



Student Mental Health Policy

Introduced:	September 2024
Next Review	October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Dunes International School, Abu Dhabi, is committed to promoting and safeguarding the mental wellbeing of all students. The school recognizes that mental health is a vital component of overall wellbeing and academic success. This policy aims to provide a structured framework for prevention, early intervention, and access to mental health support in alignment with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) Wellbeing Policies.

2. Objectives

- To promote student mental wellbeing through education, awareness, and supportive school practices.
- To ensure early identification and intervention for students experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties.
- To provide access to qualified counseling and support services.
- To maintain confidentiality, safety, and inclusivity in all mental health practices.
- To ensure compliance with all ADEK and Federal UAE laws related to child wellbeing and data protection.

3. Mental Health Awareness and Education

- The school shall implement structured programs to promote emotional resilience, mindfulness, and balanced living.
- Mental health topics shall be integrated into the health education curriculum as per ADEK and DoH requirements, including:
 - Emotional regulation, stress management, and resilience.
 - Understanding and coping with anxiety, depression, and social pressures.
 - Awareness of substance misuse, digital gaming addiction, and eating disorders.
 - Promoting a non-stigmatizing environment for mental health discussions.
- Regular workshops and classroom sessions shall be conducted to support social and emotional learning.





4. Parental Awareness and Engagement

- Parents shall be informed about the school's mental health policy, initiatives, and resources.
- The school shall organize periodic parent workshops, share awareness materials, and encourage participation in wellbeing surveys.
- Collaboration with parents will be encouraged for early identification and ongoing support for students in need.

5. Counseling and Support Services

5.1 Access to Counseling

- The school provides access to counseling services for all students.
- Counseling may be offered by qualified in-school counselors or through Department of Health (DoH)-licensed external specialists in accordance with ADEK's In-School Specialist Services Policy.

5.2 School Counselor will:

- Offer confidential counseling services to students.
- Collaborate with teachers, parents, and school leaders to address student wellbeing concerns.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g., Family Care Authority, psychiatric services) when additional support is required.
- The counselor may also act as the school's Mental Health Lead, coordinating wellbeing initiatives.

5.3 Social Worker

- A qualified social worker shall support students and families by acting as a bridge between school, home, and community.
- The social worker will provide emotional and behavioral support but shall not deliver therapy or clinical counseling.

5.4 Confidentiality

- All student information shall be handled in line with Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 on Personal Data Protection and ADEK confidentiality requirements.
- Counselors may share relevant information with designated school leaders or the Child Protection Team when it is in the best interest of the student or required by law (e.g., cases of self-harm, abuse, or neglect).

5.5 Parental Consent





- Parental consent is required for regular or structured counseling sessions.
- Consent is not required for spontaneous, one-time, or crisis interactions deemed essential for the student's wellbeing.

6. Referral Pathways

- The school shall maintain a clear Referral Pathway for students to access internal and external mental health support.
- Students, teachers, and parents can refer concerns directly to the School Counselor or Social Worker.
- When required, students may be referred to external licensed professionals for specialized care.
- All referrals shall be documented confidentially and in compliance with ADEK's School Inclusion and Reporting Policies.
- The referral pathway shall be communicated through the Parent Handbook and staff orientation programs.

7. Support during Vulnerable Phases

- The school shall identify high-stress periods such as exams, transitions, or university application seasons.
- Structured support shall include:
- Study leave (up to 4 weeks for board examinations).
- End-of-term one-on-one sessions between teachers and students for feedback.
- Workshops on stress management, time management, and emotional coping.
- Teachers shall receive guidance to identify early signs of student stress and to provide timely referrals to the counselor.

8. Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs

- The Head of Inclusion shall collaborate with counselors, teachers, and parents to ensure that the mental health needs of students with additional learning needs are met.
- Documented Learning Plans (DLPs) shall address mental health and wellbeing components.
- Reasonable accommodations may include:
- Adjusted schedules or flexible timetables.
- Sensory-friendly uniform options.
- Close monitoring and proactive measures against bullying or teasing.



9. Implementation and Compliance

- This policy shall take effect from October 2025, in alignment with ADEK implementation timelines.
- The School Principal, in collaboration with the School Counselor, Social Worker, and Head of Inclusion, shall oversee implementation and annual review.
- Training shall be provided to staff to identify and support students experiencing mental health challenges.
- Non-compliance with this policy may result in action as per ADEK's school regulations and relevant UAE laws.

10. Review and Continuous Improvement

- This policy will be reviewed annually or as directed by ADEK to ensure ongoing relevance and compliance.
- Feedback from students, parents, and staff will be considered in policy updates.

Principal Mr. Paramjit Ahluwalia	
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