



## GEMS Winchester School Dubai



# Whole School Wellbeing Policy

**Person(s) Responsible:** Vice Principal, Head of Primary and Head of Secondary

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## 1. Introduction

At GEMS Winchester (WSD), we see our academic and pastoral work as interrelated and complementary. We believe it is vital that, alongside achieving their academic potential, our students learn skills and have experiences that enable them to thrive and flourish during the school day - and beyond.

WSD is committed to promoting wellbeing which is provided in a range of age-appropriate ways: from circle time for the younger students, to dedicated lesson and curriculum time in the secondary school. Our aim is for all students to be emotionally, physically and spiritually healthy; able to make sound life choices; to engage productively with the community and in the relationships that they form; to be compassionate, reflective and well-informed individuals; to be able to make a positive difference in global society.

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## 2. Definition of Wellbeing

In line with KHDA Wellbeing Matters Framework, WSD uses the following definition for wellbeing:

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

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## 3. An Evidence-Based Approach to Wellbeing

At WSD, we have embraced the five elements/components of Martin's Seligman's work of PERMA and the theory of wellbeing. These are:

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishments

At WSD, we focus on building these five elements of wellbeing by:

- Increasing and prioritising positive emotions
- Teaching emotional regulation skills
- Encouraging students to utilise their skills
- Providing challenging activities to facilitate growth
- Identifying and using character strengths
- Promoting and supporting inclusion
- Communicating high expectations
- Fostering positive relationships
- Providing support
- Teaching life skills
- Facilitating connection to the school community
- Improving self-efficacy
- Celebrating success

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## 4. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Wellbeing Policy is to provide clarity to all stakeholders at WSD on approach to ensuring our students and staff wellbeing.

We have ensured that this Wellbeing Policy is:

- Child-centered: The wellbeing needs and the best interests of our students are a central focus of this policy. This requires us to respect and value the voice of all students and foster their belonging and connectedness to the WSD community.
- Fair and inclusive: All children receive fair and inclusive opportunities to develop their wellbeing in ways that are responsive and suitable to their particular needs and contexts. Practices are tailored and relevant, building on the existing strengths of students, school staff, families and school communities.
- Evidence-informed: This policy promotes the use of evidence-informed practice, which brings together local experience and expertise with the best available evidence from research.
- Outcomes-focused: This policy promotes continuous improvement practices and the use of data relating to outcomes to guide practice in our school in relation to the promotion of wellbeing for all students.
- Partnership/Collaboration-focused: The wellbeing of our students is a shared responsibility. Working in partnership with parents, guardians, school staff and external agencies is key to ensuring this policy is implemented.

WSD regularly reviews school policies for staff and students that are in accordance with the school aims, philosophy, vision and ethos. All aspects of the school planning and the self-evaluation process in our school incorporate a health and wellbeing dimension. Wellbeing-promotion is addressed in school policies and plans including, but not limited to:

- Physical Education lessons
- PSHE lessons
- Science lessons
- Physical Education lessons
- Moral, Social and Cultural Education (MSC)
- Code of Behaviour
- GEMS Jewels of Kindness
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- Critical Incidents
- Health and Safety
- Anti-bullying
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Students of Determination
- Transition Planning
- Professional learning and development of staff

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## 5. Whole School Approach

School Culture and Environment at WSD aims to cultivate an environment that enhances wellbeing for all who learn, work and visit. Our school environment is one that consciously fosters warm relationships, encourages participation, develops student and teacher autonomy and provides clarity of boundaries, rules and positive expectations. WSD provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment that encourages and supports students, staff and members of the whole school community, both in and out of school.

At WSD, we provide a climate in which positive relationships, respect and consideration for others prosper, and where individuals are encouraged to make a vital contribution through their personal skills and qualities. Our school leaders actively promote wellbeing at WSD. Every employee at WSD strives to a culture and climate which is accepting and supportive for staff, parents and students. Through nurturing quality relationships within the school, we facilitate the wellbeing of staff members and students as well as fostering a shared responsibility for promoting positive wellbeing.

