

YAA Well-Being & Mental Health Policy

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

1.0 POLICY OVERVIEW

At Yas American Academy, we recognize our responsibility to promote the health, wellbeing, and happiness of every student, staff member, and family within our community. In line with ADEK Policy 70 – Promoting Student Wellbeing and Protection, and the wider goals of the UAE Centennial 2071 and ‘We are the UAE 2031’ in the national strategy for well-being 2031, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment that supports the mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing of all.

This policy reflects our support for the UAE’s goal of building a cohesive society and preserving national identity. We place wellbeing at the heart of school life and prioritize it across all academic and pastoral systems. Our commitment is grounded in the national vision, guided by the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who stated: “We will seek to create a society where our people’s happiness is paramount, by sustaining an environment in which they can truly flourish.”

Yas American Academy’s wellbeing approach is embedded across the school and guided by the following principles:

- A whole-school approach where wellbeing is everyone's responsibility, including school leadership, staff, students, and families.
- Early identification and targeted intervention through preventive programs, regular screening, and timely referral to internal or external support services.
- Use of restorative practices and promotion of student voice to support respectful relationships and positive behavior.
- Access to qualified pastoral leaders, a school counselor, and a social worker who provide individualized support and maintain confidentiality in line with safeguarding requirements.
- Ongoing staff training to build capacity in recognizing signs of distress, mental health concerns, and how to take appropriate action.
- Active engagement with families and community organizations to strengthen the support network available to each student.

We align our wellbeing provision with the ADEK National Identity and Wellbeing Framework, embedding UAE values, Islamic principles, and inclusive practices across the curriculum and daily routines. We ensure that all practices comply with ADEK and federal laws, including mandatory child protection protocols.

Yas American Academy is committed to nurturing confident, resilient, and emotionally literate learners who are prepared for success in school and in life, as active contributors to the UAE and the wider global community.

2.0 VISION

At Yas American Academy we take the emotional health and wellbeing of our student’s and staff very seriously. Our ethos is a caring one, which develops respect, self- esteem and gives a voice for all. Our school is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all stakeholders and we recognise the importance of wellbeing for both health and academic performance. We promote a supportive and inclusive ethos, which values parental/guardian involvement and contribution. This policy outlines the ways in which we, as a school care for and nurture the emotional wellbeing of our students, parents and staff.

3.0 POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy describes the way we support the emotional needs of all stakeholders at YAA and the importance the school places on the wellbeing and mental health of all members of the YAA community. We aim to develop a community where all stakeholders can flourish, feel safe and welcome and which:

- Promote a positive culture of wellbeing in all staff, students and the community.
- Increase understanding and awareness of positive education.
- Instil a growth mind-set of learning about positive education.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain support from Senior Leadership Team, in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

- Empower parents with tools and strategies around a child's growth and development to create cohesion between school and home practices.

4.0 UNDERSTANDING WELLBEING

The term 'wellbeing' is a multidimensional term that encompasses physical, mental and social health, in addition to emotional intelligence, positive relationships with peers and accomplishments. We understand that high levels of wellbeing cannot be sustained every single day, but our aim is to be able to equip our students with the skills to navigate through the challenges that society and life may bring. With these taught skills, we aim for our students to be able to flourish in all domains of their wellbeing and therefore lives. Research indicates that improved levels of wellbeing improves:

- Student engagement with their learning
- Standards in all subjects
- Effective teaching
- The involvement of Parents and carers in school life and learning
- High self-esteem and confidence
- Behaviour and attendance
- Fewer disengaged students
- Lower rates of persistent absence
- Positive and effective relationships between staff and with student's

5.0 PROMOTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Yas American Academy is committed to ensuring that students are able to access appropriate guidance, advice and support in a timely manner throughout the period of their studies. A comprehensive range of support for students is available on campus, through the following key members of staff;

- Homeroom teachers
- Heads of Grade/Department
- School Counsellor
- Dean of Students
- School Nurse
- Senior Leaders
- Student Council.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

6.0 STUDENT VOICE

The school promotes and strengthens the student voice through :

- A democratic process for the election of School Council representatives
- Regular School Council meetings
- Consulting student's about change and policy development
- Establishing student sub committee's which look at issues such as Anti-Bullying and Wel-Being.

7.0 INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

The school promotes the involvement of parents and carers in the life and learning of the school through:

- Parent meetings
- Having an 'open door policy'
- Parent questionnaires
- Regular consultation about change and development through questionnaires and special meetings
- Subject focus meetings
- PSHE and International themed days
- Tailored Assembly Schedule to give a balanced, informative experience to students.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities
- Regular communication and involvement regarding student progress, behavior and pastoral issues
- Parental workshops

8.0 SUPPORTING PARENTS

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programs run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners

9.0 POSITIVE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

We will follow the guidance issued by ADEK to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. Incorporating this into our PSHE curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Students across certain grades in elementary and all grades in middle and high school will be exposed to informal lessons during homeroom to develop mindfulness and positive psychology. Students will not be assessed in these areas, the sole purpose is to education and support the wellbeing of our student's.

