



Well-being Policy

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Policy Overview

At Summit International Schools, the well-being of our students, staff, and parents is a fundamental priority. Our well-being policy is designed to create a nurturing and supportive environment that respects the cultural values and diversity of Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). By promoting a culture of mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being, this policy aims to enhance our community's overall health and happiness.

Objectives of the Well-being Policy

The key objectives of this well-being policy are:

Creating a Supportive Environment: We seek to establish an inclusive atmosphere where students, staff, and parents feel supported emotionally, socially, and physically. This includes providing resources and interventions to prevent mental health challenges and promote personal resilience.

Promoting Health Awareness: The policy actively encourages awareness around mental health, emotional regulation, social skills, and physical health through workshops, campaigns, and curriculum-based learning.

Preventing and Addressing Bullying: This policy's core goal is to prevent bullying in all forms (physical, verbal, emotional, and cyber). Through education and transparent reporting systems, we aim to create a zero-tolerance culture for bullying.

Clear Procedures for Support: We have established accessible, confidential, and culturally sensitive procedures for reporting well-being concerns, seeking support, and receiving interventions when needed.

These objectives are framed within the UAE's cultural context, ensuring that all initiatives are culturally appropriate and aligned with local values.

Well-being Framework

Student Well-being

Mental Health Initiatives

Our holistic approach to student well-being addresses their emotional, mental, social, and physical needs. Mental health is promoted through the following specific initiatives:

Mental Health Awareness Campaigns: Age-appropriate mental health campaigns are conducted across different school levels to build a common understanding of emotional health. Campaigns include assemblies, class discussions, and visual displays that emphasize stress management, positive thinking, and emotional expression. They are tailored to respect cultural sensitivities around mental health discussions.

School Counselor Sessions: Students can access individual or group counseling sessions with the school counselor. These confidential sessions provide a safe space for students to express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns. Counselors follow UAE regulations on confidentiality, ensuring that parents or guardians are informed when necessary, particularly for younger students.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): SEL is integrated into classroom teaching, particularly in younger age groups, with lessons focusing on emotional regulation, empathy, conflict resolution, and communication skills. For older students, SEL includes more advanced topics like managing anxiety, peer pressure, and navigating relationships, aligning with developmental needs.

24/7 Access to Support: Students and families are provided with information on hotlines and online platforms offering mental health support outside school hours. These resources are vetted to ensure they provide culturally appropriate and ethical support.

Regular Well-being Check-ins: The school's well-being team conducts regular check-ins for at-risk students or those identified as needing extra emotional support. These check-ins ensure that students receive timely interventions and that parents are involved where appropriate.

Peer Support Programs: Peer-led groups, such as "Friendship Groups" or student mentorship programs, offer additional support for students, helping them build connections and reduce feelings of isolation. Older students act as mentors to younger students, providing guidance and promoting inclusion.

Physical Health Initiatives

The physical well-being of students is just as important as their mental health. Our initiatives are designed to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle:

Daily Physical Activity: Physical education classes are scheduled daily for younger students and at least twice weekly for secondary students. In addition to PE, students are encouraged to participate in sports clubs, morning exercises, or movement breaks throughout the school day.

Nutrition Education: The school cafeteria provides healthy meal options, and regular nutrition workshops are held during assemblies. The school clinic works closely with the cafeteria to ensure that meals are balanced and nutritious, reflecting the dietary habits of the UAE. Students are also educated on making healthy food choices.

Health Assessments: The school conducts routine BMI checks and health assessments to monitor students' physical development. The school clinic conducts these assessments in a way that maintains student privacy and dignity. Any concerns about a child's health are communicated to parents in a confidential manner, and appropriate steps are taken to support the child's well-being.

Staff Well-being

Support Systems

Regular Workshops and Seminars: Staff well-being is promoted through quarterly workshops focusing on stress management, work-life balance, and strategies for emotional self-care. These workshops equip staff with practical tools to manage their workload and personal life stressors.

