



The Apple International School, Dubai



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# APPLE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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**ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26**

“A HEALTHY OUTSIDE STARTS FROM INSIDE”

# GUIDING PARAMETER

The Apple International school's Vision and Mission statement reflect the school's commitment to well-being. The school endeavors to create a learning environment that is committed to being creative, emotionally intelligent, and empathetic life-long learners and global citizens.

The Apple International School is a dedicated member of society and works towards achieving the vision outlined by the leaders of Dubai. The focus on happiness and well-being is supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who indicates that:

"We will seek to create a society where our people's happiness is paramount, by sustaining an environment in which they can truly flourish."

## AIS VISION-

Aspiring for our students to be creative, emotionally intelligent, and empathetic life-long learners and global citizens.

## AIS MISSION-

We empower our students to be self-aware and grounded individuals who contribute positively to a happy, inclusive, and caring community. We aim for the students to be 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners who can proactively create opportunities for themselves and others in a versatile global setting.

### Definition of mental health and wellbeing

The World Health Organization's definition of mental health and wellbeing

"a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her potential can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to her or his community".

Mental health and well-being are not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

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

## **AIS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

At Apple International School we are committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school, we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable, and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

### **This policy aims-:**

- ✚ To continue to make the health, safety, and wellbeing of all staff, students, and families our top priority.
- ✚ To create an approach that is based on KHDA's wellbeing agenda for schools.
- ✚ To reassure and provide comfort during these difficult times.
- ✚ To create an enthusiastic and engaged learning community.
- ✚ To design teaching and learning that is personalized, creative, challenging, and fun.
- ✚ To develop skills to enable students to make the right choices.
- ✚ To create a sense of mutual respect, care, and responsibilities shown for ✚ everyone in school.

### **AIS promotes a mentally healthy environment through-**

- ✚ Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging through morning assemblies, club activities, Breaktime activities, etc.
- ✚ Celebrating every day of the week as a special day.
- ✚ Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- ✚ Providing students with options in curriculum and supporting them with curriculum modifications.
- ✚ Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.

- ✚ Providing students with a flexible homework policy to support their learning. ✚ Supporting students with personalized learning plans, differentiated activities, and lessons.
- ✚ Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- ✚ Providing opportunities to reflect.
- ✚ Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

### **At AIS we all work together to**

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'.
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

### **Mental Health Awareness**

The skills, knowledge, and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The inclusion department conducts well-being week activities throughout the year to ensure that we make students and staff aware of mental health and emotional well-being issues safely and sensitively.

### **Identifying needs and Warning Signs**

The staff will raise the flag proactively if they identify any of the following from a range of possible difficulties:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships

- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing a mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and a safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing leads as appropriate.

#### Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits.
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

#### Supporting Parents

- ✚ Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- ✚ Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- ✚ Ensure that all parents are aware of whom to talk to, and how to get about this if they have concerns about their child.
- ✚ Make our emotional well-being and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.

- ✚ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through school magazines.
  - ✚ Subject focus meetings – Coffee mornings with Principal and Parent-Teacher Meetings.
  - ✚ Regular communication and involvement regarding student progress, behaviour, and pastoral issues.
  - ✚ Parent workshops
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### Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and well-being including:

- ✚ Al Jalila foundation
- ✚ Educational psychologists
- ✚ Behavior support through partnership with Al Fasht Center
- ✚ Therapists

### Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training in recognizing and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our CPD

### Wellbeing Measures during COVID 19 Pandemic:

#### Communication:

Guidance on communicating with parents and students (in case of COVID19 incident)

Transparency is of utmost importance in tackling COVID-19. AIS clinic sends a form asking for the details. Communication with parents, who are extremely anxious about sending their children to school. The school admin team informs parents of the COVID-19 incident management process in addition to all safety measures that have been implemented at school by the DHA/KHDA/MOE communication mandates. (Wellbeing and Safeguarding Guidelines)

For parents of Students of Determination, communication is more frequent and on a need basis. The SENCO takes responsibility for any additional communication from the school to the parents of Students of Determination.

### Communication with Students:

- ✦ Setting expectations regarding the new school year/conditions, developing a culture that prevents COVID-19 (e.g., social distancing; wearing masks; sanitizing, etc.)
- ✦ The school will communicate with students prior to their return to campus to set expectations concerning what a school day with social distancing will look like, what the general weekly schedule might be, and most of all, to reassure students that returning to campus is safe and to their benefit.
- ✦ Prior to school reopening, for the new academic year, the section head posts a series of Back-to-school posters/messages on TEAMS to focus on the NEW Normal, keeping safe, socializing, innovative ideas to study and learn, and focusing on online classes.
- ✦ Posters shared by DHA / MOE are posted across the school.

### Counselling

- ✦ Supporting Students and Staff Cope with Anxiety/Trauma
- ✦ Identified students will receive individual counselling sessions with the school counsellor.
- ✦ Staff and students returning to school may have experienced effects related to confinement, social isolation, loss, and bereavement amongst many other things.
- ✦ Counsellors will support the school community (students and staff) with appropriate resources to cope with mental health issues.

### Staff Wellbeing

- ✦ Staff members are encouraged to seek interventions focused on tackling their mental and physical health.
- ✦ Well-being activities conducted for staff during INSET(in-service training) programs ✦ Almost all staff at AIS have been vaccinated as per the MOE/KHDA protocol.
- ✦ Regular training sessions to help teachers develop their IT skills are provided to build on their confidence in delivering lessons as per the new normal.
- ✦ All staff are well supported by the well-being team whenever they face any personal situation, such as an infection in the family or the loss of a loved one. Confidentiality is always maintained.
- ✦ AIS staff take part in the Dubai School Adult Wellbeing Census.

### Monitoring & Review:

- The Wellbeing Team and Principal are committed to reviewing the impact of the Health and Wellbeing policy as part of the school's strategic direction and improvement plans.
- This policy should be used in conjunction with other policies.
- Staff and student questionnaires and surveys provide an opportunity to improve practice and monitor outcomes throughout the year.

Dr Jinto Sebastian

Principal

The Apple International School, Dubai

Reviewed Annually

Last date of Review: June 2025



