



POLICY TITLE:	Staff Mental Health
DEPARTMENT:	Academics

Policy Contact: School Counselor	Issue Date: 24/03/2024
School: Al Ain Juniors School	Revision Date: 28/06/2027
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Purpose

The purpose of this Student Mental Health Policy is to create a supportive and nurturing environment at Al Ain Juniors School that fosters the emotional and psychological well-being of all students. This policy, aligned with the **School Policy on Student Mental Health** issued by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), aims to provide a framework for addressing and supporting the mental health needs of students. As a K-12/FS2 to Year 13 institution affiliated with both the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Cambridge International Examinations, Al Ain Juniors School recognizes the importance of mental health in the overall development and success of its students.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Al Ain Juniors School, from Kindergarten to Grade 12/FS2 to Year 13, and encompasses mental health education, early intervention strategies, access to support services, and a school-wide commitment to reducing stigma related to mental health issues.

Objectives:

- To ensure that all students have access to appropriate mental health education, resources, and support.
- To promote an environment where mental health is treated with the same importance as physical health.
- To identify and address mental health concerns early, providing students with the appropriate interventions and support systems.
- To reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges and encourage open communication about mental well-being.
- To enhance the resilience, coping skills, and emotional intelligence of students, helping them manage stress and life challenges.
- To provide clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents, and the wider school community in supporting student mental health.



Mental Health Education:

Curriculum Integration:

Mental health education will be integrated into the curriculum across all grade levels, where age-appropriate content will be provided. This will include topics on emotional well-being, self-awareness, stress management, coping strategies, and the importance of seeking help when needed. The curriculum will also promote skills related to empathy, resilience, emotional regulation, and social relationships.

Mental Health Awareness Programs:

The school will conduct regular awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars on mental health topics for students, staff, and parents. These programs will focus on increasing understanding of mental health issues, promoting positive mental health, and teaching students how to recognize signs of distress in themselves and others.

Early Identification and Intervention:

Signs and Symptoms:

Teachers and staff will be trained to identify early signs of mental health issues, such as changes in behavior, mood, academic performance, or social interactions. These may include withdrawal, anxiety, depression, sudden changes in academic achievement, or substance abuse.

Referral Process:

When mental health concerns are identified, teachers, staff, or parents may refer the student to the school counselor or mental health professional. Referrals will be handled promptly and sensitively, ensuring the student receives the necessary support in a timely manner.

Individual Support Plans:

For students exhibiting ongoing mental health challenges, an individual support plan will be developed in collaboration with parents, teachers, and mental health professionals. This plan may include counseling, accommodations in the classroom, and strategies for managing mental health concerns.

Mental Health Support Services:

School Counseling Team:

The school will maintain a team of qualified counselors and mental health professionals who are available to support students. These professionals will provide one-on-one counseling, group counseling, and run workshops on mental health topics. Students can seek support confidentially, ensuring a safe space for discussing their concerns.



Parental Involvement:

Parents will be informed of any mental health concerns or interventions that involve their child. The school will work in partnership with parents to ensure that support is extended at home as well as at school. Parent workshops will also be organized to help them understand and support their children's mental health needs.

Peer Support Programs:

Al Ain Juniors School will implement peer support programs where older students can act as mentors or peer supporters for younger students. These programs will help reduce feelings of isolation and provide students with the opportunity to discuss their mental health in a supportive, peer-driven environment.

Reducing Stigma and Promoting a Positive Environment:

Promoting Mental Health Awareness:

The school will actively work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues by promoting open discussions, normalizing mental health challenges, and encouraging students to seek help when needed.

Safe and Inclusive Environment:

The school will create a safe, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment where students feel comfortable expressing their mental health concerns. This includes addressing any form of bullying, discrimination, or harassment that may impact a student's mental well-being.

Cultural Sensitivity:

The school will ensure that mental health support and education are culturally sensitive and consider the diverse backgrounds and needs of all students, respecting cultural differences in the perception and understanding of mental health.

Promoting Resilience and Well-being:

Well-being Initiatives:

The school will offer programs and activities that promote overall well-being, including mindfulness practices, physical fitness programs, art and music therapy, and stress management workshops. These activities will provide students with tools to build resilience and emotional strength.

Coping Strategies and Life Skills:

The school will teach students valuable life skills, such as time management, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving, to help them manage stress and navigate challenges in a healthy manner.



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Confidentiality and Privacy:

Confidentiality of Mental Health Information:

The school will maintain the confidentiality of any mental health concerns or records, with information being shared only with relevant staff or professionals as required. Students and parents will be informed about the confidentiality policy and the process for accessing mental health support services.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Students:

Students are encouraged to take an active role in their mental well-being by seeking help when needed, participating in mental health programs, and supporting their peers in maintaining a positive mental environment.

Staff:

All school staff, including teachers, administrators, and counselors, are responsible for maintaining a positive mental health environment. Staff members are expected to support students by being aware of mental health issues, referring students to appropriate professionals when necessary, and promoting a culture of respect and empathy.

Parents:

Parents are encouraged to collaborate with the school in supporting their child's mental health. The school will regularly communicate with parents regarding mental health resources, signs of distress, and ways they can help their children manage stress and emotions.

Mental Health Crisis Management:

Crisis Intervention:

In the event of a mental health crisis, the school will have clear procedures in place for immediate intervention. This may include contacting emergency services or external mental health agencies, ensuring that the student receives the care and support needed without delay.

Post-Crisis Support:

After a crisis, the school will provide continued support for the student, including counseling, adjustments to their academic schedule, and regular check-ins to monitor their recovery and well-being.



Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:

Monitoring and Feedback:

The school will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its mental health programs and support services through student and parent feedback, surveys, and meetings with mental health professionals. This information will be used to improve services and make adjustments as necessary.

Annual Review:

The Student Mental Health Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with best practices, ADEK guidelines, and the evolving needs of the student population.

Version no.	Description of change	Owner	Date of Issue
1.0	Adoption of Policy	Principal	24.3.2024
2.0	Significant changes to align more closely ADEK School Policy On Student Mental Health	School Counsellor	24.6.2024
3.0	Review	School Counsellor	8.3.2025