



Home of Irresistible Learning

Dubai English Speaking School

Student Wellbeing Policy



Written by:	Sarah Curran & Ruth Gibson	Reviewed	September 2023
Approved by:	SLT	Next Review:	September 2024

Rationale

At Dubai English Speaking School, we aim to promote wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and caregivers), and recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is to our lives, in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. We want our students to be at their best, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically in their present world and as they grow into valuable citizens of the future.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the student's social, emotional, and personal needs are catered for, and that they are supported to reach their potential, accessing help when needed. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

DESS aims to develop the underpinning skills of Emotional Intelligence to maximise opportunities for individuals to succeed in today's curriculum and beyond, by educating students about self-awareness, social awareness, managing and regulating feelings, motivation, empathy, and interpersonal skills.

Aims

Our aim is to ensure that the students are given the opportunity to flourish. We strive to develop the whole child. This school is one which:

- builds upon the individual students' strengths
- promotes positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community including students, staff, parents, and caregivers
- recognises the importance of emotional and physical wellbeing in our lives
- develops crucial protective factors which build resilience in students
- all pupils are valued and have a sense of belonging and safety
- All pupils feel comfortable to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems, non-judgementally
- encourages students to actively engage in mindfulness practices for attention and regulation

Supporting children's positive mental health and wellbeing

Negative experiences and distressing life events can affect mental health and wellbeing. This can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state, displayed in diverse ways, all of which can be an indication of an underlying problem.

Our school support provides a range of support strategies and interventions in a tiered programme to promote children's wellbeing and positive mental health, responding to those in need of wellbeing support.

Children are referred through the tiered programme by parents, staff or by self-referral for support. Levels of support are recognised as:

Whole school initiative

- We use consistent strengths-based language throughout the year groups classrooms
- Wellbeing programmes, events and competitions are shared at home to activate interest at home, create conversations and drive awareness across years groups
- Display boards and visuals act as prompts to keep wellbeing front-of-mind
- Parent Forums and information channels keep parents aligned with school initiatives, align conversations and communicate the importance of student wellbeing on every agenda.
- Staff Wellbeing is considered a priority - please see DESS Staff Wellbeing Policy.

Level 1 - Awareness. Class Conversations and pupil-led activities

- School wide campaigns and assemblies celebrate significant dates (e.g. Mental Health Awareness Day, Children's Mental Health Week) to raise awareness and create conversation
- Weekly Moral Education lessons through which we teach children the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

Level 2 - Prevent - Early Identification

- All children in all classes engage in 10 minutes mindfulness practice every day to train attention and understanding control of thoughts.
- LSA and classroom teachers provide in-class Social Emotional Learning interventions to validate emotions and normalise tricky times. Ideas of interventions may include worry boxes, breakfast club, circle time sharing, friendship discussions, emotional regulation thermometer.
- Support of school nurse is offered to all children for physical and mental health checks
- Introduction of physiology for learning (diet, sleep, exercise, stress management) is encouraged through health education.
- Positive pro-social behaviour initiatives and classroom management strategies are provided through professional development opportunities and supported by LSA relationships
- Firm, fair, kind consistent teaching and positive role modelling for safe, belonging to 'Like a DESS child/staff member/parent.'

Level 3 - Reduce. Focused support responding to signs of struggle

- Small invitation-only, out-of-class, cross-class intervention groups for emotional intelligence teaching as "Lesson for Living" to help the understanding of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, interpersonal skills and motivation. By peer-to-peer guided learning, these groups serve to normalise / validate any current student (low level) struggles and respond to observations / reports of signs of distress e.g., friendship dynamics, worries for work, changes at home, school transitions.
- Invite only extra-curricular groups e.g., Mindful Art for moments of meaning, and for teacher/pupil connection.
- Development of Individualised Education Programme (IEP) or Behavioural Intervention Plan (BIP) for personalised, SMART classroom academic/social/behavioural targets
- Mini groups for Emotional Intelligence taught-skill groups for social skills including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, interpersonal skills

Level 4 - Reverse

- Individualised low-level interventions for 1:1 support for children experiencing tricky times with self-and/or others, adverse childhood experiences or change/transitions.
- Team Around Child support to ensure parents, class teachers and specialised teachers are all aligned in support strategies
- Support for Student Safeguarding and Child Protection - see DESS Safeguarding Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our role in school is to ensure that students can manage times of change and stress, become resilient, and are supported to reach their potential. We must also ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, understand factors which affect their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring there are robust measures in place to safeguard and protect students from harm
- Ensuring that Student Wellbeing continues to feature on every school agenda and thread through school vision.
- Providing professional development for the staff to equip them with strategies to promote student wellbeing
- monitoring the wellbeing needs of students
- ensuring that all community members including students, staff and caregivers feel valued and belong in the DESS community
- ensuring that there are effective methods of communication available for staff, students and families
- Ensuring all staff members are trained and informed about the safeguarding policies and procedures
- The Headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the Deputy Headteacher, senior and middle leadership team, school student advisor and coaching team, who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

Members of staff are responsible for:

- Creating an environment which values and celebrates the whole child as a unique individual
- Maintaining a warm and nurturing atmosphere where children can be themselves and feel safe.
- Recognising signs of emotional distress or difficulty and taking appropriate action to ensure the student is safe
- Role modelling best practice for self-care and self-regulation
- Responding to the emotional states and supporting appropriate behaviour of students
- Using the school's strengths-based language approach across the curriculum to help children identify their strengths
- Keeping notes and observations of any behavioural changes or emotional challenges faced by individual students and seeking advice on supporting their needs
- Reporting any safeguarding concern directly to the designated child protection officer