

Nibras International School

Wellbeing Policy



Approved and Reviewed by:	Principal
Date of review:	August 2023
Date of next review:	August 2024

Rationale and Purpose:

At Nibras International School, we are committed to promoting and supporting the well-being of every individual through creating a whole school ethos in which the whole community (students, staff, and parents) feel secure, know that they are valued and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development and recognize how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is in our lives.

Individuals are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy; therefore, well-being is the responsibility of the whole school community. The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of what Well-being is and the systems and procedures in place to support the Well-being needs of our students and staff.

Mission:

Students develop a sense of themselves, as well as the world around them. By making connections within and between cultures, NIS opens students' hearts and minds so that they embrace challenges and opportunities, share ideas and purpose, and truly influence others to make a positive difference.

Vision:

To empower the next generation of global leaders who can excel anywhere in the world.

Core Values:

NIS believes that each individual has a unique potential to amaze. Our goal is to nurture that potential to ensure our students learn, lead and inspire so that they can become global leaders, making the world a better place.

Our core values are the foundations that enable:

- **Creative Thinkers:** Create dynamic and technology-enabled risk-takers who can innovate and lead their own learning journey.
- **Aspirational and Adaptable Learners:** Consistently challenged by high standards and aspired to strengthen their skills.
- **Reflective Learners:** Become active participants in a lifelong learning process, fostering curiosity, creativity and an ongoing cycle of self-improvement.
- **Effective Communicators:** Empower responsible and respectful citizens to voice their own opinion and express themselves in various situations and mediums.

TORCH Values:

Ignite the TORCH as we strive to be Tolerant, Organized, Respectful, Caring and Honest.

Definition of Learning:

We believe learning is the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills and understanding through a shared journey beyond the classroom. Our diverse learners explore engaging inquiries that empower them to be future innovators who solve global issues with sustainable solutions ignited by the NIS TORCH values.

Policy implementation:

This policy is implemented along with the Safeguarding and the Health and Safety Policies of the school. All stakeholders must adhere to this policy with complete commitment.

Introduction:

Childhood and adolescence are crucial stages of human development. These are the stages where they learn from the different social systems in their surroundings (Leung & Fung, 2021). Their interaction with their environment may lead them to complex stressors and pressures, resulting in depression and isolation when not managed. Since children spend most of their time in school a week, schools must provide an environment that facilitates positive wellbeing (Ednfndr, 2019).

The UAE sets a national strategy for wellbeing 2031 owing to its role in supporting Vision 2021 and UAE Centennial 2071. Among the nine strategic objectives of the national wellbeing agenda for this policy, it is worth considering the following:

1. Cultivate a conducive environment for learning and working
2. Promote digital wellbeing and positive virtual communities
3. Promote the adoption of a healthy and active lifestyle
4. Nurture and sustain good mental wellbeing
5. Inspire positive thinking as a core life value
6. Develop good life skills

Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles set the tone for promoting a culture of wellbeing at school.

- Students' wellbeing is essential to learning, and learning influences wellbeing.
- The school environment honors fairness, respect, dignity, and support individuals' rights and fundamental freedom through its TORCH values of being Tolerant, Organized, Respectful, Caring and Honest.
- Pastoral care practices are fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning process and the school's structural and organizational systems.
- A positive education approach focuses on teaching and developing students' social-emotional skills (relationships, strengths, and resilience). It provides a strong foundation for students to reach their aspirations in learning and life.
- School leaders, teachers, support staff and all stakeholders play an active role in building a positive, happy, friendly learning environment where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for the development of their child's wellbeing. Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support attendance, student learning, safety, and wellbeing.

- Staff, students, and families share and cultivate an understanding of wellbeing and support for positive behavior and how this supports effective teaching and learning.

