote staff and student agency, including leadership of the Wellbeing Champions, in improving wellbeing across the school
- Ensure that cultural occasions represent all students' cultural background and encourage international respect and understanding
- Ensure students and parents know who they can raise concerns to, via home-school communication, assemblies, policies and the school culture
- Continue to raise the profile of the Pastoral Team and how they can support individual students and families
- Listen to, and act upon, the views of parents, the Local Advisory Board and wider community
- Regularly report to the Local Advisory Board about student wellbeing, including data
- Involve parents in the life of the school, including celebrations, workshops and cultural events to support family cohesion
- Analyse wellbeing data and monitor follow-up actions to improve wellbeing
- Keep abreast of UAE policy and international research around school, student and staff wellbeing
- Monitor and review wellbeing practices and their impact
- Regularly train staff on the importance of wellbeing and how to intervene to improve wellbeing
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise additional support during times of expected or unexpected stress
- Monitor student sickness/absence, and have support meetings with parents if any patterns emerge
- Maintain the highest standards and practices regarding child protection and safeguarding
- Conduct exit interviews with families who leave the Academy to help identify any wellbeing issues that may have led to this

## Role of the Governing Board

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty to promote wellbeing for all, within a supportive physical environment
- Ensure the curriculum has a strong focus on wellbeing across the school
- Monitor wellbeing data and hold senior leaders to account for actions in response to data
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote and improve wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with wellbeing in mind
- Ensure parents are well-informed by school leaders about how the school promotes and supports wellbeing



## Links with other policies

Please refer to the policies below which provide further information related to Staff Wellbeing:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Feedback for Success Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Students of Determination Policy
- Feedback and Complaints Policy