

Wellbeing Policy

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Introduction

In line with the UAE National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031 at the Australian International School Dubai, student wellbeing underpins every aspect of a student's schooling, from their ability to learn in class, to their ability to build positive relationships. Wellbeing is the foundation of the school experience and is just as important as academic learning.

This policy is written in line with The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework 2022. This Framework:

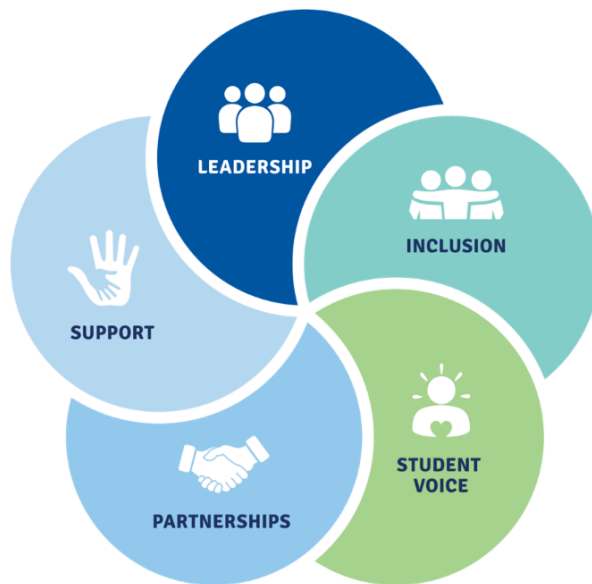
- Affirms children's rights to education, safety and wellbeing under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Is informed by relevant Australian National, State and Territory policies, initiatives and legislative frameworks.
- Aligns to the Australian Curriculum, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.
- Emphasises the importance of students having authentic opportunities to contribute their voices to decision-making over matters that affect them.
- Focuses on all students and their families, including those from vulnerable groups.

This policy provides an overview of student and staff wellbeing – what it is and why it matters. It looks at how student wellbeing programs and mental health education in schools can be used to build more resilient learning communities.

Vision and Mission Statement

Our vision at the Australian International School Dubai is to create a community of learners who feel happy, safe and welcomed in their learning environment. Our mission is driven by the Wellbeing Matters Guiding Framework (KHDA, 2022) which focuses on the advancement of wellbeing across Dubai's private schools. We aim to provide a stimulating learning environment across the whole curriculum which maximises individual potential, promotes wellbeing and ensures that students are well equipped to meet the challenges of education, work and life.

In line with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework it is our vision to promote student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships.



(Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, 2020, Australian Government Department of Education)

School Values

Driven by our school values (created by the students and teachers), we aim to ensure all students feel a sense of belonging to their school and wider community, developing the skills for lifelong wellbeing. These five school values will subsequently guide the implementation and monitoring of our school's wellbeing agenda.

- **Courtesy:** As a whole school we encourage students to show courtesy to one another at all times. Courtesy within our school community entails respecting the personal space of others, standing for the National Anthem, following instructions and listening actively to one another.
- **Citizenship:** As a whole school we encourage students to be good citizens towards one another. Citizenship within our school community entails being a role model, celebrating diversity and being inclusive, being organised and prepared for learning, and setting personal and learning goals.
- **Care:** Students are supported to develop caring behaviours towards one another to ensure the wellbeing of their peers. By expressing yourself calmly, asking for and offering help, and celebrating the achievements of others we can show care towards our learning community.
- **Courage:** To be honest, persistent and willing to try something new, are all acts of courage at our school. All students' sense of wellbeing is supported when there is a school culture of contributing thoughts and ideas, while also making mistakes and trying something new.
- **Curiosity:** To be a curious AIS Dubai student means to have an open mind, apply strategies to solve problems and acknowledge and build on others' ideas. When we give our best efforts and seek help to work through challenges we are supporting an environment where everyone's well being is valued.

The School House System

Relationships and Partnerships are nourished through the AIS Dubai Schools House System. As a whole school we take pride in our students' achievements and celebrate them through the House System.

A house system is used to encourage pastoral care in students, encourage healthy competition toward success, develop leadership roles and celebrate students' individual and group achievements. Students in each class are grouped into one of the houses. Points can be awarded based on (but are not limited to):

- In class achievements
- Positive behaviour
- Sporting events
- School values

Activities designed to ensure recognition, inclusion and wellbeing of our students at AIS Dubai include:

- Star of the Week
- Celebration of Student Birthdays

Moral Education within School Curriculum

Moral education is a key factor of the school curriculum and has a significant impact on a students' overall development, supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing while fostering moral development. With the integration of moral education into the school curriculum we create a nurturing learning environment that promotes students' moral, social, emotional, and academic growth, preparing them to become responsible and compassionate members of society.