Student wellbeing definition:

There are a variety of ways to define student wellbeing. Below is the adopted school definition, which is the basis for the conception of this policy at NIS:

1. Student wellbeing is a sustainable state of positive mood, attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships, and experiences at school. (Noble et al., 2008 As cited in Dhaoui, 2021 p. 4)
2. Students' wellbeing refers to the psychological, cognitive, social, and physical functioning and capabilities students need to live a happy and fulfilling life. (OECD, 2017 p. 61)

It is important to note that low levels of wellbeing and associated mental health problems can have adverse consequences on the health and development of the young. According to Woolf & Digby (n.d.), students who are happy and healthy tend to:

1. Develop and improve concentration, motivation, and energy levels
2. Develop coping skills for life
3. Build and maintain better relationships
4. Successfully overcome difficulties
5. Continue with and be successful in their academic studies

NIS Approach to Wellbeing

At NIS, we aim to develop the following underpinning skills to maximize opportunities for individuals to succeed in today's curriculum and beyond:

- Self-awareness through the TORCH values
- Managing feelings
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

It is essential to develop these aspects of learning within the curriculum as:

- They underlie almost every aspect of our lives
- They enable us to be effective learners
- They enable us to get on with other people
- They enable us to be responsible citizens

Wellbeing viewpoints:

The viewpoints which guide the school approach to wellbeing includes the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support and Socio-Emotional Learning based on Responsive Classroom Morning Meetings in the Elementary which guides students to healthy conversations whilst Advisory Homeroom sessions support Secondary students.

Ways in which Morning Meetings, Wellbeing sessions and Advisory Homeroom support individuals' overall health, happiness, and quality of life:

1. **Strengthen Connections and Relationship Skills:** The classroom climate encompasses interactions among students and the teacher where an atmosphere of safety, respect, and engagement exists and open communication, collaboration, and inclusion is encouraged.
2. **Increase Self-Confidence:** Sharing personal stories can be scary. Our programs provide a safe and caring environment that encourages students to open up and build trust in others, which increases their confidence and builds their wellbeing agency by understanding their own needs, making informed choices, developing self-care strategies, seeking support when needed, and advocating for their own wellbeing.
3. **Promote Social Awareness:** The four central areas of social awareness include perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others.
4. **Encourage Positive Behavior Toward Others:** Our programs promote a positive school culture where everyone's voice and opinions matter. This in turn creates a norm around the need to respect others.

Learning Environment:

A safe learning environment covers the physical and cyber spaces students engage in for school activities. Schools develop school-wide rules and consequences in collaboration with their school community. A positive learning environment supports students' personal and social development and staff wellbeing. Schools provide rich learning environments that are open, respectful, caring, and safe.

Student Wellbeing Activities to promote Wellbeing Agency:

Wellbeing agency empowers students to take ownership of their wellbeing and play an active role in nurturing their holistic development. Various wellbeing activities support and provide a platform for students to discover their interests and talents while advocating for and understanding their own needs. Wellbeing activities take place within a division or across the whole school and all events are tracked in the NIS Events Calendar.

Supporting documents:

[UAE National Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[UAE Centennial 2071](#)

[UAE Moral Education](#)

[Vision 2021](#)

Counseling Services:

A Guide to the School Counseling Service

The counseling department aims to build on the school's pastoral provision by offering additional emotional support to students and Nibras International School employees, who may benefit from the opportunity to work with a professional counselor. This confidential service helps promote the psychological well-being of students, enabling them to make the most of the opportunities offered for their social and academic development.

Services provided

- Providing a psychological one-to-one counseling service for vulnerable students in an education environment by working in a confidential setting, supporting students, families and school staff.
- Wellbeing programs, in small groups covering a range of areas such as friendship issues, self-esteem, bullying, and a monthly newsletter, "From the Counselor's desk", addressing various social/emotional issues.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, and ensuring that students have a safe space to talk about their difficulties in either their home or school environments.
- Meeting with staff and families in relation to student concerns and difficulties as appropriate.
- Providing open door policy availability for 'drop in' sessions at break-times.
- Reporting child protection and Safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding leads when required.
- Support Student wellbeing by both providing appropriate referrals for parents to approach external Psychologists/ Counselors.
- To provide students with leadership and Team building activities, through Student Council, and Morning Announcements, as well as to contribute to Community building activities.

