

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Owner	<i>SLT</i>
Approved by	Ms Sapna Changrani (Head of School)
Review Date	<i>July 2026</i>
Next Review Due	<i>July 2027</i>
Circulation	All Staff, Students, Parents; School Website; KHDA Inspection File

CONTENTS

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Rationale**
- 3. Aims**
- 4. Our Core Values**
- 5. Guiding Lights of Wellbeing: The 5A's**
- 6. Pathways to Global Good- UN Sustainable Goals**
- 7. The School Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- 8. Well-being Team & Responsibilities**
- 9. Role of Student Wellbeing Ambassadors**
- 10. Five domains of Well-being**
- 11. Early Identification in students, staff and parents**
- 12. Referral Pathway**
- 13. Counselling Services & Procedure**
- 14. Staff CPD**
- 15. Digital Wellness**
- 16. Services We Offer**
- 17. Complaints procedure**
- 18. Glossary**

Executive Summary

Dubai Scholars Private School is dedicated to promoting a safe, inclusive, and emotionally healthy learning environment where wellbeing is deeply embedded into the *school's ethos, curriculum, teaching practices, and student life*. The Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (2025–26) is built around a whole-school approach that nurtures resilience, self-awareness, and positive relationships while also addressing individual needs through timely, structured support.

Our core wellbeing philosophy is guided by the “5 A’s” —

- ∞ Awareness
- ∞ Acceptability
- ∞ Agency
- ∞ Attitude
- ∞ Aspiration

The 5A’s in alignment with our core values and UN sustainable development goals develop emotionally intelligent and globally responsible learners. The framework outlines two levels of support: universal wellbeing promotion for all, and targeted interventions for those requiring additional care. A trained, multidisciplinary Wellbeing Team—including counsellors, safeguarding leads, pastoral heads, and medical staff—monitors student welfare and leads awareness initiatives, classroom activities, and mental health education.

Communication and referral procedures are structured, confidential, and inclusive. Any student, staff member, or parent can initiate a referral through direct communication with the counsellor, by submitting a written request, or via a “Talk to the Counsellor” drop-box. Staff are trained to recognize early signs of emotional distress and respond supportively. Following a referral, the wellbeing team assesses the concern, engages relevant stakeholders, and determines the appropriate level of intervention—ranging from in-school counselling to external specialist support. Informed consent is obtained as needed, with clear protocols for handling sensitive cases. Regular follow-ups, feedback loops, and collaborative action plans ensure that all support is purposeful, respectful, and effective.

This structured yet compassionate approach ensures every member of the school community *feels seen, heard, and supported*—fostering an environment where both academic excellence and emotional wellbeing can thrive.

Rationale

At Dubai Scholars Private School, we are committed to promoting, supporting and prioritising the Wellbeing of every individual through creating a whole school ethos in which the whole community (children, staff, parents and carers) feel safe, and know the importance of mental health

and wellbeing in lived reality. We offer support and enable them to manage times of change and stress in line with cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Our Senior Leadership Team actively contributes to creating a supportive learning environment where everyone in the school community feels respected, included, and safe. Additionally, everyone involved in the school community actively contributes to creating a welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and encourages harmonious relationships. Students take an active role in their education and wellbeing, feel connected, and use social and emotional competencies to be kind, resilient, and safe. Families and communities work together with the school as partners to support learning, safety, and wellbeing for the students. Families, students, and school personnel all share a common concept of wellness, good behaviour, and how these factors contribute to efficient teaching and learning. We always ensure students are in a safe and inclusive learning environment where learning and wellbeing are equally important.

We also recognize our staff and parents are vital part of school community. We ensure staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally and our parents always participate in their child's education, celebrate and appreciate the culture of peers, socialise and get to know other parents and teachers, thereby building strong links in the Dubai Scholars community.

We are committed to make sure that everyone can cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress. The school aims to maintain an inclusive and positive educational ethos, which supports health and wellbeing of all at school, by ensuring all are treated with mutual respect and equality.

Vision & Objectives

- ∞ Dubai Scholars is committed to providing a safe, secure, and emotionally healthy learning environment for all students. We are dedicated to support personal, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development.
 - ∞ Our aim is to ensure that all our students and staff are self-actualized, self-reflective and equipped to navigate the challenges of life.
 - ∞ We nurture our students through strength-based approach and integrated well-being in the teaching practices. Student wellbeing Activities are conducted that focus on Mindfulness and Positive Affirmations.
-
- Creating a school ethos that promotes wellbeing, resilience and positive skills to improve the individual and school performance.
 - To create and practice a culture for wellbeing where all school community members are treated equally and respectfully under any circumstance.
 - To nurture an environment that enhances competence and wellbeing; one that consciously fosters warm relationships, positive expectations, encourages participation and celebrates differences and diversity.
 - To enhance the provision of choice, which supports self-regulation, self-discipline and achievement to the students.
 - To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment that encourages and supports students, staff and members of the whole school community, both in and out of school.
 - To inspire and endorse self-esteem and self-confidence thus helping to foster self-discipline and effort, encourage students to stretch themselves and take risks in their learning.
 - To develop an environment where personal growth and physical health is consistent to enhance self-satisfaction, self-efficacy, resilience, social competence and good health.

