

AAESS Wellbeing Policy

2022-2023

Next review date: July 2023



This policy has been read and adopted by AAESS Board of Directors and Executive Principal:

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Helen A. McCauley in blue ink.

For and on behalf of AAESS Board of Directors

Date: July 2022

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Mr Andrew Thomas in blue ink.

Mr Andrew Thomas, Executive Principal

Date: July 2022

Rationale

At Al Ain English Speaking School, we are committed to promoting and supporting the Wellbeing of every individual through creating a whole school ethos in which all stakeholders (children, staff, parents and carers) feel secure, know that they are valued and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is in our lives. Individuals are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy; 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 children and staff.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: “in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”. Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children’s wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

At AAESS our role is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. 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.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing is promoted and valued.
- To ensure AAESS provides a safe, secure, supportive and stimulating environment that is responsive to the personal, social and emotional needs of all members of the school community.
- To encourage cooperation, respect and consideration for and between all members of the school community.
- To promote warm and positive relationships between children, staff and parents.
- To build an atmosphere of trust.
- To help children and staff grow in self-esteem, confidence and independence of thought.
- To provide children and staff with opportunities to develop their resilience and coping strategies.
- To encourage the children and staff to value one another and to respect the views of other members of their community.



- To prepare the children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
To provide staff for the opportunities to develop professionally and personally.

Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation’s definition of mental health and wellbeing “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

AAESS Approach to Wellbeing

Wellbeing is also referred to as Emotional Literacy, Emotional Intelligence or Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). Research indicates that Emotional Intelligence predicts approximately 80% of lifelong achievement in comparison to conventional IQ, which predicts between 4% and 20% (Gross, 2000). Therefore, the Wellbeing programme at AAESS aims to develop the following underpinning skills of Emotional Intelligence to maximize opportunities for individuals to succeed in today’s curriculum and beyond:

- self-awareness
- managing feelings
- motivation
- empathy
- social skills

AT AAESS, we believe it is essential to develop these aspects of learning within the primary curriculum as:

- They underlie almost every aspect of our live
- They enable us to be effective learners
- They enable us to get on with other people
- They enable us to be responsible citizens

Wellbeing is a set of systems, procedures and programmes which involve the whole school community and aim to promote High Performance Learning Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAAs) and emotional intelligence. 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.

Wellbeing support for the children is provided at a whole class, group and individual level. Extra support is provided through pastoral meetings and listening areas, where individuals or groups of children are given the opportunity during break times, to talk to pastoral leaders, HOYs about issues they are having, who then offers life coaching in order to address their concerns.

Equal Opportunities

AAESS recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The school will take positive steps to create school culture through its governing body, managers and other employees, in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences. This commitment extends to the whole school community and others connected with it. The school is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to promotion of good relations between all.

Parental involvement

Parents are responsible for sharing with the school any changes in circumstances within the home that may affect the wellbeing of their children. If children require additional support for their social and emotional wellbeing, this will be discussed with parents through each step so that the school and home are working together to support the needs of the children.

The Role of the Counsellor

Counsellors and wellbeing support staff should have appropriate knowledge of how to communicate with and support all members of the school community and demonstrate an understanding of their circumstances.

Schools shall develop a staff and student wellbeing plan based on their individual Risk Assessments in conjunction with school counsellors.

The Wellness Team

The wellness team at AAESS is representative of staff members across the school and made up of individuals with different roles and responsibilities. The wellness team is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the wellness provision at AAESS as well as making a judgement or determination of the level of wellbeing during the year and in particular during stressful or busy times. The wellness team drives and initiates wellness activities and initiatives across the school.

Assessment and recording

Class teachers are to keep records of student support on their SDR Forms regularly referring to them in order to ensure whether additional support is needed. Careful planning for and monitoring of children's wellbeing is an integral part of AAESS's evaluation and review. Any serious incidents and issues that may



affect the wellbeing of the children or in relation to safeguarding must be recorded to the Wellbeing committee and to a member of the Safeguarding team for additional support if needed.

Roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

Our Wellness team in collaboration with the Pastoral Team work together to ensure that they lead and support Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs. They:-

- Lead and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Lead on PSHCE and Morality teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Are the first point of contact with mental health services, and make individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our Senior Leadership Team
- Our Wellness Team
- Our Inclusion Leadership Team
- Our Safeguarding/Child Protection Leaders
- Our Year Leaders
- Our School Counsellor
- Our SENDCo who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision
- Our School Nurse

At AAESS all members of the school community are responsible for supporting the wellbeing of children, staff and parents. Class teachers are ultimately responsible for the social and emotional wellbeing of the children in their class and need to set up systems within their classes whereby emotional support is available to them. This may be through circle time, worry boxes or other 'talk' time systems. If class



teachers feel children need further support, they are to discuss this with parents and Head of Year and then seek support from the Pastoral leader.

