

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School - Dubai South (GFD) we take the emotional health and wellbeing of our students and staff very seriously. Our ethos is a caring one, which develops respect, self-esteem and gives a voice for all. Our school is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all staff and we recognise the importance of staff welfare. We promote a supportive and inclusive ethos, which values parental/carer involvement and contribution. This policy outlines the ways in which we, as a school care for and nurture the emotional wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

2. Purpose of policy

This policy describes the way we support the emotional needs of all stakeholders at GFD and the importance GFD places on the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

3. Aims and objectives

We aim to develop a community where all stakeholders can flourish, feel safe and welcome and which:

- Creates an enthusiastic and engaged learning community who will achieve their full potential
- Develops the whole child
- Aspires to be at the heart of our community

We aim to be a school where:

- Teaching and learning is personalised, creative, challenging and fun
- A sense of mutual respect, care and responsibility is shown for everyone in school
- Everyone in school feels safe, supported, valued and happy
- All staff are supported through existing policies, procedures, initiatives and through individual pastoral care and advice.
- Students feel a sense of belonging as part of the GFD community

4. Rationale

The emotional health and wellbeing of everyone in the care of GFD is fundamental to our school vision. We believe it promotes school improvement and success in a multitude of ways:

- Students are more engaged with their learning
- Improved standards in all subjects
- More effective teaching
- Parents and carers more involved in school life and learning
- Students' self-esteem and confidence is developed
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- Fewer disengaged students
- Lower rates of persistent absence
- Positive and effective relationships between staff and with students
- Positive impact on recruitment - we believe that positive emotional health and wellbeing creates happier, motivated staff and students who strive to get the most out of life.



5. Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing

The school promotes and strengthens the student voice through:

- A democratic process for the election of School Council representatives and student leaders
- Regular School Council meetings, including specific student welfare councils
- Consulting students about change and policy development
- Allocating a wellbeing budget
- Regularly gathering wellbeing data from students and using the data to positively impact wellbeing at GFD

The school promotes the involvement of parents and carers in the life and learning of the school through:

- Parent meetings
- Having an 'open door policy'
- Parent questionnaires
- Regular consultation about change and development through questionnaires and special meetings
- Subject focus meetings
- Sports and theme days
- Involvement in school trips and extracurricular activities
- Regular communication and involvement regarding student progress, behaviour and pastoral issues
- Parental workshops
- Involvement in school priorities and reviews for children with special educational needs

The school facilitates an enhanced environment for learning through:

- Improved school and classroom environment, facilities and resources
- Recognising the background of individual students and their physical, social and emotional needs
- Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour for learning
- Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships

The school enhances student motivation and learning through:

- Consistent support for vulnerable children and those with SEND from learning support, teaching assistants and other agencies where appropriate
- Celebrating successes and achievements in the classroom
- An exciting and varied range of extra-curricular events and educational visits
- A balanced curriculum with opportunities for intellectual, physical and expressive development
- Recognising a range of learning styles
- Encouraging independence in learning
- Using a range of teaching styles appropriate to students' age, ability and level of maturity

The school enhances student self-esteem and personal development through:

- The Personal Development Curriculum which includes Moral, Social and Cultural Studies and PSHE



- Information, advice and guidance on health and development
- A focus on Growth Mindsets
- Opportunities for student leadership through the student leadership programme
- Developing belonging through family members being in the same house
- An emphasis on praise and reward for effort
- Opportunities for reflection and personal development through art, literature, Islamic values and mindfulness
- Access to extra curricula activities and school visits – both local and international
- Access to school counsellors for further support when required
- Access to mental health first aid support when required
- A robust character education programme
- Targeted intervention based on wellbeing data
- Supervision for student mental health first aiders

The school enhances staff motivation, learning and professional development through:

- Curricular planning time within the school week
- Whole school training events
- Access to appropriate external training and visits to specialists
- Involving staff in decision making and proposed change
- Consultation in training and support needs through regular review
- Induction training and information for new staff
- Provide additional support at times of particular stress, change and/or difficulty
- Have a responsive and listening culture, reacting quickly to problems
- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent
- Provide opportunities for staff to socialise for all staff to relax and socialise together
- Opportunities to discuss with the Principal or other members of the senior leadership team any issues of worry/concern
- Access to mental health first aid support when required
- Targeted intervention based on wellbeing data

The Principal and other senior leaders will:

- Ensure the provision of a healthy working environment
- Take responsibility for his/her work life balance and be aware of the role model they are setting for others
- Provide pastoral/welfare support for individual staff as required, including access to mental health first-aid
- Ensure that all staff are treated in a fair, sensitive and confidential manner
- When issues arise, discuss options appropriate to the circumstances
- Support as far as possible any initiatives and recommendations in relation to staff welfare with the staff welfare and wellbeing committee
- Promote a safe environment through the training and implementation of the Safeguarding policy.