Dubai Scholars provides the best quality to promote the wellbeing of our students. We also have a duty to always prevent and protect students in our care from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes.

Our Core Values

Integrity

Stand up for what we believe, be honest with ourselves and others, demonstrate fairness in our judgements and actions, fulfil commitments and promises.

Compassion

Promote a peaceful, caring and safe community, understand the circumstances and viewpoints of others, develop the capacity to forgive others and ourselves.

Empathy

understand and share another person's experiences, thoughts and emotions.

Respect

Believe in the inherent dignity of all people, value and appreciate diversity mutual respect for our parents, teachers, support staff and students as one community.

Accountability & responsibility

Take ownership of our behaviour as individuals, encourage independent learning and empower students to embrace responsibility.

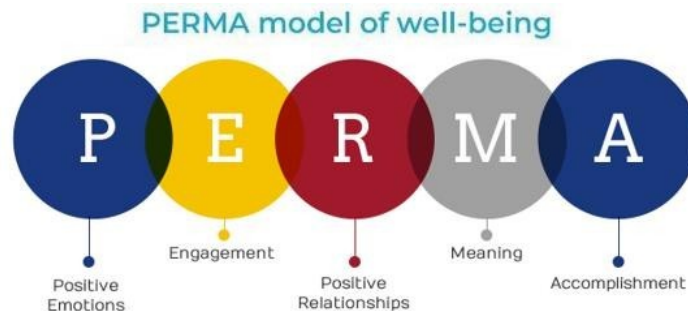


What is Wellbeing?

“Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.” (World Health Organisation, 2001).

Wellbeing at Dubai Scholars is living through learnings and lessons. It's a process of becoming empathetic, self-aware, and emotionally resilient. It involves understanding one's own emotions, recognizing the experiences of others, and responding with kindness, balance, and intention. True wellbeing grows through meaningful connections, mindful habits, and the ability to navigate challenges with strength and compassion. We aim to build *self-actualized* individuals, who see values within themselves and in their surroundings. It works in dual ways; one aspect focuses on 'self' and the second on 'other'. This connection between the 'self' and 'other' is enriched and bolstered by the wellbeing culture, ethos and core values of our school. We are committed to give an inclusive, engaging and safe culture to each student, parent and staff members

Meantime we focus on PERMA theory of Wellbeing too.



- **P** – Positive Emotion: Encouraging feelings of joy, gratitude, and contentment.
- **E** – Engagement: Fostering deep involvement in meaningful activities.
- **R** – Relationships: Building supportive, respectful, and positive connections.
- **M** – Meaning: Promoting a sense of purpose and belonging within the school and wider community.
- **A** – Accomplishment: Supporting goal setting, achievement, and personal growth.

By integrating PERMA into our school culture, we aim to create an environment where all individuals can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

Guided Lights of Well-being:

Our wellbeing policy is grounded in the belief that every learner can thrive uniquely when they are guided by the 5 pillars of wellbeing. These pillars in line with DS Core values builds emotionally healthy school and strengthen how we support, educate, and empower each member of our community. It integrates elements of emotional health, mental health, and social development, making it a holistic psychosocial and educational model.

1. **Awareness:**

This pillar forms the basis to *self-coach* one's own beliefs and actions, social and emotional learnings, understanding towards diverse backgrounds, perspectives and abilities that encourages students and staff to value uniqueness. To foster empathy in relationships and hold oneself accountable for the actions.

2. **Acceptability:**

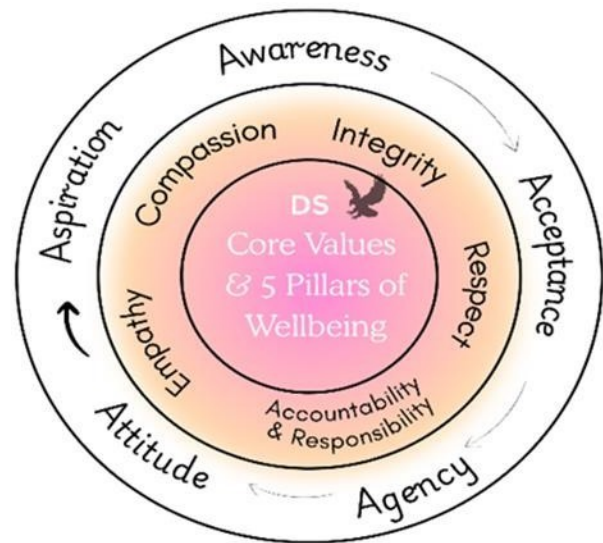
Celebrate diversity with honesty, demonstrate openness and adaptability towards challenges. It involves embracing the vulnerabilities with pride.

3. **Agency:**

Agency involves *taking ownership of words, decisions and actions* towards oneself and others. It empowers individuals to take actions that involve care, warmth and unconditional positive regard for others. Agency is a driving force that supports mutual respect through recognition of other's autonomy. It involves taking accountability and responsibility for one's own wellbeing along with others.

4. **Attitude:**

Believing in a growth mindset and approaching life's situations with a positive outlook. It brings courage, clarity and emotional resilience. Maintaining a proactive and constructive attitude in a diverse environment builds psychological safety, and nurtures wellbeing for all.