Sample of types of problems brought to counseling, among others

- Anxiety
- Family dynamics/relationship issues
- Depression
- Self-Harm
- Eating Disorders
- Grief/ Loss
- Stress

Class Teacher: making a referral to the School Counselor

- ❖ If you have a concern that a student is experiencing some form of psychological distress, please contact the School Counselor to discuss your concern and, where appropriate, complete the counseling referral form.
- ❖ Once it has been determined that the student may benefit from counseling, the School Counselor will set up a meeting with the parents. Either the Class Teacher, Head of Elementary and/ or Head of Secondary, will attend this meeting with the School Counselor. If the parents agree that their child should attend counseling sessions, they will be asked to sign the Parental Consent form, if it is a primary school student, before counseling can commence.
- ❖ Once signed consent has been obtained, the School Counselor will, in consultation with the Class Teacher, schedule the student into the next available opening.
- ❖ The number of sessions per student will be determined on a case by case basis.
- ❖ As the student advocate, the School Counselor cannot be involved in disciplinary/behavioral issues.
- ❖ Counseling sessions are confidential, however, as we are part of a school community, the School Counselor will always liaise with staff to offer some guidance or approaches that would help support the student at school. It is always a team-approach.
- ❖ There are three situations where confidentiality will be breached in terms of child protection protocol:
 - a. Where the student discloses that he/she is being hurt by someone
 - b. Where the student discloses he/she wants to hurt someone else
 - c. Where the students disclose that he/she wants to hurt him/herself

Expectations

Conflict Resolution

Students are sent to the Counselor office when they are in conflicting situations either with their peers, teacher, parents/ guardians. Individual counseling sessions are provided to them, and ways on how to react, approach situations are role-played, and presented.

Conflicts with teachers are addressed, by talking to both teacher and student, and ensuring both teacher and student can move past the conflict.

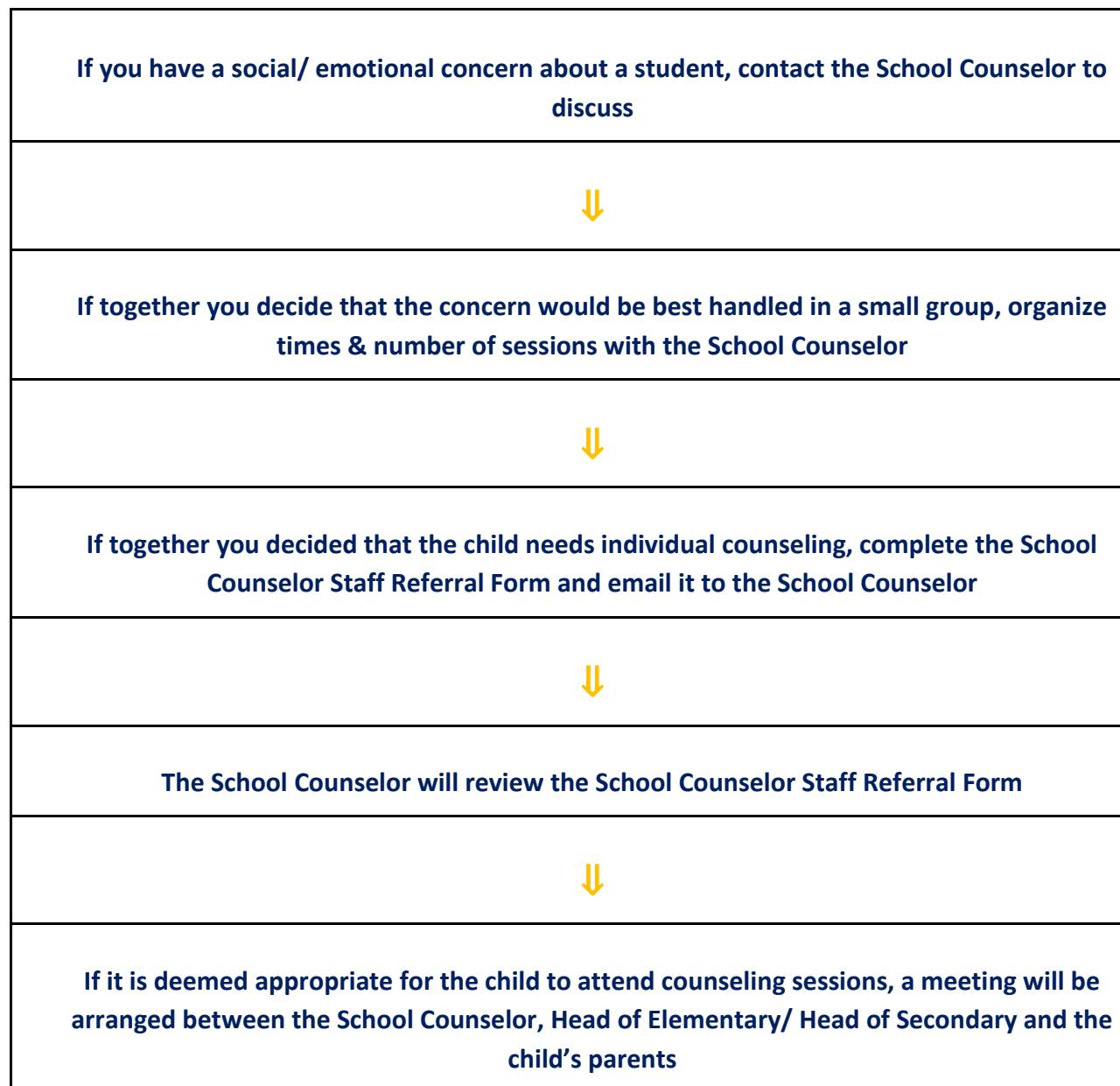
Should the situation be that of a conflict within the home environment, the counselor will make a call to home, and ask to meet the parents and/or have a telephone conversation with the parents about effective ways on how to resolve the situation.