10.0 MINDFULNESS (ELEMENTARY)

- Students in grades 4 and 5 will be exposed to mindfulness practices to learn about emotional control strategies, develop a growth mindset, practice empathy and resilience, and how to forge effective relationships with their peers.

11.0 WELL-BEING HOMEROOM SLOT (MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL)

- Secondary students will be provided with one well-being slot per week with their homeroom teacher to enhance their self-esteem, enjoyment, and acceptance in the Yas American Community. This has been designed to provide teachers with autonomy to provide an environment which is conducive to the learners in their group and individual needs.
- Grade 12 students receive weekly bespoke sessions with the school counsellor to address individual needs and a tailored approach to supporting them during their final year.

12.0 ADEK FRAMEWORKS

- Schools will integrate mandatory frameworks into each project –moral education, student competencies and my identity. This will also be referenced in each project to outline how these have been met.
- In addition to this each project will also be referenced against ADEK inspection framework P2 and P5

13.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND GATHERING DATA

- Quality assurance of each project will be self-reported by the students learning , experiences, skills and knowledge gained throughout
- There are several tools that can be tailored to gather data from projects that measure student engagement, satisfaction and outcomes of learning.
- Surveys will engage with activities in different topics in PSHE related to well-being and mental health.

14.0 INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

When a student has been identified as having cause for concern and has been referred to the Counsellor or Social Worker, this information is shared with the child's teachers and relevant staff when necessary. The development of the Pastoral support plan should involve the student, parents, relevant professionals and where needed will be referred to an external agency on a case-by-case basis.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Relevant information of the student's situation/condition/diagnosis/learning needs
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

Confidentiality Clause

Once a student, staff-member or parent is referred for 1-1 school counselling services, the information there-on is treated with confidentiality, and will be provided to other members of staff on a need to know basis. This includes documentation, diagnosis and other information. The information provided by the school counsellor cannot be included in any formal records, unless required by a court order or subpoenaed. Confidentiality can only be broken in the following instances:

- Risk of Self Harm
- Risk of Harm to Others
- Child Protection situation

15.0 PROMOTING STAFF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The school enhances staff motivation, learning and professional development through :

- Curricular planning time within the school week
- Whole school training events
- Student progress meetings held during the school day
- Involving all staff in decision making and proposed change
- Consultation in training and support needs through regular review
- Induction training and information for new staff
- Provide additional support at times of particular stress, change and/or difficulty
- Have a responsive and listening culture, reacting quickly to problems
- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent
- Regular Wellness Committee events to increase staff morale
- Opportunities to discuss with the Principal or other members of the senior leadership team any issues of worry/concern

16.0 STAFF TRAINING

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising, supporting and promoting emotional health and wellbeing as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

As part of our CPD programme, there are regular opportunities for training on wellbeing and mental health issues.

- Mindfulness – personal stress, working with children, CBT, Selfcare, Happitude,
- Teaching and Learning Pedagogy and delivery wellbeing provisions

17.0 Inclusion and Support for Students of Determination

Yas American Academy is fully committed to inclusive education and ensuring equitable access to wellbeing services for all students, including Students of Determination. Our approach is in line with ADEK Policy 26 and ensures that students with additional needs are supported through individualized plans, multi-disciplinary coordination, and tailored interventions that consider both academic and emotional development. The school works collaboratively with families, counsellors, the social worker, and external agencies to ensure meaningful inclusion.

18.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Wellbeing is a shared responsibility across the whole school community. The Principal and senior leaders ensure that wellbeing remains a strategic priority and is integrated into all school systems. The school counsellor and social worker provide direct support to students and training to staff. Teachers and homeroom staff build daily relationships with students, monitor wellbeing, and flag concerns. Students are encouraged to look out for one another and use their voice constructively, while parents are key partners in reinforcing wellbeing strategies at home.

19.0 Crisis Management and Escalation

In cases where a student experiences a mental health crisis, Yas American Academy follows a clear escalation pathway. Initial concerns are reported to the homeroom teacher or counselor, and if necessary, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In emergency cases involving risk of harm to self or others, the school nurse and senior leaders are alerted, and external emergency services are contacted. All staff are trained in how to respond to crises calmly and effectively, ensuring the student's safety and dignity are maintained.

20.0 Monitoring and Evaluation of Wellbeing

To ensure continued impact and improvement, Yas American Academy monitors wellbeing through regular surveys, staff feedback, behavior and attendance data, and student voice. This data is reviewed each term and used to inform planning, adjust interventions, and update the School Improvement Plan. The Wellbeing Team collaborates with academic leadership to ensure emotional wellbeing is seen as integral to student success.

21.0 Digital Wellbeing and Online Safety

The school promotes digital wellbeing by educating students on healthy screen habits, cyberbullying prevention, and responsible digital behavior. Lessons in homeroom and ICT classes highlight the impact of social media on mental health and provide strategies for self-regulation. Parents are also supported through guidance materials and workshops on monitoring and managing digital use at home. Online safety is embedded across our safeguarding framework.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with ADEK regulations, school stakeholders, and internal data analysis. All updates will reflect the current best practice and UAE law.

Approved by: Principal | Date: August 2025

Next Review Date: August 2026

Signed: S. Griffiths
Principal – Ms. Sarah Griffiths