A positive attitude does not mean ignoring difficulties but rather approaching them with confidence and the belief that improvement is possible. It enhances motivation, strengthens relationships, and contributes to a more respectful and supportive school environment. By embracing positivity, individuals become more open to learning, more willing to take initiative, and better equipped to bounce back from setbacks—leading to personal growth and academic success.

5. Aspiration:

Aspiration drives the individual to *aim, visualize, and become the best of beings*. It positively reinforces modelling in the school. Aspiration in alignment with core values becomes a powerful force for collective progress.

Pathways to Global Good

5A's - UN Sustainable Development Goals

At Dubai Scholars, our commitment extends beyond the four walls of classroom, aiming to nurture individuals who are not only mentally resilient and relationally skilled but also globally responsible.

1. Awareness- Quality Education (UN Sustainable Development Goal 4)

The first foundational pillar of our well-being framework aims to provide emotional literacy, Identity and mental health awareness to whole school community. These integral components culminate to the holistic and psycho-social development of the individual. This aligns with the values of UN sustainable goal 4 of quality education which 'fosters inclusive and equitable education'. Through school's environment that promotes integrity and provide targeted initiatives such as wellbeing tracker apps, awareness weeks, mindfulness activities, SEL programs, we ensure that our students are not only academically strong but also psychically strong, self-regulate, and enabled to navigate the challenges of life.

2. Acceptance- Reduced Inequalities (UN Sustainable Goal 10)

The second pillar of Well-being believes in celebrating people from varied heritage, background, ethnicity, gender, beliefs and forming a relationship that fosters inclusion, tolerance and mutual respect.

3. **Agency- Peace, Justice, Strong institutions (UN Sustainable Goal 16)**

The third pillar is the driving force in building just, peaceful and effective institutions. It values and empowers student/teacher's voice parallel to our core value of accountability and responsibility. It encourages individuals to take informed choices and participate in change making initiatives as democratic leaders. Agency is tracked through responsibilities done by wellbeing council, decision making trainings, teacher feedback boards.

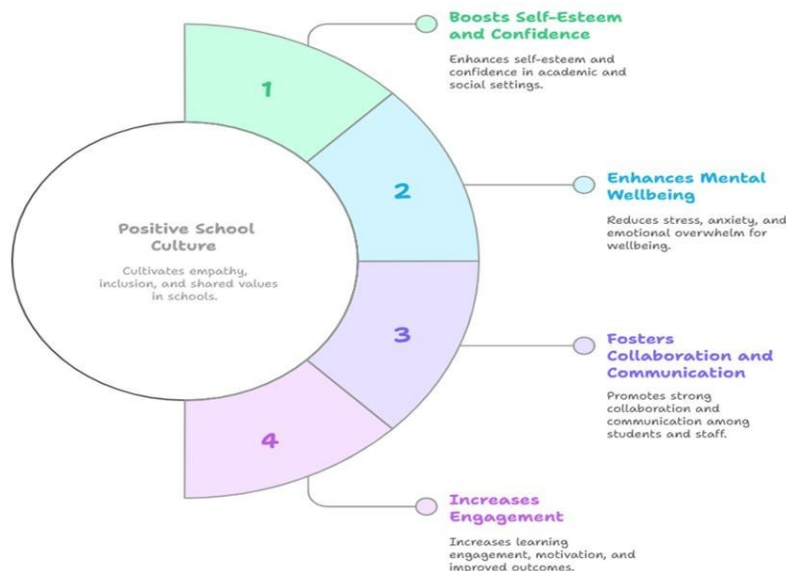
4. **Attitude- Good Health and Well-being (UN Sustainable Goal 3)**

Approach the complexities of life with empathy, positivity and gratefulness. It ensures coaching culture for not only physical health but also mental health for all. In school, positive attitude is promulgated through mindfulness programs, socio-emotional learning, grounding techniques, positive affirmations that builds self-esteem.

5. **Aspiration- Decent Work & Economic Growth (UN Sustainable Goal 8)**

This pillar aims to build readiness of future leaders by providing them with skilled abilities, future-focussed learning and entrepreneurial mindset. It employs the notion of proactive and productive employment of individuals. In education, it is provided through modelling changemakers, aspiration-building activities such as goal setting, adaptability, mentorship, soft-skills, alumni talks. These skills are inculcated to build an empowering, inclusive and sustainable economic growth environment.

Unveiling the Multifaceted Benefits of Positive School Culture



The School Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing

We support all students, parents and staff through a systemic whole school approach to wellbeing, with tiers of support that emphasise appropriate early intervention.

Our leadership, inclusive learning environment, supports, student voices, and excellent partnerships with other stakeholders all contribute to our effective practices.

Our two-tiered support to School Wellbeing is as follows:

1. Whole school approach
2. Targeted support

Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing

This whole school approach involves all members of the school community, engaging in a collaborative process of change, to improve wellbeing. Also it produces a wide range of educational and social benefits for our students, including improved behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, greater social cohesion, increased healthy life style and food habits, physical fitness and improvements to mental health.

