

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

To create a school that unlocks the  
potential of every child

إنشاء مدرسة قادرة على إطلاق العنان  
إلى إمكانات كل طفل

Approved/reviewed by	
Assistant Head of Pastoral	
Date of review	August 2024
Date of next review	August 2025

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulation

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## **RATIONALE:**

At Safa British School, the mental health of our students, families, and staff is central to our decision-making. This policy aims to embed our commitment to promoting and monitoring wellbeing within

our culture and provides a clear approach to support children and staff during challenging times. We believe everyone has the right to feel safe, and no concern is too small to discuss with a trusted adult in our support network.

We aim to create an environment that:

- Promotes positive mental health in all staff and students.
- Increases understanding and awareness of common mental health related challenges.
- Provides support and training to staff enabling them to offer support to individuals mental health challenges.
- Creates an atmosphere where our emotional well-being is valued and respected.
- Feels safe to express any worries and concerns that we may have (using pulse when needed).

## **DEFINING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLEBING:**

Wellbeing and mental health are interconnected concepts critical to an individual's overall health.

Wellbeing encompasses a holistic view of health, including physical, emotional, and social aspects, reflecting a state of contentment, purpose, and positive functioning in daily life. It is characterized by factors such as life satisfaction, a sense of meaning, good relationships, and the ability to manage stress effectively.

Mental health, a component of wellbeing, specifically refers to the state of an individual's psychological and emotional functioning. It includes the ability to process thoughts and emotions, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to the community. Good mental health is marked by emotional stability, resilience, and the capacity for personal growth and self-acceptance. Poor mental health, on the other hand, can lead to mental illnesses, which are conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior, often requiring professional intervention and support.

## **TEACHING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH:**

Our well-being curriculum, ACHIEVES, has a sustained focus on managing mental health. Our curriculum offers students an opportunity to explore and discover various elements of emotional, social and physical wellbeing. It highlights healthy self-regulation, resilience and communication as core foundational skills in developing a well-rounded healthy individual.

Wellbeing check in time is embedded in our timetable every Monday during Form Time. Form Tutors are assigned in Secondary to allow for a trusted adult to be easily and regularly accessible for the students. The Pastoral team uses the Pulse data to monitor student experience and follow up on

wellbeing check ins when relevant. Although the wellbeing check in is once a week, students can reach out for help in person or online at any time.

Student led Peer Mentorship programs work under the supervision of the counsellor to offer student voice and peer to peer learning about maintaining one's own mental health. Peer mentors offer weekly wellbeing sessions to build relationships with the student community and high specific skills of coping and self-management.

### **SIGNPOSTING:**

Signposting about mental health and well-being in schools is crucial for fostering a supportive environment. It involves clearly directing students to available resources, such as counseling services, Pastoral team and Peer mentors. Informative posters, assemblies, and workshops help raise awareness and reduce stigma. Ensuring that information is accessible, visible, and regularly updated empowers students to seek help when needed, promoting a culture of openness and resilience. Effective signposting helps create a safe, inclusive space where mental health is prioritized and supported.

- Pastoral team wall: Images and contact information of Pastoral team members that students can approach
- Peer Mentors Image in every classroom to help students identify peer support.
- Information board outside the counsellor's office with information sheets created collaboratively by peer mentors and school counsellor.
- Mental health protocol process in every classroom (Appendix A)

### **IDENTIFYING VULNERABLE STUDENTS:**

Vulnerable students are usually identified through parental concerns, reports or teacher observation.

Identified students are categories using the PERMAH elements of wellbeing (Appendix B)

- Additional educational needs (SEN students)
- Gifted and talented (G and T)
- Neurodiverse (Autism /ADHD)
- Students who have challenging home environments
- Students whose families are struggling with high stress or severe crisis
- Students observed to have significant changes in regular emotional and behavioural patterns

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF DIAGNOSIS:

All students have varied levels of learning and emotional capacity. Similarly, the level of challenges the students face differs. Some students struggle with elements of behaviour and learning and benefit from additional skills and support. Others have challenges that lie outside the range of typicality which require altered and varied interventions to match their strengths. The second pool of students often fall under a specific neurological or mental health diagnosis.

