



At GEMS Royal Dubai School, we are committed to promoting and supporting the Wellbeing of every individual through creating a whole school ethos in which the whole community (children, staff, parents and carers) feel secure, know that they are valued and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development and recognize 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 GEMS Royal Dubai School our role is to ensure that children can 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.

### **1. 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 GEMS Royal Dubai School 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 co-operation, respect and consideration for and between all members of the school community.
- To promote 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.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

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

## **2. 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:

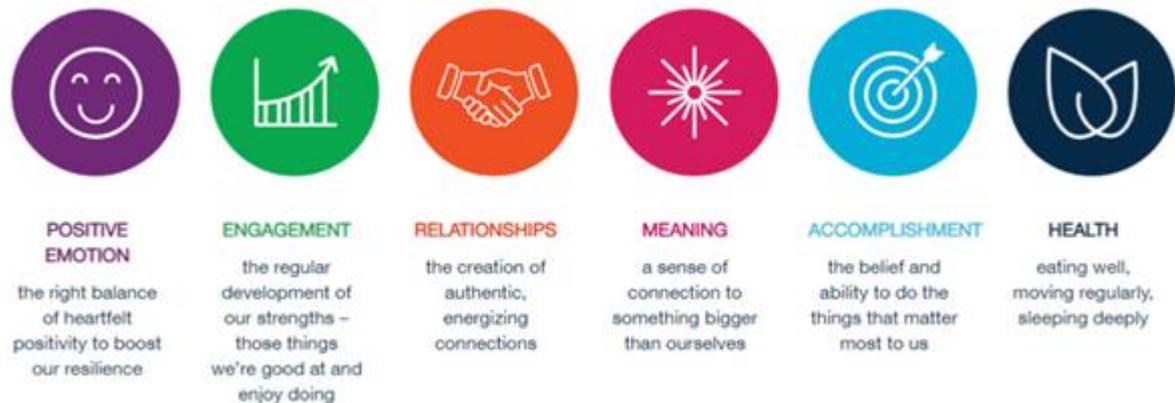
- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

## **3. The RDS 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 GEMS Royal Dubai School 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

We do this through a bespoke wellbeing programme which is based on the PERMAH model (see image below).



As a High Performance Learning School, it is essential to develop these aspects of learning within the primary curriculum as:

- They underline 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

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. These therefore 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.

Wellbeing support for the children is provided as a whole class, group and individual level. Each classroom is equipped with a Zones of Regulation display which is used to provide emotional guidance and support for children to self-regulate. We teach these explicitly in the younger years and children can then refer to them independently as they transition through the school. Extra support is provided through the wellbeing team, where individuals or groups of children are given the opportunity during break times, to talk to the Pastoral leader about issues they are having, who then offers life coaching in order to address their concerns.

#### **4. Equal Opportunities**

The school 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 the promotion of good relations between all.

## **5. 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.

## **6. 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.

The Wellbeing team will support students who are emotionally vulnerable.

Any incident that has had a negative impact upon a students' emotional health and wellbeing will be supported by the RDS support staff.

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

**COVID Specific:** Staff and students may be returning to school having experienced effects related to confinement, social isolation, and loss and bereavement amongst many other things. Schools may use outside agencies to support the school community (students but also teachers and staff) with post confinement as well as identify age- and context appropriate resources to cope with mental health issues.

## **7. Assessment and recording**

Class teachers are to keep records of student support on their PPM Forms regularly referring to them on in order to ensure whether additional support is needed. Careful planning for and monitoring of children's wellbeing is an integral part of the RDS evaluation and review. Any serious incidents and issues that may affect the wellbeing of the children or in relation to safeguarding must be recorded on the HSE Guard Portal and a member of the Safeguarding team will support.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about 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 about 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 (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).

Our 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 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 Inclusion Leadership Team including Student Well being Leader
- 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 GEMS Royal Dubai School 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.

Specialist 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 GEMS Royal Dubai School.

## **9. 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:

- SDQ (Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaires), Emotional Literacy Assessments, PASS and the Boxall profile
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Digital worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers and the school counsellor.
- Pupil Progress Review meetings.
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings in EYFS.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

## **10. Links to other policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's 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.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Royal Dubai School teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Review date: May 2023