Our culture of nurturing children and building resilience to mental health problems means our school is a safe place where:

- Every child feels valued;
- Every child has a sense of belonging;
- Every child feels able to talk openly with trusted members of staff about their problems;
- Positive mental health is promoted;
- Bullying is not tolerated.

We focus on giving student's voice, being active learners and developing strong character qualities that will enable them to succeed, thrive and contribute positively throughout life. Also we consider teaching and learning and the development of wellbeing as parallel, integrated, complementary processes. The whole school approach integrates the different support systems within the school, which in turn creates the capacity to be reflective and responsive to the needs of our school and the individuals, who are part of the school community.

Benefits of promoting wellbeing

- A co-ordinated approach to social, physical and environmental needs
- Better learning results for students
- More done to promote staff health
- School environment is safer and more secure
- Students receive better quality education
- Improved relationships within the school
- More involvement of parents/guardians
- Increased students' self-esteem
- Better use of outside agencies
- Lowered incidence of bullying
- Better understanding of schools' health aims

Targeted support

Targeted interventions for students whose progress is severely impeded by their social, emotional, academic or behavioural concerns. Support takes place in one to one, small groups, class groups and year groups. Individual interventions are designed for students who are identified as requiring intensive tailored support to engage positively in learning environment. Depending on the level and nature of need the student will be moved to the specialist interventions.

Student of Determination and other vulnerable groups will be taken care by the appropriate specialists in line with their level of need/s.



DS Targeted Support Model

All staff have a responsibility to facilitate and support positive mental health. We aim to spot the early warning signs of mental health issues and to identify appropriate support for the children, staff and parents based on their needs. We involve parents wherever possible and the children themselves in the care and support they need in School.

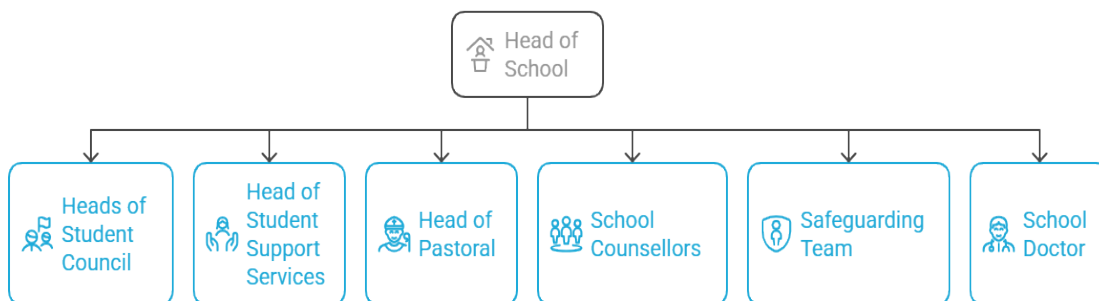
Our staff recognises the importance of remaining calm, supportive and non-judgemental with someone who disclose a concern. Staff always make it clear that the concern will be shared with the school counsellor to help them and get the support they need. Staff understand they need to listen, not advise and to treat everyone equally and with mutual respect.

*Well-being Team:

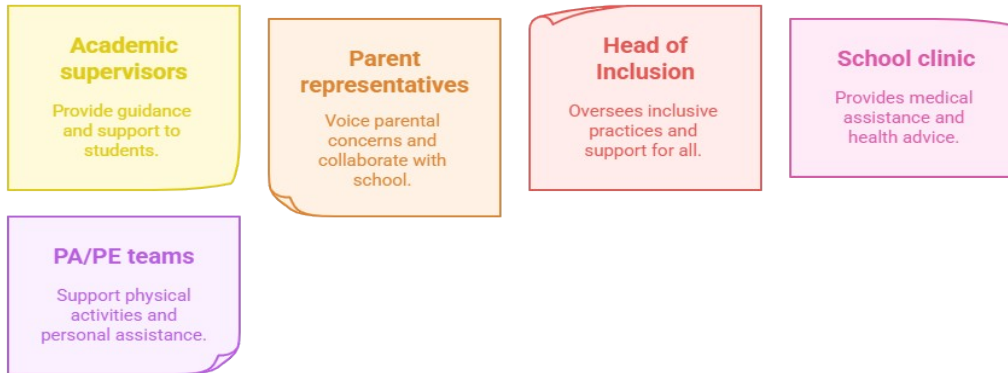
*Roles and Responsibilities of the Well-being Team:

- Initiate information dissemination programmes and organize activities for the protection of students.
- Establish a system for identifying students at risk and experiencing well-being concerns.
- Monitor the implementation of positive measures and effective procedures in providing the necessary support for the students.
- Ensure that students' rights are heard, respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare.
- Ensure that students and school staff; both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the Well-being Policy.
- Keep written records (referral, action taken, etc.) of cases for future references.
- Follow up reported cases.

Well-being Core Team Structure



Well-being Support Network Members



Roles & Responsibilities of Wellbeing Counsellors:

The School Wellbeing Counsellor plays a vital role in promoting emotional, social, and behavioural growth while fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment. The role extends beyond counselling to include preventive care, advocacy, skill-building, and integration of modern practices such as AI-enabled tools to strengthen the wellbeing ecosystem at Dubai Scholars.