Moral Education is a subject where students engage in discussions, activities, and reflections focused explicitly on moral values, ethics, and character development. These classes can cover topics such as empathy, integrity, respect, responsibility, and justice. These programs can teach skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

At AIS Dubai we incorporate service learning projects into the curriculum where students apply moral principles in real-world contexts. Engaging in community service activities fosters empathy, compassion, and a sense of social responsibility while promoting students' wellbeing through meaningful contributions to society.

Peer Support Programs

At AIS Dubai we have established peer support programs such as the Student Representative Council where students can provide emotional support, mentorship, and encouragement to their peers.

Creating a supportive peer network enhances students' sense of belonging, resilience, and overall wellbeing while promoting a culture of care and compassion within the school community.

Counselling and Mental Health Services

At AIS Dubai we ensure access to counselling and mental health services as part of the wellbeing policy. Provide students with opportunities to seek support, guidance, and resources to address their social, emotional, and mental health needs, fostering a safe and supportive environment for all students to thrive.

Legislation and Guidelines

This policy aims to ensure that the school is compliant with the terms of:

- UAE Federal Law 2 (2015) against Discrimination and Hatred
- The school's admissions policy adheres to the stipulations of the UAE Federal Law No 29 of 2006 concerning the Rights of People of Determination
- The policy supports the goals of the UAE National Programme for Happiness 2016 promoting wellbeing and happiness as a lifestyle in the community
- The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- The UAE School Inspection Framework 2015 (p.75) related to the learning environment supports students' wellbeing

Nurturing Students Wellbeing Across the Curriculum

All students should have the opportunity to develop social and emotional skills across all areas of the curriculum. At AIS Dubai we view every challenge they encounter in their learning as a chance to develop new skills that will help them to thrive and succeed in the future. Through our Moral Education Subject and Health and Physical Education Subject, students have the opportunity to develop a local and global understanding of ethics, building community, building character and respecting diversity.

Stakeholders

Students

The Australian International School Dubai aims to develop our students' protective and proactive factors to build resilience and responsiveness to wellbeing challenges. We are a school where:

- All students are valued and develop agency in their learning and development.
- Students feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their challenges without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing is promoted and valued.
- A safe, secure, supportive and stimulating environment is provided that is responsive to the personal, social and emotional needs of all members of the school community.
- Co-operation, respect, and consideration for and between all members of the school community is promoted.
- Students and staff have a positive sense of self-esteem, confidence and independence of thought.
- Resilience and coping strategies are actively taught.
- Positive relationships are a cornerstone of our culture, ensuring students, staff and parents value one another and respect the views of other members of their community.
- Bullying is not tolerated.
- Communication between all parties is transparent, timely and dialogic.

Staff

All staff at the Australian International School Dubai have a responsibility to promote wellbeing, and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health.

Targeted Wellbeing lessons are built into the day, with the focus being embedded in all classroom lessons. When students require additional help, staff have the skills to observe for early warning signs and know the procedures to refer for early intervention and the support to their Head of School and The Wellbeing Team.

The Wellbeing 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. (i.e Mindfulness Mondays and Wellbeing Wednesdays)
- Provide advice and support to staff on behaviour management strategies
- Track student's social, emotional and personal development; making referrals as required (I.e. Skodel Survey Student Check-in twice a week term)
- Ensure that all students have an avenue for support when they need to talk about their academic and wellbeing challenges

Parents

Our teachers, students and their parents should feel that they are equally working together on something that is important – a child's learning and wellbeing. This partnership must be strong, focused, and positive, to support student learning. Parents and teachers regularly communicate and

collaborate regarding the goals that the student has set. It is essential that the parent and teacher discuss, plan, and support each other in improving learning outcomes for the student.

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.

Within AIS Dubai we offer a volunteer program 'Friends of AIS Dubai' where parents and community members can actively participate in events or activities to showcase a sense of community both inside and outside of the school setting.

Staff Wellbeing

The social, emotional, and physical health of teachers is a shared responsibility and a critical component of student learning and overall community wellbeing. When teachers feel supported, they are better able to manage the daily stresses of teaching, establish and maintain effective classroom management strategies that are productive for learning, and cultivate supportive and caring relationships with students.

In order to support staff wellbeing, the school commits to regularly:

- Raising awareness amongst all staff about wellbeing matters such as stress, time management, workload, work practices, and how they may affect their wellbeing.
- Introducing initiatives to promote staff wellbeing such as reducing unnecessary workloads, organising social gatherings and events, promote initiatives that support a healthy lifestyle
- Providing a support mechanism for staff facing wellbeing issues and creating an ethos that makes staff comfortable to share their concerns.
- Promoting opportunities for peer mentoring amongst staff, especially for new employees during their probation period.

Leadership Commitment

School leaders at AIS Dubai have a firm commitment to developing and supporting wellbeing across the school community and include robust planning each year in order to ensure that our learning environment fosters all dimensions of wellbeing to make our learners, staff and parents feel safe, valued, respected, and engaged. Wellbeing is an important component of school strategic plans, professional learning and the vision of the school.