



# **Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy**

**Reviewed & updated on: September 2023**

## **Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We use the World Health Organization's definition of mental health and wellbeing "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 her or his community".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems but it is when kids are:

- feeling confident about themselves.
- being able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- being able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- coping with the stresses of everyday life.
- managing times of stress and being able to deal with change.
- learning and achieving.

## **Introduction**

At DIPS, we reiterate the importance of both mental and physical wellbeing to our students and staff. We strive to provide quality services for our students and staff in multiple domains, including setting and achieving SMART personal, academic, and professional goals. We make every effort possible to enable the development of healthy, happy, successful, and productive individuals and to ensure their flourishing as well as to promote supportive and inclusive atmosphere in our school community.

## **Purpose of Policy**

This policy addresses the approaches that DIPS takes to care and nurture both physical and emotional wellbeing of all members of the school community.

## **Aims and Objectives**

At DIPS, we aim to establish a healthy and well-informed school community, where students and staff can thrive, connect, and succeed. We intend to develop an enthusiastic learning environment, where students can have the ability and the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute back to their communities.

In addition, we plan to provide students with the necessary support at each stage of their development and learning in an individualized manner that fits the individual's needs and enhance his/her well-being. We operate on senses of mutual respect as well as shared care and responsibility in order to assume a school community development of quality teaching, learning, and engagement at all levels for every member at DIPS.

Our school system is eager to assist students and staff members with access to information, resources, policies, educational services as well as accommodations to create partnerships at the local level, in order to strengthen the collective wellbeing of schools and their communities.

## **Rationale**

We believe that learning occurs more effectively in the context of positive minds and bodies. Feeling mentally and physically safe and healthy contribute to well-being. At DIPS, we intend to provide for safety, and support good health, as well as improve learning experiences for all members in the school by taking the following approaches:

- Attending to students' needs to ensure their engagement in learning and healthy lifestyle
- Making sure the delivery of subjects is aligned with class standards as well as curriculum
- Providing students with choices and opportunities that motivate them
- Parent's involvement in school life and learning
- Promoting achievement opportunities to ensure students' high self-esteem and confidence
- Improving attendance and participation rates
- Creating positive and professional relationships between students and staff

## **Promoting Emotional Wellbeing**

- Promoting students/staff voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Teaching effective skills to help students cope with emotional distress and build resilience using social emotional program SEL
- Conducting group/individual counseling sessions
- Enabling positive, caring, and respectful relationships between school staff, students, and their peers
- Providing personalized learning experiences
- Parental workshops and meetings
- Professional development for staff
- Providing accommodations for students with special educational needs as well as gifted and talented students
- Reinforcing students' learning through reward systems and celebrating their achievements
- Utilizing a range of teaching styles appropriate to students' interests and abilities to increase their motivation for learning
- Access to appropriate support that meets students' needs

## **Promoting Physical Wellbeing**

- Enabling safe, secure, and healthy school environment
- Enhancing school, classroom settings, clinic facilities, and resources
- Facilitating healthy food options at the school canteen
- Engaging students in physical education classes, school trips and extracurricular activities
- Participating in student councils

## **Responsibilities**

At DIPS, all staff of the school community are responsible for supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. School staff, especially teachers, should be aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the head of sections, Inclusion lead or counselors.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Panic attack
- Changes in eating (loss or gain of weight)
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents are responsible for informing the school of any change that happens at home that may affect the wellbeing of their children so school staff and parent will be working together to support the needs of the children.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Superintendent and head of sections are committed to review the impact of this policy as part of school strategic directions and improvement plans.

### **COVID-19 Specific:**

Staff and students may be returning to school having experienced effects related to social isolation, loss and bereavement amongst many other things. Students and staff who are emotionally vulnerable will be referred to counselors for mental health support.

As for students/staff who need intensive mental health support, counselors will refer them to mental health organizations.

Extra support will be given to students of determination as they may be more emotionally vulnerable as a result of the COVID-19 situation.