1. Student Support & Development

- o Provide individual and group counselling sessions to address students' emotional, social, and behavioural needs.
- o Actively support students' mental health and wellbeing, ensuring early identification and intervention.
- o Use a preventive approach to reduce stress, anxiety, and peer-related conflicts, while promoting resilience and positive coping strategies.

2. Wellbeing Curriculum & Training

- o Deliver effective training to ensure seamless implementation of the DS Wellbeing Curriculum Framework across all year groups.
- o Collaborate with teachers to embed wellbeing practices into classroom routines and the wider school culture.

o Organise and facilitate wellbeing workshops, awareness campaigns, and activities aligned with the school's ethos of Nurturing Minds and Sustaining Hearts.

3. Parental & Teacher Engagement

- o Partner with parents to create consistency of care and support between school and home.
- o Provide guidance and training sessions for staff to strengthen their ability to identify, respond to, and support student wellbeing needs.
- o Act as a mediator between students, parents, and teachers in sensitive cases to maintain a healthy learning environment.

4. Safeguarding & Mediation

Uphold safeguarding responsibilities by monitoring and addressing concerns promptly.

- o Implement structured referral systems for concerns raised by staff, parents, or students, ensuring timely interventions.
- o Refer cases to external professionals when specialised intervention is required.

5. AI Upskilling & Digital Integration

- o Continue to upskill and integrate Artificial Intelligence tools to support early identification of wellbeing patterns, streamline documentation, and track interventions effectively.
- o Stay updated on digital innovations in counselling and wellbeing to ensure forward-looking practices.

6. Community & Preventive Programs

- o Support community outreach initiatives and service-learning projects that strengthen empathy, civic responsibility, and emotional resilience.
- o Advocate for student wellbeing at school-wide and external platforms, contributing to a culture of holistic development.

7. Documentation & Reporting

- o Maintain accurate case logs, reports, and observation records, while ensuring confidentiality.
- o Track and evaluate the impact of counselling programs and wellbeing interventions through structured reporting.
- o Share monthly updates with the leadership team to ensure informed decision-making.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student Well-being Council

The Student Well-being Council is a student-led body committed to fostering a positive environment. They serve as trusted peer advocates, creating a safe and approachable space for students who may feel hesitant to seek help directly from teachers or counsellors. Acting as the hands, ears, and eyes of the school community, the council bridges the gap between students and adult support systems—ensuring that no voice goes unheard and no concern unnoticed, especially in spaces where staff may not always be immediately accessible. The team is closely supervised by the school counsellors.

Responsibilities of Well-being Ambassadors:

∞ Promote Mental Health Awareness

- Lead campaigns, assemblies, and events (e.g., Mindfulness Day).
- Create and share awareness materials (posters, social media, bulletin boards).

∞ Plan and Support Wellbeing Activities

- Organize peer-led sessions, gratitude walls, and wellbeing challenges.
- Encourage broad student participation.

∞ Gather and Represent Student Voice

- Use Feedback forms, suggestion boxes or surveys.

∞ Model Positive Behaviour and Inclusion

- Show empathy, respect, and resilience daily.
- Support new students and promote a culture of belonging.

∞ Collaborate with the Well-being Team

- Attend meetings with counsellors and pastoral staff.
- Share student feedback and suggest improvements.
- Guide peers to trusted adults when needed.

Student led Initiatives

Students demonstrate remarkable enthusiasm and genuine curiosity when engaging with mental health and wellbeing-related initiatives. Their eagerness to participate reflects a deep interest in understanding themselves and others, making these initiatives vibrant, meaningful, and student driven.

- Organizing **mental health awareness campaigns** and themed days (e.g., Positivity Day, Mindfulness Week).
- Leading **wellness workshops** on stress management, gratitude journaling, emotional regulation, or healthy digital habits.
- Hosting **peer support circles** or reflection groups to create safe spaces for open conversation.
- Designing and maintaining a "**Wellbeing Wall**" featuring positive messages, student artwork, or coping tips.
- Coordinating **kindness challenges, gratitude projects**, or random acts of kindness campaigns.
- Initiating "**Peer Buddy**" or "**New Student Welcome**" programs to support transitions and belonging.

Early Identification in students, staff and parents Student Wellbeing

Early recognition of well-being concerns is essential for timely intervention and support. At Dubai Scholars:

- All staff are trained to identify early warning signs and emotional distress in students.
- Vigilance is maintained in observing indicators like attendance patterns, behaviour, social interactions, and physical presentation.
- Concerns may arise from academic performance, changes in mood, or feedback from parents, peers, or staff.
- A clear referral pathway ensures that concerns are documented, shared with the well-being team, and followed up with appropriate action—ranging from in-school support to external professional intervention.
- Well-being is made a part of their lived reality through pedagogy, activities and leadership roles that enrich student's experiences within the classroom and beyond.

Staff Wellbeing

Also in Dubai Scholars, we respect and aimed to maintain good mental health and a positive outlook at work for our staff. We are committed to looking after our staff and to ensure a healthy and supportive workplace. The school provide various activities, administrative supports, workshops and seminars to support personal, social and financial concerns of our employees. Staff are getting tips and strategies to manage their wellbeing in the following areas.