Access to Counseling: The school provides counseling services for staff, which can be accessed confidentially. Staff members are encouraged to speak with the school counselor if they need emotional or mental health support. The counselor also provides referrals to external mental health professionals when necessary.

Professional Development for Mental Health: Staff are given opportunities to engage in professional development focusing on mental health and resilience. This includes training on supporting students with mental health challenges and fostering positive mental health in their classrooms.

Well-being Days: Staff members are allowed to take "Well-being Days" if they need time to address personal mental health needs. The school counselor approves these days, which are designed to prevent burnout and promote work-life balance.

Parent and Guardian Well-being

Support Systems

Well-being Webinars: Parents are invited to attend webinars on topics related to their children's well-being, such as managing anxiety, supporting academic development, and fostering resilience in the home. These webinars are scheduled monthly and are designed to provide parents with expert advice.

Parent Support Workshops: Regular workshops are conducted to offer parents practical strategies to support their children's emotional and social needs. These workshops also provide a space for parents to share concerns, ask questions, and seek guidance from the school counselor.

Open-Door Policy: The school operates an open-door policy. The policy allows parents to meet with the school counselor or Well-Being Officer if they have concerns about

their child's well-being. These confidential meetings create a strong partnership between the school and families.

Access to External Resources: For parents requiring additional support, the school offers guidance on accessing external mental health or medical resources, ensuring that these providers are culturally sensitive and relevant to the local context.

Bullying Prevention and Response

Summit International Schools is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where bullying is not tolerated.

Education and Awareness

The school implements a continuous education strategy to prevent bullying. This includes:

Annual Anti-Bullying Campaigns: These campaigns raise awareness about the different forms of bullying and the impact it has on individuals. Students participate in discussions, role-plays, and workshops that teach empathy, bystander intervention, and conflict resolution.

Teacher Training: Teachers receive training on identifying and addressing bullying behaviors. This training is refreshed annually to ensure that staff can handle incidents effectively.

Reporting Procedures

The school has clear, accessible procedures for reporting bullying. Students can report incidents directly to a trusted staff member or through an anonymous reporting system. The school's well-being team takes all reports seriously and investigates them promptly. Staff are required to document all reports of bullying and follow up with all involved parties to ensure the issue is resolved.

Investigations and Resolutions

The Well-Being Officer investigates all bullying reports in collaboration with the school counselor. The process involves speaking with the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process, and actions are taken to support the victim and correct the perpetrator's behavior. Parents are informed of incidents involving their child, and a plan is developed to prevent further bullying.

Crisis Management Procedures

Immediate Response:

The safety of students and staff is the top priority in a crisis. The school's crisis management team (including Senior Leadership, the school counselor, and designated staff members) is activated to ensure emergency protocols are followed.

Post-Crisis Support:

After the immediate crisis is resolved, counseling is provided for those affected. This may include individual or group counseling sessions and debriefing meetings with staff. Post-crisis reviews are held to evaluate the school's response and to make improvements for future crises.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

Well-being Committee: Composed of staff, students, parents, and leadership, the Well-being Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, reviewing its effectiveness, and making recommendations for improvement. The committee meets quarterly to review feedback from the school community.

Well-Being Officer (School Counselor): The Well-Being Officer is the primary contact for all well-being concerns. They manage counseling services, support staff, and students and liaise with external providers.

Cultural Sensitivity in Policy Implementation

Summit International Schools recognizes the importance of respecting cultural values, traditions, and sensitivities. This policy has been developed in alignment with the cultural context of Abu Dhabi and the UAE. All well-being initiatives are delivered with cultural sensitivity, ensuring that practices align with local customs and norms.

Conclusion

Summit International Schools is dedicated to the well-being of its community. Through the collaborative efforts of students, staff, and parents, we aim to create a supportive, inclusive, and resilient environment where everyone thrives.