Curriculum Wellbeing promotion is central to all areas of teaching and learning at WSD. The teaching and learning is democratic, inclusive, engaging and differentiated. We deliver an integrated curriculum that recognises the richness and uniqueness of the individual, and the importance of the quality of teaching and learning experiences. Wellbeing promotion is addressed across the school through:

- Dedicated wellbeing timetabled lessons
- Assemblies
- Form time
- PSHE lessons
- Physical Education lessons
- Science lessons
- Moral, Social and Cultural Education (MSC)
- School Clinic provision
- Clinic led events to promote healthy lifestyles
- Extra-Curricular Activities (ECAs)
- Personalised support in lessons (including IEPs and IBPs)

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## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team, working in collaboration with the Local Authority Board work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, kindness and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships, and where health and wellbeing are seen as important. We expect all staff to treat confidential information sensitively and in-line with school policy.

### **The Principal/CEO is responsible for:**

- Providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communication
- Providing a non-judgmental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and wellbeing support for staff
- Monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- Listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- Ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated

- Ensuring that staff are equipped with the right training to do the job confidently
- Ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- Providing guidelines for meetings, that are agreed upon and followed
- Planning the year's timetable considerately bearing in mind staff commitments, including in professional development meetings, opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- Making special arrangements, where possible, to enable staff to combine the demands of family life and work life
- Recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances ensuring accessibility of SLT to members of staff
- Ensuring that there are effective methods of communication ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed maintaining contact with staff during long absences
- Ensuring that a mentor system operates within the schools and especially for new members of staff and that the staff induction process is put into place
- Being aware of work-related stress and assess risk accordingly
- Ensuring relevant time is protected for staff such as PPA, staff meetings and time for reports etc.

The Principal/CEO implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate Senior Leaders, who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

#### **Members of staff are responsible for:**

- Treating one another with honesty, respect and kindness
- Taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- Being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and well-being of others
- Valuing all members of staff in the schools and acknowledging the important role that each and every one takes
- Contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to enhance morale and effective team spirit
- Developing and respecting shared areas, where possible, so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces
- Completing all mandatory professional learning and development into wellbeing issues (such as safeguarding and child protection training), as required

#### **Examples of good practice may include:**

- Carrying out team-building exercises as part of staff CPD
- Giving staff the option to plan their own social activities
- Celebrating staff achievements
- Providing pastoral services and support for staff, e.g. a staff well-being hub and confidential sessions
- Creative spaces for staff to be able to meet, chat, relax and work quietly
- Providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting well-being.
- Support in specific circumstances

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Reasonable consideration will be given to staff in supporting their work-life balance and well-being outside of the school.

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## 7. Supporting Student Wellbeing

Every year we train up a group of children as our School Council/Wellbeing Champions who lead on whole school campaigns on mental health and wellbeing. We seek students' views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities. We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

Our School Council/Well-being Champions are class representatives and are voted by their peers. Their roles and responsibilities are in promoting student voice. They work closely with staff in our school as well as the wider community. They are role models within the school who are very enthusiastic with high motivation to drive positive changes to our school.

At WSD, we offer a wide variety of support for students who are encountering emotional difficulties. These include:

- Class teachers, teaching assistants, members of the pastoral team and school counsellors who are available for students talk to if they are unhappy or concerned about anything at school or home.
- Drop-in sessions by the school counsellor that any child can go to if they would like someone to talk to or have concerns.
- School counsellors who meet with some students regularly, to focus on particular concerns or difficulties (low self-esteem, behaviour difficulties, anxiety).
- Students, who are encouraged to work collaboratively in teams and follow the school rules. House points are rewarded good behaviour.

If a parent has concerns about the wellbeing of the child, they should, firstly, speak to the class teacher. If they have further concerns, they can make an appointment to speak to a member of the pastoral team or a member of the SLT.