- Self-regulation: Train to set goals and stick to them, or to re-evaluate, and keep an eye on those goals.
- Good boundaries: Understanding what the role is and developing the skills to work within that role.
- Good help-seeking skills: knowing how to seek help when moving outside the boundaries of the role.
- Good work/life balance: To know that work has a place in the life, and to also engage in other meaningful activities.
- Healthy Life styles: How to follow a healthy lifestyle
- Resilience: the ability to keep going and bounce back. This will grow out of the self-regulation, self-awareness, knowing the boundaries, and keeping yourself motivated.

Parent Wellbeing

The two primary educators' students have in their lives are their parents and their school. Both are essential to a student's growth, and their combined effects have a stronger influence. It is crucial that the school's ethos emphasises the value of a child's environment, family situation, and significant relationships. To promote students' development, we always provide parents with guidance and strategies. In addition, we welcome parents to school for celebrations of accomplishments, workshops, scheduled meetings, etc.

If the parents need it, we are always willing to offer them administrative or psychological support.

Referral Pathway

Referral can be made by anyone who feels a student may benefit from help. This would include staff, parent, student by self or a peer. The process of referral into the school counsellor outlined with clear referral procedure and through the referral form or can done by posting a "I wish to Talk to the Counsellor" into counsellor mail box. Staff and parents can come by self or through referral.

Planned Check- In

Certain exceptional cases, the staff and students will undergo a check-in procedure to find out whether there is desire for counselling. Such situations will include

- Bereavement
- Parents separation/divorce
- Dramatic changes in behaviour
- Multiple school moves/Frequent early exits, late comers, class exits/history of previous counselling, mental health or safeguarding issues etc...

Consent

Informed consent is related to the client's decision whether to receive counselling. When working with primary students it is important to have a consent form from the parent, while working with Secondary student consent is not compulsory. According to British psychological society best practices, young people who are deemed to be competent to make their own decisions. 'Gillick competent' can give their own consent to a psychologist. Then parent consent is not required.

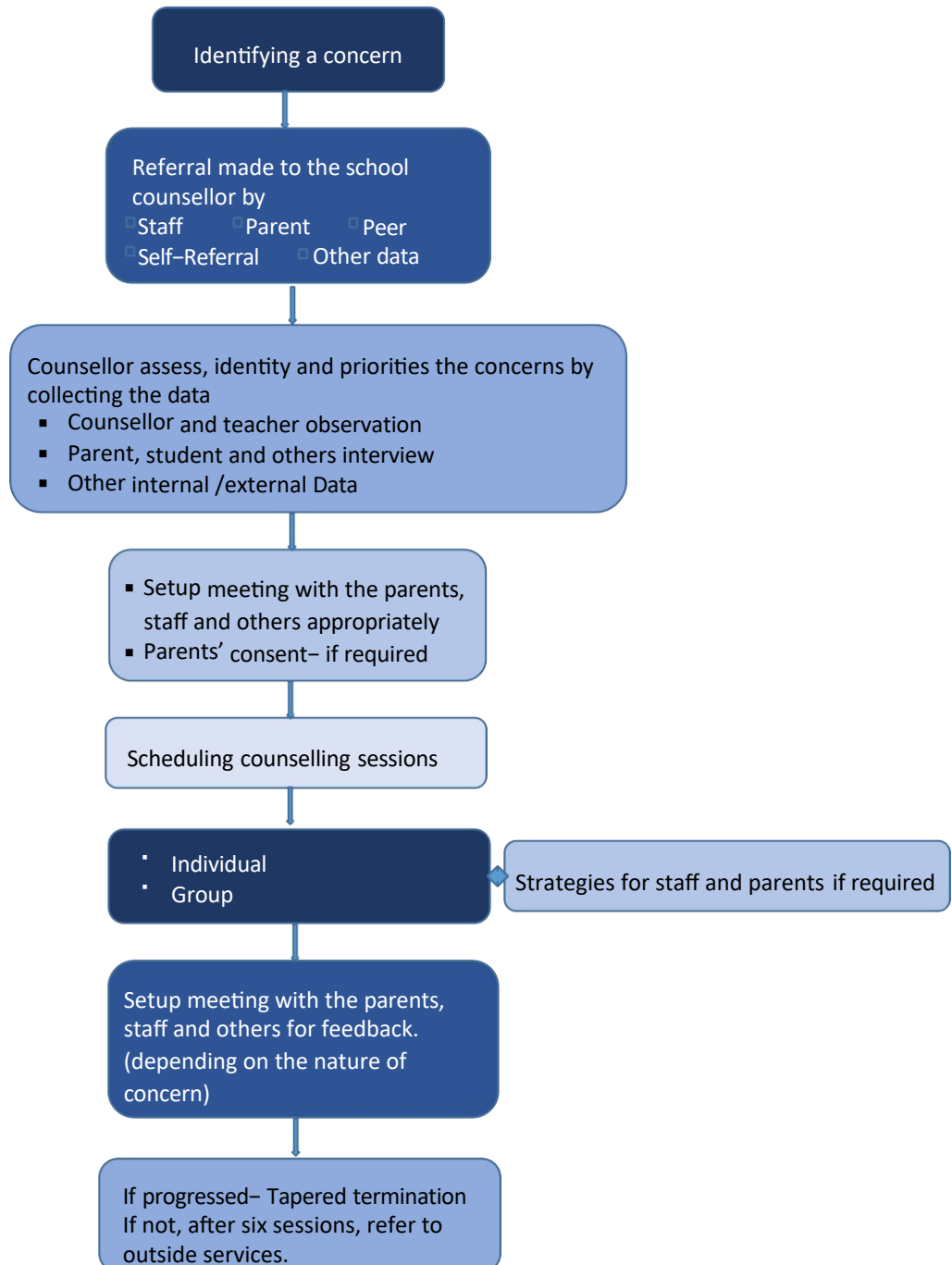
However, if the concern or informing the parent could increase the harm, then the counsellor will meet both primary and secondary student without consent.