A diagnosis does not imply a student's inability. It mainly offers targeted challenge areas that allow for strength-based interventions to be tailored to build efficiency in learning and behaviour practices.

A formal diagnosis also allows for eligibility of additional support strategies that include:

- Extra time in assessments
- Language exemption
- Scribe or Reader
- Separate room

## SUPPORT IN SCHOOL:

The school has a multifaceted support system that allows for different scope of help based on student needs.

- *Peer Mentors* are selected students trained and monitored by the school counsellor accessible for peer-to-peer support.
- *Form tutors* are primary teachers responsible for the class.
- *Pastoral team* includes Heads of Year, Heads of Key stage and Assistant Head Teacher
- *School counsellor* is identified mental health professional available for wellbeing support.

Students can approach any teacher they feel comfortable with opening to.

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT IN SCHOOL:

## DEFINITION

Counselling is the process of building awareness and learning coping strategies to build efficiency in maintaining social and emotional wellbeing. This can be offered in a one-to-one or group format. The process involves reflective discussions and activities targeted at specific goals identified for the betterment of the unique individual.

The goals are determined based on concerns as identified by the student themselves, teachers or parents.

How is counselling beneficial:

- Improved communication and interpersonal skills.
- Greater self-acceptance and self-esteem.
- Ability to change self-defeating behaviors/habits.
- Better expression and management of emotions
- Efficient management of life stressors

## ROLE OF THE COUNSELLOR:

- Offer tailored support strategies to students in individual or group set up.
- Create assemblies that build skills and support the development of healthy strategies of coping with stress, emotional regulation and strong sense of self.
- Collaborate with the school community to create support structures for maximised experience of student not only in class but in school in general.
- Offer parental guidance and support to help cope with specific challenges.
- General Parental information session with topics that offer insight into child development and maintaining healthy communication styles.
- Teacher professional development to build awareness on mindful classroom practices that are cohesive and inclusive for all students in the class.
- Working with Peer mentors to offer support to larger school community through monitored engagements, wellbeing initiatives and

## **COUNSELLING PROCESS:**

The student and counsellor discuss specific goals/ targets to be addressed during their time together.

The discussion is often a balance between reflection on the individual's emotional experience and identifying comprehensive strategies to support shift to effective coping and management of self. These strategies are drawn from behaviour therapy and psychotherapeutic interventions based on what is most relevant to the individual.

The individual is often given reflective homework and invited to try the strategies and share feedback on how it worked for them. Based on this feedback these strategies are either reinforced or altered.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS:**

### Students:

Students can reach out to the counsellor independently with their struggles and challenges. Based on the severity of the issue, the counsellor will reach out to parents and/or relevant teachers.

### Parents:

If parents have observed any cause for concern, they are welcome to reach out to the counsellor and or form tutor. Following this, the counsellor will check in with the student and give feedback as needed.

### Teachers:

If teachers have observed a significant shift in student behaviour and level of class engagement, they will highlight these students to the counsellor through the referral form. The counsellor will follow up with student check-in and devise an intervention plan as required.

Some students drop in on a need basis where they seek out support during times that they need it.

Other students are offered fixed time slots for weekly sessions (6 to 10 weeks). These slots are often non-curricular periods; however, they can be during curriculum hours based on level of urgency and need for support. A discussion is facilitated at the end of the block of session to reflect on goals, progress and plan. The process is highlighted on Appendix C

## **CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY:**

For a young person to be eligible to receive counselling, s/he must understand the nature of counselling and be able to make a valid verbal counselling contract, including the ability to understand the principle of confidentiality and the need for this to be overridden where there is a risk of harm. For secondary students, consent to attend counselling may be given by the student without the

parent/carer's involvement. If student concerns are repetitive and persistent, parents will be informed to expand the support plan to include home as well as school

The Counsellor has a clear discussion with the students stating the boundaries of confidentiality. The counsellor is entitled to share information with parent/ senior leadership in case of:

- Disclosure of self-harm
- Disclosure of harm to other
- Sharing safeguarding concerns from home or school environment
- Information that may cause detrimental effect to child's development and experience of a healthy life

Disclosures are managed according to Child safeguarding policy involving relevant members of the safeguarding committee.