Specialists and support staff are responsible for sharing with the class teacher any concerns they may have when working with the children.

Our Senior Leadership Team is responsible for supporting the class teachers as necessary in promoting the wellbeing of the children at Al Ain English Speaking School.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with Wellbeing and mental health needs

Our approach:

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

Early Identification:

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with wellbeing and mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Through surveys, questionnaires, worry boxes and the whisper button.
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers and Mental Health Lead (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs in a particular class regularly).
- Whisper button on school website for children to raise concerns which are checked Mental Health Lead (these are anonymous but give an indication of needs across the school).
- Pupil Progress Review meetings.
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- Parental meetings
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Anti stigma. Links with the School's Positive Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.



In addition to children’s wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

○ **AAESS Vision for staff wellbeing**

At AAESS we acknowledge the importance of Staff Wellbeing. Staff who are emotionally and physically fit, motivated and productive benefit not only themselves and their families but are important to pupil achievement and the school’s performance. AAESS has several policies which support staff wellbeing to ensure their health and safety, risk management, welfare, retention and employee rights.

Scope

This policy is fully inclusive and applies to all staff employed at AAESS. All staff are treated with fairness and consistency so that equality is maintained and discrimination avoided, and it aims to:

- Maintain a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high standard of education to students at AAESS
- Promote the health and wellbeing of all staff members with initiatives to improve morale and job satisfaction
- Recognise the impact work challenges including pandemic restrictions and distance learning practice can have on colleagues stress levels, mental and physical health
- Communicate the importance of a positive work-life balance to all staff
- Ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly
- Consult with staff on policy development
- Respond sensitively to external matters which affect the lives of individual staff members and department teams
- Provide staff with Wellbeing training, guidance and resources for personal and professional development
- Encourage cooperation, collaboration and team-building through shared Wellbeing events
- Provide Clinic, HR and Counseling services onsite
- Provide Health Insurance cover for all staff and full information on cover provided and upgrades available

Roles and responsibilities of staff-

- Staff are encouraged to actively engage with the ethos of the Wellbeing policy; understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Staff should support fellow employees in their awareness of this policy and ensuing activities



- Support and contribute to AAESS aim of providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all employees
- Staff should be able to ask for advice, support and help with their physical and emotional wellbeing without fear of judgement, discrimination or sanction

Roles and responsibilities of School leadership-

- Ensure that all employees are made aware and have access to this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including the principles, objectives and procedures
- Encourage the creation and maintenance of an environment and workplace culture where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns
- Commit to providing a supportive workplace culture where healthy lifestyle choices are valued and encouraged
- Treat employees equally and without discrimination
- Ensure that all staff are trained in line with the school's priorities and offered opportunities for development
- Appoint a Wellbeing coordinator/School Counselor to support Welfare provision
- Protect and preserve the equitable treatment of employees and not tolerate bullying, harassment or abuse of any kind
- Ensure policies, procedures and actions are in place and followed at all times.
- Commit to providing employees with access to safe and appropriate health and wellbeing information, activities and services; following recommended good practice, quality service provision and UAE legislation.
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy.

Role of School Counsellor- see also [Counselling Policy](#)

The school counsellor will provide the following services to staff to ensure their wellbeing:

- Provide individual counselling sessions
- Provide advice and support in areas such as physical, mental and emotional health
- Assist staff to identify goals and potential solutions to their problems
- Provide counselling support following bereavement or other traumatic event
- Organise seminars/workshops to promote healthy lifestyle, self-care and awareness programs
- Promote a culture which recognises the importance of emotional wellbeing
- Refer staff to external agencies if needed for specialist on-going services



- Liaise with Clinic and leadership staff where needed
- Provide a flexible service at times of crisis or in urgent situations

Review and monitoring of policy-

- This policy is reviewed and updated annually and when circumstances require amendments (eg- Covid 19)
- Employees are informed when a particular activity or change to worksite environment or practice aligns with this policy
- Employees are empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback to this policy
- Employees are notified of all changes to this policy.