Counselling Services & Procedures

An in-house school counselling service is provided for students, staff and parents. Where in open-door policy is followed by all. The sessions are scheduled by experienced and skilled school counsellors. Students profile and follow backs are maintained for frequently visiting cases in school. We provide counselling with sensitivity to students' moods, emotions, developmental stages, behavioural changes, and academic challenges. With these factors in mind, we tailor our support to accommodate their individual needs.

School Wellbeing

School Counselling Procedure



Assessment and identification

After receiving a referral, the counsellor will conduct primary level interviews and observations with the student to identify the level of need/s. Also the counsellor will contact with the SLT, the teacher, the student, and the parents to move forward with a multidimensional assessment in accordance with the nature, seriousness and the Level of the of the need. Also, the student will be directed to an outside service provider for an assessment if required.

Intervention

The school counsellor will keep a mutually agreed action plan in place to assist the client to find solutions rather than providing advices. The provided interventions may include mainly cognitive, behavioural, family, motivational, and solution-focused approaches. In many cases, the given intervention will be a blend of approaches which focus on supportive, short -term, problem-centred outcomes. Counsellor will not provide long term therapy. In some cases, a need may be identified for a student to undergo external expert support and further interventions. Interventions/support sessions takes place in one to one, small groups, class groups or year groups according to the requirement.

Intervention sessions will generally take place during class time, unless otherwise agreed with the counsellor. The duration of each session will generally be for no longer than one lesson (40 minutes' maximum).

Joint interventions/collaborations

Where the clients are willing, collaboration plan in the form of face to face meeting or in the form of email will be shared with parents and teachers. Action plan might include strategies/Tips/ Techniques required to support the student in classroom and home environment. Collaboration will also happenwith Inclusion staff/PE/Music/Art/Swimming/Dance/School clinic staff/External therapists.

This is in order to support their need/s and better understandings of their behavioral or emotional vulnerabilities. Without being informed of the session's content, heads of year or key stage leaders may receive information that is useful to ensuring the safety of the students in their care.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress and review of the plan are done through multi-dimensional. Structured reviews and follow-up checklists are done by parents, teachers and the counsellor in line with the level of the need and nature of the concern. Structured reviews and follow-up checklists are in place for staff.

School Counselling Provision During Holiday periods

During holidays, the school counsellor won't hold intervention sessions. In exceptional circumstances, the counsellor may, nevertheless, hold a stand-alone video call to the clients with the intention of guiding them in desperate need toward help.

Confidentiality

Discussions (including records of discussions) with the School counsellor are confidential, except where in the reasonable opinion of the School counsellor:

- There is a concern that the client will cause himself harm
- There is a concern that the client will cause harm to another person
- The client discloses that another person is at risk of significant harm
- The client discloses criminal activity that may impact on the welfare of the student, or others, or the reputation of the School
- The client discloses that he has suffered harm, or the counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm
- It is necessary or appropriate to consult and/or seek advice from local authority/expert about issues involving the student
- It is otherwise required by law

Where necessary, it will be explained to client that the above exceptions are required by law, to comply with School policies, for the School to discharge its duty of care to students, or for the proper performance of a school counsellor's responsibilities and administration of the School.

Records/Access

All wellbeing records are stored both manually and electronically. Records kept securely and confidentially accessible only by the School counsellor. Access to a student's counselling records by the particular student, his parent/s, or third parties will only be granted where legal and privacy obligations are met.

Staff CPD

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. School leadership and School counsellor provides continuous professional development training to all staff to ensure all staff can identify early symptoms of mental health and wellbeing issues and to know what to do and where to get help.

These intensive CPD trainings aim to train staff in the following area:

- Embedding socio-emotional learnings into lessons
- Effective communication skills of active listening, empathy and non-judgemental responses.
- Stress management techniques and, recognizing burnout
- Responding to critical incidents
- Building trust and psychological safety in classrooms
- Awareness towards inclusive and trauma informed practices
- Clear guidance on school safeguarding procedures, Gillick Competence and student consent

Trained staff builds increased competence to handle sensitive conversations confidently, improved student-teacher relationships, better staff well-being and retention, positive school culture and enhanced academic outcomes. These trainings are conducted in accordance with the calendar provided termly/annually for all the staff members through workshops or online modules by highly skilled and experienced mental health professionals or school counsellors. It is ensured that all the professional development trainings are meaningful, and that staff demonstrate clear understanding through engagement, feedback and observed practise. Staff CPD is not just a professional growth- it's a school transformation. Empowered staff create empowered students.