The process is highlighted in Appendix D

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The school counsellor keeps up to date with emerging trends of vulnerabilities and challenges with the relevant populations. There is a consistent scope of professional upskilling through workshops, seminars and courses.

The teachers are equipped with relevant language and strategies to support emotionally vulnerable children in the classroom environment. They are constant conversation and reflection of variations and amendments to incorporate needs of children within reason when they may be going through highly stressful complications in their life. The pastoral team is formally trained in Mental Health First Aid, through the Lighthouse Arabia wellness center.

Parents are encouraged to explore the strategies shared with children through regular workshops to offer consistent reinforcement to students. These workshops include in-house presentations by the school counsellor and presentations by external professionals.



## APPENDIX A: Mental health protocol

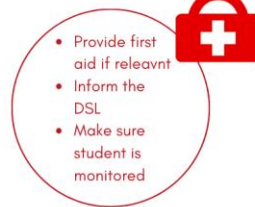


### 1. Concern Identified

Young person shared about a mental health concern about themselves or a peer

### 2. Is there evidence of immediate danger?

Has the Young person in high risk of, attempted to harm or has harmed themselves or another individual.



### 3. Initial action

- Be calm, supportive and non judgmental
- Speak to the young person in a private and quiet setting
- Explain confidentiality protocol
- Actively listen to their experience and do not jump to offering solution
- Check to clarify and make notes documents their words to get accurate information

### 4. Passing on Information

- If doubtful regarding young persons safety - approach DSL
- Document on CPOMS. Make sure give clear account of summary of events

### 5. Mental Health First Aiders

Counsellor or Pastoral Leadership will be able to offer support.

## APPENDIX B: PERMAH wellbeing elements



**POSITIVE  
EMOTION**

the right balance of heartfelt positivity to boost our resilience



**ENGAGEMENT**

the regular development of our strengths – those things we're good at and enjoy doing



**RELATIONSHIPS**

the creation of authentic, energizing connections



**MEANING**

a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves



**ACCOMPLISHMENT**

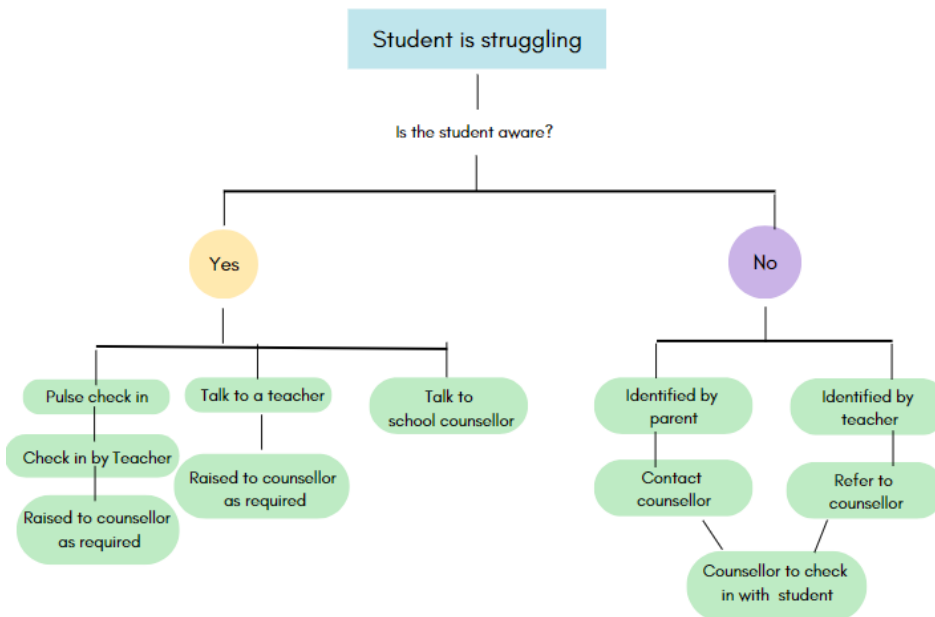
the belief and ability to do the things that matter most to us



**HEALTH**

eating well, moving regularly, sleeping deeply

**APPENDIX C: Support Flow chart**



**APPENDIX D: Disclosure Flow Chart**