Referrals can be made to the School Counselor using the [forms](#) located on the shared drive, under Policies, procedures and forms - Counseling.

As Teachers are our first point of contact, some teachers may talk to the parents, discuss their concerns for their students and suggest for their child to meet with the School Counselor. Parent consent forms can also be found on the Shared drive, Policies, Procedures and Forms.

If you are unsure about any of this, please talk to the School Counselor.

See Flow Chart below:





If written consent is obtained from the parents, the child will be added to the School Counseling tracking file and assigned to the priority or waiting list



The School Counselor will liaise with the Class Teacher to arrange session time and will keep the Class Teacher appraised of progress



The School Counselor will regularly review the child's progress and the School Counselor will ensure that the parents are kept informed of progress



Should a closure session be required, the School Counselor will meet with the parents to discuss progress.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety of the students is our utmost priority.

Should a child be known to be at risk, cause harm to oneself, or others. A safeguarding record of concern is filled out - This form is available with both the Elementary and Secondary assistants.

The form is filled out mentioning the name of the student, and their grade level. On occasion, that the child is self-harming himself or others, has an eating disorder, the School Counselor informs the student of the severity of the situation, and accordingly a Safeguarding form will be filled, and handed over to the Designated Safeguarding leads. The parents are contacted thereafter.

As of 2023, we have begun recording all our Safeguarding concerns on the website [“MyConcern”](#)

On occasion that the child has been hurt or abused at home, the child is sent to the School Doctor/ nurse who will then complete a Body Map guide, and this will then be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Should the child require child protection services, the DSL along with the School Counselor will make a call to the necessary authorities to inform them of the matter.

E-Safety Services:

E-Safety and concerns related to e-safety are dealt with according to the NIS E-Safety Policy.

Employee Wellbeing

Nibras International School acknowledges that Employee Wellbeing is a critical component of a healthy working environment. Promoting employee wellbeing makes it easier for employees to manage stress, while maintaining a positive and productive environment.

Services provided

- Providing a psychological one-to-one counseling service for all employees in a confidential setting, helps promote the psychological well-being of employees, enabling them to make the most of the opportunities offered for their social development.
- School wide Wellbeing programs, addressed towards all employees, cover a range of adult difficulties, such as stress, anxiety, work - life balance and physical health.
- An employee wellbeing committee consisting of 4 active staff members, to create monthly events and activities ensuring staff wellbeing throughout Nibras International School.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all employees, and ensuring that employees have a safe space to talk about their difficulties in either their home or work environments.
- Meeting with the Head of School, in relation to employee concerns and difficulties as appropriate.

- Providing open door policy availability for 'drop in' sessions at 3:00 - 4:00 pm
- Support Employee wellbeing by both providing appropriate referrals for employees to approach external Psychologists/ Counselors.
- To provide employees with social, community building events through the Employee wellbeing committee

Sample of types of difficulties brought to counseling, among others

- Stress
- Conflict Management
- Depression
- Relationship/ Marital difficulties
- Work Life Balance
- Grief/ Loss
- Time Management

Nibras International School, and International School Partnerships recognizes and encourages Mental health support for all employees, and as such, our Medical Insurance coverage covers 20 sessions with a Mental Health professional at a facility of their choice.