



## Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy 2023 – 2024



مدرسة جيمس متروبول  
GEMS Metropole School  
MOTOR CITY

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Mr. Naveed Iqbal</b>
<b>Date of review:</b>	<b>July 2023</b>
<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>July 2024</b>

## **Rationale**

At GEMS Metropole, we believe that each person's wellbeing is nurtured through experiences of belonging, building relationships with others, being accepted and valued and by being positively engaged in the community. We acknowledge the importance of providing opportunities for all members of the school community to develop an awareness of their wellbeing and responsibilities and a commitment to becoming valuable members of the global community.

## **Our Vision**

As an international leader in wellbeing promotion, the United Arab Emirates holds its National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031 as a key driver of public policy and a significant enabler of the Centennial 2071 Vision.

GEMS Metropole School supports the UAE vision for wellbeing by sharing the following vision:

'We are proactive in promoting wellbeing, allowing us all to personally thrive'.

This vision is based on a proactive, positive psychology model, reinforced through the PERMAH framework allowing our community to build their personal sense of happiness and wellbeing, rather than a reactive only approach.

## **Aims**

At GEMS Metropole School, we are committed to promoting and supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (students, staff, parents). We recognise that mental health and emotional well-being is just as important as physical health. Individuals are better prepared for a happier fulfilled life when they are healthy, safe and thriving; therefore, Wellbeing is the responsibility of the whole school community. The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of what Wellbeing is and the systems and procedures in place to support the Wellbeing needs of our students, staff and the community.

We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. Therefore, our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All students are valued for their uniqueness.
- Students feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their emotions without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing is promoted and valued.
- We create a culture of Wellbeing and Inclusion.
- We promote warm, positive and trusting relationships between students, staff and parents.
- We provide students, staff and parents with opportunities to develop their awareness, confidence, resilience and coping strategies.
- We provide staff for the opportunities to develop professionally and personally.

## **Definition of wellbeing**

At GEMS Metropole school we have adopted the OECD definition of wellbeing which states 'the psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life.'

Our student's definition is "Wellbeing is the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy'.

With enhanced wellbeing, we naturally become more emotionally literate and creative. In this, we become more

agile and develop an enhanced capacity for problem-solving. We also become more resilient when facing challenges and are more likely to employ a growth mindset and persevere. Quite simply, the dedicated pursuance of wellbeing is a fundamental feature of successful human development.

## Our approach to Wellbeing

- Provide a safe environment to enable students and staff to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensuring the welfare and safety of students and staff is paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for students based on their needs.
- Involve parents when their child needs support.
- Involve students in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with students and keep parents updated.

## This is achieved through:

The PERMAH model of Wellbeing

We follow the PERMAH model of wellbeing which is based on Martin Seligman's positive psychology research and approach to cultivating personal mental health and wellbeing at school. For example,

**Positive Emotions** – reflecting on what is going well in our life and spending time with people we care for

**Engagement** – participating in activities we enjoy and love

**Relationships** – demonstrating our school values to build positive, caring and supportive relationships

**Meaning** – ensuring activities and opportunities are linked to the outside world and grow our understanding of being people of others

**Accomplishment** – setting personal targets and persevering until they are achieved and celebrating this

**Healthy Lifestyles** – be active and knowledgeable about the importance of healthy and active lifestyles

## High Performance Learning and School Values

As a High-Performance Learning School with core school values underpinning all that we do, it is essential to develop these aspects of learning within the curriculum as:

- They underlie almost every aspect of our lives
- They enable us to be effective learners
- They enable us to get on with other people
- They enable us to be responsible citizens
- They enable us to grow a wellbeing language

In an Emotionally Intelligent organisation or community, individuals are more likely to work together as proactive and supportive members of a team. Therefore, it is essential to include systems and procedures that enable staff and parents to feel valued and listened to so all stakeholders can work together to promote an ethos that supports the totality of needs of our children. This enables all children to feel, safe, secure and happy which in turn prepares them to learn effectively and equips them with the skills to cope with life.