All concerns are reported on 'Guard'. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

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## 8. Supporting Staff Wellbeing

Every year Staff Wellbeing Support for the wellbeing of staff is an essential element in wellbeing promotion, and crucial to sustaining teacher/staff engagement, enthusiasm and the ability to model resilience. It builds staff capacity to cope with challenges and adapt to change, and creates conditions to support and motivate staff to be effective. WSD is a safe and supportive environment for staff members. All staff members are supported in maintaining their personal health and wellbeing.

Every month, staff are offered an opportunity to join 'Thank Goodness it's Friday'. This provides recreational sporting opportunities for staff to enjoy. Clinic and counselling provision (as required) is available along with GEMS Awareness Programmes and wellbeing support (GEMS Cares). Wellbeing is considered carefully within our professional learning programmes (including pre-induction and induction training). Appraisal and Performance Management provide another avenue of support for staff via a mentor coaching approach, and staff are given opportunities to participate in a range of professional development activities at a school and company level.

WSD aims to promote a 'family' environment for all to enjoy. Examples are that all staff receive birthday cards; staff are invited to attend wellbeing/celebratory events each term; World Teachers' Day is celebrated (and our

student council plays a pivotal role in this celebration by, for example, organising for staff to receive a handwritten postcard from students).

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## 9. Monitoring Wellbeing

At WSD, we regularly monitor, evaluate and review our approach to wellbeing. We use a range of evidence to support our judgements, which are taken from (but not limited to):

- Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) Survey
- Dubai Wellbeing Census (Student and Staff)
- Staff Wellbeing Surveys
- Staff Wellbeing Working Group
- Parent Surveys (school based and GEMS-wide)
- School Counsellor logs and Phoenix Guard

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## 10. WSD Community Involvement

Every year WSD continues to develop strong partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider community, which is a central part of the wellbeing process. We efficiently engage with appropriate agencies and specialist services to advise, support and contribute to health and wellbeing, teaching and learning.

The following stakeholders collaborate regularly:

- Parents/Guardians
- Local Advisory Board
- Friends of Winchester
- Primary and Secondary Student Leadership Teams
- External support agencies

We recognise that, if our parents are valued, supported and encouraged too, their children will flourish and thrive. We understand the direct correlation between the wellbeing of our parents and the wellbeing of our students, and how essential it is that we all share the same vision. The more we enable our parents to feel valued and have the opportunity to express their views, the more we can work together.

Supportive measures include:

- Parent coffee mornings
- Workshops from specialists from within and out of school
- Referral to external specialists
- Links on the website
- Time to meet with members of staff
- Communication (newsletters, social media, reports, Parent-Teacher Meetings)

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## 11. Wellbeing Protective and Risk Factors

At WSD, we have identified a series of risk and protective factors relating to wellbeing promotion, that are specific to our school setting. We implement a preventative wellbeing promotion process that has a focus on strengthening school-based protective factors and minimising school-based risk factors.

At WSD, wellbeing protective factors include:

- Positive relationships with peers and teachers - including positive teacher classroom management strategies and a sharing of positive behaviour management practices with parents
- A sense of belonging, security and connectedness to our school through the creation of a positive school climate and participation in school and community activities
- Opportunities for social and emotional learning including the development of attention and planning, self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationships, responsible decision making and problem-solving skills
- Opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills providing a sense of mastery and self-efficacy
- The fostering of expectations and the recognising of contributions, effort and achievement, providing opportunities for success
- Protocols and support systems that proactively support students and their families should difficulties arise
- Opportunities to develop the necessary skills to cope with using online technology in a safe and appropriate way
- The wellbeing of school personnel and professional development for teachers and staff

At WSD, wellbeing risk factors include:

- Disengagement, absenteeism, isolation and alienation
- Violence/aggression, bullying and relationship difficulties
- Low achievement/learning difficulties/special educational needs including social, emotional and behavioural needs
- Cultural differences
- School transitions
- Poor connection between family and school
- Inconsistent discipline
- Lack of opportunity to develop social and emotional learning, including problem solving and coping skills

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## 12. Links to Other Policies

This policy links to our policies on:

- Behaviour Policies
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Gifted and/or Talented Policy
- Student Code of Conduct

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