
MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

1.0 Objectives

The objective of this document is to describe the GIIS approach towards positive mental health

2.0 Scope

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and administrative staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the Inclusion policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

3.0 Policies

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (World Health Organization)

At GIIS, Dubai, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using specialized, targeted approaches aimed at students in need.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students and parents.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues. Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students with mental health concerns and their peers and parents or care-giver.

Lead Members of Safety and Wellbeing

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

1. Ms. Anita Singh - Principal
2. Ms. Reshmi Raj - SENCO
3. Ms. Sneha Samel - Guidance Counselor, Child protection and Safety Officer
4. Dr. Ishwarya - School Doctor - First Aid Lead
5. Mr. Vishnu Nambiar - Health and Safety Officer

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health of a student should speak to the Guidance Counselor in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer, the Principal or the designated Supervisor. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Wellbeing Pro-Edge curriculum.

As an ongoing process of implementing Mental Health from the grassroot level, 20 minute Wellbeing Activities for better mental health are incorporated every morning at the beginning of each day as CONNECT TIME ACTIVITIES.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the students we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Creating Awareness

To ensure that all stakeholders are well aware of sources of support within school and outside.

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Possible Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional issues. These warning signs should be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Designated Mental Health Lead.

In case of any student who requires attention and support the Medical team and Counselor apprise the educators and caregivers about the concerns of the student for maximum support.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increase isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn. Changes in activity and mood

- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing Disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgmental.

Staff should listen rather than give advice and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made. Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Designated Mental Health Lead who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Parents must always be informed if a student may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children. Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Wellbeing ProEdge classes and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a student is facing a mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends as well. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings

Training to staff

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

The staff members, including the Teachers, Nannies, Administration staff and Security are updated about the Child protection and Mental Health Policy

The Mental Health Policy will be in line with the Inclusion Policy and the Child Protection and safeguarding policy of the school.

[Back to Index](#)