## Student wellbeing

We nurture our students through an extensive and integrated student wellbeing and engagement program that:

- promotes the safety and protection of every child

- fosters inclusion
- encourages attendance
- cultivates the understanding and practice of the school values and student behaviour policy
- promotes engagement with learning and participation in all aspects of school life
- meets and caters for individual needs
- develops character strengths
- builds leadership capacity
- builds resilience
- provides health and wellbeing education
- includes access to a range of counselling and external agencies
- seeks and honours student voice

### **Support Process:**

We are committed to maximising opportunities for students to engage in health and wellbeing education.

### **Whole school**

- Lead Time – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Daily Themed Morning to engage students in PERMAH
- Links to external support agencies
- House system – to feel connected and promote a sense of belonging
- Opportunities include curricular strands such as MSC, cyber safety, physical education; whole school activities e.g. assemblies, participation in local and national initiatives such as mental health awareness week, anti-bullying programmes; specific health awareness weeks or day
- Wellbeing support for the children is provided as a whole class, group and individual level. Extra support is provided through the Happiness Room/Pastoral areas/school councillor/student mentors, where individuals or groups of students are given the opportunity during break times, to talk to the Pastoral leaders about issues they may be having.
- FS1 and 2 use of Leuven scales to identify wellbeing and engagement levels of our youngest students
- An extensive sports program, internal and external after school club options, Primary Masterclass every Wednesday and opportunities to showcase talents (e.g. MTS Talks and MTS Walks)

### **Student Voice**

- Election of student council representatives, student wellbeing leadership team.
- Regular team meetings with the student leadership team.
- Student Wellbeing Calendar
- Meet the Leader PERMAH focus
- Student Mentorship Programme - Senior students mentoring junior students (Year 6 Transition to Secondary School)
- School-based programmes which are linked to the curriculum to promote student voice by developing independence and choice-making.
- Participation in PASS.
- YouHQ student wellbeing app in Year 5-9

### **Student-led activities**

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Peer mentoring – students working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child

- Trained peer to peer mental health first aiders
- Playground leaders – a lunchtime group supporting younger students at lunchtime.

### Transition programmes

- Transition Programme at key transition phases across school for students and parents
- Student led transition workshops
- New student induction programme

### PASS at GEMS Metropole

Who?	What?	When?
Year 2	PASS 1	November (target group June)
Year 3-6	PASS 2	October (target group June)
Year 7-9	PASS 3	October (target group June)
Year 10-13	PASS 4	October (target group June)

PASS (Pupil Attitude to Self and School) is conducted twice across the year. All students conduct Term 1 with targeted students conducting the survey again in June. Target students are based on teacher reflections post annual PASS data analysis training conducted each year.

- Intervention is planned based on research backed strategies and additional support from the school counselors.
- Students with a percentile score less than 25 are identified as target students and high priority. This is addressed using the three Domina model (Self, School and Learning)
- Fragile learners are identified as students with CAT4 averages above 125 and a Perceived Learning Capability score of 25.
- Annual staff PASS PD is planned into the school PD overview to continue to build staff's knowledge and understand of student PASS data
- Heads of Year have dedicated PASS training
- PASS student data is monitored using the school's Information Management System

## **Staff wellbeing:**

The school has refined its systems to support staff wellbeing further by prioritizing support into five aspects. A sense of community, Staff Voice, Support Networks, Communication and Staff Professional Pathways.

- Sense of Community – events plotted across the year and during Induction to build a sense of community and belonging across our staff
- Staff Voice – through termly survey, SLT Wellbeing meetings, daily staff wellbeing form staff have numerous opportunities to feedback and evaluate school wellbeing provision and practices
- Support Networks – all staff have access to their Line manager, SLT and school councillor for support
- Communication – daily briefings are emailed; Monday briefings are led by SLT and Middle Leader SWAYS help minimize emails empower staff
- Staff Professional Pathways – a personalized PD calendar provides staff with flexibility to attend carousel PD sessions, further sign-up sessions for coaching and teaching and learning provide staff with extended opportunities to grow. A secondment programme is in place to help aspiring leaders grow.

There is a dedicated Staff Wellbeing coordinator working alongside the Staff Wellbeing working party to promote PERMAH and wellbeing through the school.

### **All staff will:**

- Treat all people with dignity and respect;
- Understand their safeguarding duties concerning students' mental and physical health and wellbeing, and raise any concerns promptly with the DSL or other members of the safeguarding team;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures.