Digital Wellness

At Dubai Scholars, digital wellness is a key part of our commitment to nurturing well-rounded, emotionally resilient students. In an age where screen time, online presence, and digital communication are an everyday part of life, we educate our students on using technology mindfully, respectfully, and safely.

Our **digital wellness program** focuses on three key areas:

1. Screen Time Education

- Students are taught the value of balanced screen use, with strategies to reduce excessive digital consumption and avoid dependency.
- They learn about the importance of quality screen time (e.g., learning, creativity) versus passive or harmful use (e.g., doom scrolling, overuse of games).
- We encourage the development of healthy routines, including device-free zones/times and mindful disengagement techniques.

2. Social Media & Mental Health

- We raise awareness about the psychological impact of constant comparison, online validation, and social media pressure.
- Students explore topics such as self-esteem, digital body image, FOMO (fear of missing out), and online peer pressure.
- Reflection activities and discussions help them develop digital self-awareness and emotional literacy in online contexts.

3. Cyberbullying Response Strategies

Cyberbullying can deeply affect a student's self-worth, safety, and emotional health. Dubai Scholars follows KHDA safeguarding guidance and age-appropriate strategies to ensure students are protected, informed, and empowered. Students are educated on recognizing and responding to cyberbullying in a safe and supportive way.

Students are taught to:

- **Recognize** the different forms of cyberbullying (e.g., exclusion, name-calling, impersonation, spreading rumors, posting private content without consent).
- **Respond calmly and safely** without retaliating or engaging further with the bully online.
- **Report incidents immediately** to a trusted adult, wellbeing counsellor, or teacher.
- **Block and protect privacy** by using in-app tools to block the bully, adjust privacy settings, and report offensive content.

- **Keep evidence**
(e.g., screenshots, chat logs, messages) to support investigations.
- **Access emotional support**
through school counsellors and wellbeing staff to manage stress, fear, or embarrassment.
- **Understand that help is available**
and that reporting bullying is not tattling—it's a courageous and protective step for themselves and others.
- **Know their rights**
including the right to be heard and protected. Older students, if deemed **Gillick competent**, may access support services or counselling independently and confidentially.
- **Support their peers**
by not forwarding harmful content, standing up respectfully, and encouraging peers to seek help.

Understanding the Impact of Cyberbullying

At Dubai Scholars, we ensure students understand that cyberbullying is not just a digital issue—it affects:

- **Mental health** (e.g., anxiety, depression, low self-worth)
- **Physical wellbeing** (e.g., sleep disturbances, headaches)
- **Academic performance** (e.g., reduced concentration, absenteeism)
- **Social relationships** (e.g., withdrawal, isolation)
- **Emotional regulation** (e.g., fear, anger, helplessness)

We respond swiftly to any reports, with procedures aligned to **KHDA child protection policies**, ensuring that every student feels **heard, supported, and safe**.

We offer:

The following services are available in Dubai scholars for different needs to develop a more graduated and effective response to meet needs.

- School premises and facilities are frequently monitored and modified in line with the need/s
- Individualised education and behaviour plans
- In-school counselling for students, parents and staff
- A specific room where the members can share their concerns.
- Case work/Group work

- Awareness days, weeks, campaigns, Celebrations, and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing
- Teacher/specialist lead group or class activities
- Students lead sessions
- Transition Support for students and parents and relevant staff
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school for both students and staff.
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems through SEAL topics
- PE/Art/Music/Dance lessons enhance student's overall wellbeing.
- School clinic supports with healthy life style and clinical support
- Healthy meals are provided by the school canteen
- Administrative support for staff concerns

Complaints procedure

If anyone has any concerns or complaints regarding the school wellbeing programme, an appointment can be made by them to speak to the Head of School or they can drop complaints addressing to the Head of School.

We always make sure that the people in our school community are secure, engaged, challenged, and supported to achieve to their very best abilities.

Glossary

1. **PERMA model:**

A positive psychology framework developed by Dr. Martin Seligman, outlining five key elements that support wellbeing:

P – Positive Emotion, E – Engagement, R – Relationships, M – Meaning, and A –

Accomplishment. These pillars help individuals flourish personally, socially, and academically.

2. **Gillick Competent:**

A legal term referring to a child under 16 who is considered mature enough to understand and make informed decisions about their own wellbeing or care, without the need for parental consent. This applies especially in situations involving counselling, health, or safeguarding matters.

3. **Strength based Approach:**

An educational and psychological method that focuses on identifying and building on an individual's existing strengths and capabilities, rather than focusing primarily on problems or deficits. It fosters confidence, motivation, and a sense of purpose.

4. **Digital Wellness:**

The intentional and balanced use of technology to support mental, emotional, and social health. It involves managing screen time, practicing safe and respectful online behavior, and maintaining healthy boundaries in the digital space.

POLICY REVIEW

 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to reflect operational needs, changes in legislation, or updated guidance from the KHDA