



مدرسة الشروق الدولية  
SUNRISE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
Abu Dhabi, UAE

## Student Mental Health Policy

<b>Purpose of Policy</b>	To prioritize and integrate mental health across all aspects of the school environment by promoting a whole-school approach that fosters awareness, early identification, and timely intervention. The policy aims to support the wellbeing of all members of the school community through proactive initiatives and structured support systems.
<b>Approval for this policy given by</b>	Principal
<b>Responsibility for its update</b>	Head of Inclusion
<b>Policy applies to</b>	All staff of Sunrise International School
<b>Introduced on</b>	April 2025
<b>Compliance From</b>	AY 2025/26
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Review Date</b>	November 2025
<b>Next Review Date</b>	April 2026
<b>Principal's Signature</b>	

**School Seal**



## **Introduction**

In alignment with the ADEK School Wellbeing Policy, Sunrise International School is committed to fostering a positive school environment where student mental health is prioritized. This policy outlines the framework for mental health education, early identification of mental health concerns, and access to counseling and support services. We believe that mental wellbeing is essential for the progression and success of our students. Our commitment is to nurture and sustain the mental wellbeing of our student community, identifying and supporting students at risk of poor mental health.

## **Purpose**

- To prioritize mental health and integrate it into the school environment.
- To promote a community-wide approach to mental health through awareness initiatives for all stakeholders.
- To establish systems for the early identification and intervention of mental health concerns.

## **Definitions**

- **Mental Health:** A state of wellbeing where individuals can cope with life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community (WHO, 2022).
- **Behaviors of Concern:** Significant changes in behavior that may impact a student's wellbeing, safety, or learning, including risky or illegal habits.
- **Counseling:** Personalized therapeutic support provided by qualified professionals addressing academic, career, and social-emotional development needs.
- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** Skills enabling self-awareness, emotional regulation, social interaction, and resilience.
- **Wellness Space:** A dedicated area in the school for promoting emotional and mental wellbeing.

### **1.1 Student Awareness and Education**

- Deliver mental health education across all grade levels, emphasizing balanced lifestyles, stress management, and emotional regulation.
- Ensure curriculum coverage of health education topics per national standards (MoHAP, 2003; DoH, 2023).
- For Cycle 2 and 3 students, provide education on mental health conditions, substance abuse prevention, and accessing support.

### **1.2 Student Counseling**

- Provide in-school or outsourced counseling services through qualified professionals.
- Ensure that all counseling is documented in accordance with ADEK Reporting Policies.

### **1.3 Referral Pathways**

- Establish clear procedures for students, staff, and parents to refer individuals for mental health support.

- Communicate these pathways through the Parent Handbook and internal documentation.

#### **1.4 Support During Vulnerable Phases**

- Implement structured measures to support students during high-stress periods, including:
  - Study leaves of up to 4 weeks for exam preparation.
  - End-of-semester office hours for individual student-teacher feedback.
  - Workshops on coping strategies for stress and emotional resilience.

#### **1.5 Wellness Resources**

- Maintain a wellness space accessible to all students for emotional regulation and mental rest.

#### **1.6 Inclusion**

- Provide tailored support for students with additional learning needs in accordance with ADEK's Inclusion Policy and Federal Decree Law No. (29) of 2006.
- Offer reasonable accommodations, including flexible schedules and sensory-friendly environments.

### **2. Mental Health Awareness and Education**

#### **2.1 Parental Engagement**

- Inform parents about the school's mental health policies and initiatives.
- Facilitate parental workshops and provide resources to promote mental health awareness.

#### **2.2 Staff Training**

- Ensure all staff receive training on identifying mental health concerns and following referral protocols.

### **3. Counseling and Support Services**

#### **3.1 Provision of Counseling**

Ensure access to counseling for all students as required, documenting each step in the counseling process.

#### **3.2 Appointment of Counselors**

- Employ qualified school counselors, either as staff members or through DoH-licensed centers.
- Counselors must meet the qualifications outlined in the ADEK Staff Eligibility Policy.

#### **3.3 Counselor Responsibilities**

- Provide individual and group counseling.

- Collaborate with teachers, parents, and external agencies while maintaining confidentiality.
- Respond promptly to critical concerns, including suicidal ideation and substance abuse.

### **3.4 Appointment of Social Workers**

- Employ social workers to serve as a liaison between school, home, and the community.
- Social workers focus on social, emotional, and behavioral support but do not provide therapy.

### **3.5 Mental Health Committee**

- Appoint a Mental Health Lead or Committee to coordinate initiatives and maintain compliance with this policy.

### **3.6 Confidentiality**

- Adhere to Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 on Data Protection and other relevant guidelines.
- Share information only when necessary to protect student welfare or meet legal obligations.

### **3.7 Parental Consent**

- Obtain parental consent for structured counseling unless disclosure is necessary to prevent harm.
- If consent is refused, document the refusal and refer serious cases to Child Protection Services.

## **4. Referral Pathways**

### **4.1 External Referral**

Refer students to external professionals when specialized support beyond the school counsellor's qualifications is needed.

### **4.2 Development of Referral Pathways**

Design procedures for referrals, reporting signs of concerning behavior, and informing and engaging with parents.

### **4.3 Communication**

- Ensure all referral pathways are communicated clearly to students, staff, and parents.

### **4.4 Monitoring and Reporting**

- Collect and analyze data on mental health referrals and outcomes for continuous improvement.

## **5. Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs**

### **5.1 Individualized Support**

- The Head of Inclusion will collaborate with school counselors and teachers to ensure holistic support.
- Adapt learning plans to accommodate students' mental health needs.

### **5.2 Reasonable Accommodations**

- Provide accommodations such as adjusted timetables, sensory breaks, and monitoring for students at risk of bullying or anxiety.

## **6. Policy Review**

### **6.1 Annual Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with ADEK guidelines and emerging best practices.

By implementing this comprehensive policy, Sunrise International School affirms its commitment to fostering a safe, supportive environment where all students can thrive emotionally and academically.