### **Practical Actions to Support New Staff**

- School Induction
- Wellbeing Check in with SLT in Term 1a
- Allocated mentor, buddy or support person
- Collaborative Observation mentor

## **Community Wellbeing:**

The community is encouraged to develop a culture of openness to ensure that all members of the community are aware of named adults within the school that they can speak to, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Heads of Years, senior leaders and school counsellors.

Numerous events are plotted across the school year to promote our PERMAH wellbeing framework and provide the school community to engage in activities which promote our wellbeing vision. These include House Colour Day, Pink Month, Farmer's Market, National and International Day, World Book Day and End of Year school celebrations.

Our parent ambassadors actively lead many community events during the year which further promote PERMAH in action across school.

### **All students, staff and parents will:**

- Be encouraged to treat themselves and others with dignity and respect;
- Engage in mental health and wellbeing curriculum-related topics and initiatives;
- Be encouraged to raise any wellbeing concerns with staff;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures.

### **New Families**

- Dedicated Family Induction webinar – Meet the Leaders
- Dedicated Family Induction Morning
- Meet the new teacher communication and classroom time before all the students begin school
- Community Fair
- Coffee Mornings
- New Family and student survey to evaluate the programme

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health.

As a community of educators, it is our responsibility to safeguard our students, staff and parents health and wellbeing through the appropriate channels e.g. in-house support and onward referral. In doing so, it is crucial to ensure that appropriate boundaries are set and adhered to at all times.

### **The School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:**

- Regularly review this policy and any attendant procedures
- Ensure that a suitable training programme is available to staff, drawing on the breadth of expertise across the Metropole family to ensure that CPD is informed by best practice in both general and specific terms
- Promote a culture of mutual respect, trust between students and staff and the fostering of a positive learning environment.
- Ensure that staff supporting students through challenging situations such as self-harm are themselves well supported via appropriate channels e.g., immediate and follow-up debriefs with the relevant Teams; access to School counsellors
- Termly report on student wellbeing to the School Senior Leadership Team and the Local Advisory board.
- With the DSL, produce and maintain referral routes, partnerships with any external agencies such as clinical psychology services, staff training and responsibilities etc.

### **Pastoral Team (SLT, Inclusion Lead, Clinic, DSL)**

- Closely monitor wellbeing and personal development whilst ensuring that Metropole successfully promotes a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- Provide regular supervision, training, advice and guidance with a focus on student mental health and wellbeing.
- Regularly Convene at staff specialist networks to promote cross - organisational working and share best practice.
- Keep up to date with current research and practice.
- Ensure that all staff training is regularly updated.
- Regularly report to Metropole SLT on safeguarding matters including student mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure that all staff and parents understand their safeguarding duties about mental and physical wellbeing.



- Regularly review systems for supporting good mental and physical health and wellbeing within their provision.

**Student and Staff Wellbeing co-ordinators will:**

- Review updated policies regularly and receive termly updates on student and staff wellbeing
- Lead the wellbeing student leadership programme
- Co-ordinates wellbeing events throughout the year
- Plans and shares resources that can be shared with students and the community via lessons, assemblies, webinars, coffee mornings.

**Mental Health First Aiders will:**

- Undertake and regularly refresh their Mental Health First Aid training to provide non-diagnostic and non-judgemental support for mental health and wellbeing within their provision;
- Provide relevant advice and support to students and staff as required, including signposting to appropriate sources of further support.

It is essential all staff members to recognise the boundary between support and professional health care. Only suitably trained healthcare professionals are qualified to diagnose and treat health conditions, whether mental or physical.

**Links to other Policies**

- Safeguarding/child protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Inclusion policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- E-Safety policy
- Health and Safety policy
- School Counselling policy
- Values policy

**Monitoring Arrangements**

The school's arrangements for managing access to education and training providers for students are monitored by Mr. Nizar Mourad – School Operations Manager.

This policy will be reviewed by Neil Corrigan (DHT Primary), Joe Gannon (DHT Secondary) and Dr. Jennie Telus (Head of Inclusion) annually.

At every review, the policy will be approved by Mr. Naveed Iqbal – Principal and CEO







