Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

ACTIVE

Policy owner / lead	Whole School Safeguarding Officer
Approved by	SLT
Version	2.0
Issue / revision date	October 2026
Next review date	August 2027
Applicability / scope	Students and staff across the school community
Policy family	Student Wellbeing, Behaviour and Pastoral
Status	Active

1. Introduction

The ABC International School is committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school community. We recognise that emotional wellbeing is fundamental to children's development, learning, relationships and overall experience of school. We also recognise the importance of staff wellbeing in sustaining a healthy, supportive and effective school environment.

Our approach is preventative, inclusive and responsive. We aim to create a school culture in which students and staff feel safe, respected, valued and able to seek support when they need it.

Mental health and wellbeing are shared responsibilities. The school works in partnership with students, parents, staff and, where appropriate, external professionals to promote wellbeing, recognise emerging concerns and provide suitable support.

This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing, identifying and responding to concerns, supporting students and staff, and recognising the boundaries of school-based provision. It should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other relevant policies.

2. Understanding Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health is an important part of overall health. It influences how individuals think, feel, behave, form relationships, manage challenges and participate in everyday life.

Positive mental health does not mean feeling happy at all times or being free from difficulties. Everyone experiences periods of stress, worry, sadness or emotional uncertainty. These experiences are a normal part of life and do not necessarily indicate a mental health condition.

Mental health difficulties may be temporary or ongoing and can vary in their nature, severity and impact. They may affect an individual's emotional, social, physical or educational functioning.

The school recognises that mental health and wellbeing are influenced by a range of factors, including relationships, personal circumstances, physical health, developmental needs and experiences within and beyond school.

Our role is to promote wellbeing, recognise when additional support may be needed and respond appropriately. School staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or provide clinical treatment.

3. Student Wellbeing

The ABC International School aims to provide an environment where students feel secure, included, and supported to develop confidence, resilience, independence, and positive relationships.

We recognise that students experience and express emotional difficulties in different ways, depending on their age, development and individual circumstances. Younger children may communicate distress through behaviour, play or changes in emotional regulation, while older students may be more able to describe their feelings and seek support independently.

Our approach accounts for these developmental differences and each student's individual needs.

The school aims to:

- Promote positive relationships, belonging and emotional security.
- Help students understand and express their feelings in age-appropriate ways.
- Develop emotional awareness, resilience and healthy coping strategies.
- Encourage students to seek help and identify trusted adults.
- Recognise and respond sensitively to emerging concerns.
- Work in partnership with families to support students' wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate pastoral and educational support when difficulties arise.

Students are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about themselves or someone else. The school provides age-appropriate opportunities for students to share their views, express concerns, and contribute to decisions that affect their school experience.

4. Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing Through School Life

Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is an integral part of school life, not the responsibility of a single department or programme.

The school supports student wellbeing through the following areas.

Curriculum and personal development

Age-appropriate learning, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), helps students develop emotional awareness, healthy relationships, self-esteem, resilience and strategies for managing challenges. Assemblies, form time and other learning opportunities reinforce these messages.

Positive relationships and belonging

The school promotes a positive, inclusive culture where students feel valued and connected to their peers and adults. Respectful relationships, kindness, fairness and a sense of belonging are central to student wellbeing.

A safe and supportive environment

The school aims to provide a safe, predictable and supportive learning environment. The school takes concerns about bullying, discrimination, inappropriate behaviour, and difficulties with peer relationships seriously and addresses them in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

Physical health and enrichment

Physical education, sport, active play, extracurricular activities and wider enrichment opportunities contribute to students' physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Students are encouraged to develop healthy habits and participate in activities that support their interests and sense of achievement.

Digital wellbeing

The school promotes healthy, responsible technology use, helping students understand how online experiences, social media, screen time, and digital relationships can affect their mental health and wellbeing. Age-appropriate education encourages students to make informed choices, develop healthy digital habits and seek support when needed.

Student voice and help-seeking

Students have age-appropriate opportunities to express their views and share concerns. From Year 3 onwards, students use Komodo wellbeing surveys to reflect on and share how they are feeling. Staff help students understand who they can approach for support and encourage them to seek help when needed.

Transitions and change

The school recognises that joining a new school, moving between key stages and preparing for the next stage of education can affect students' emotional wellbeing. Appropriate guidance, reassurance and opportunities to develop positive relationships help students navigate these changes.

5. Early Identification and Intervention

Early recognition of emotional and mental health concerns is an important part of the school's pastoral approach.

Staff are encouraged to remain attentive to changes in a student's presentation, behaviour, attendance, relationships, engagement or emotional wellbeing. These changes may have many explanations and do not necessarily indicate a mental health difficulty.

Staff should respond sensitively, listen without judgement and share concerns through the school's established pastoral or safeguarding procedures. Their role is to recognise and report concerns, not to diagnose conditions.

Heads of Year coordinate and support day-to-day pastoral concerns, with oversight from Assistant Heads with pastoral responsibility, who also serve as Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). Where concerns become more significant, persistent or complex, these Assistant Heads work with relevant staff and families to determine appropriate support and next steps.

Concerns that indicate a safeguarding risk, including self-harm, suicidal ideation or an immediate risk of harm, must be referred directly to a DSL in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Such concerns must not be delayed by routine pastoral processes.

The school records relevant pastoral and safeguarding concerns on CPOMS in accordance with school procedures.

The school also monitors patterns in attendance, wellbeing surveys, pastoral records and feedback from students, staff and parents. This information helps identify emerging needs, inform preventative provision and guide appropriate intervention.

6. Scope of School-Based Mental Health Support

The ABC International School provides pastoral care, wellbeing guidance and appropriate educational support for students experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties. Counselling or other specialist support may also be available where appropriate.

The school recognises that some students may require assessment or treatment from qualified external mental health professionals. School-based support does not replace specialist clinical care.

Where external support is needed, the school will work in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, external professionals to support the student's wellbeing and continued participation in school.

7. Pastoral Support and Additional Support

The school provides pastoral support through its established pastoral structure, including teachers, form tutors, Heads of Year, Assistant Heads, and other relevant staff.

When a student requires additional support, the school considers the nature of the concern, the student's age and development, their individual circumstances and any relevant professional advice.

Support may include:

- Regular pastoral check-ins with an appropriate member of staff.
- Adjustments to classroom expectations or aspects of the school day.
- Support with relationships, emotional regulation or engagement in learning.
- Collaboration between pastoral and inclusion staff.
- Additional communication and planning with parents.
- Consideration of counselling or external specialist support where appropriate.
- Individual risk assessments or reintegration arrangements where necessary.
- The school reviews support according to the student's needs and adjusts it as circumstances change.

- **Significant life events**

The school recognises that bereavement, family separation, serious illness and other challenging personal circumstances can affect a student's emotional wellbeing. Pastoral support is provided sensitively, taking individual circumstances into account and working in partnership with families where appropriate.

Inclusion and additional needs

Mental health difficulties may overlap with special educational needs or other barriers to learning, but having a special educational need does not necessarily indicate a mental health difficulty, and vice versa.

Pastoral staff and the Inclusion Lead work together, where appropriate, to ensure support accounts for the student's wider needs.

Attendance and reintegration

The school monitors attendance and recognises that patterns of absence may sometimes indicate emotional or mental health difficulties.

Where mental health concerns affect attendance, or a student returns after significant absence or treatment, pastoral and safeguarding leaders will consider suitable arrangements on an individual basis. These may include reasonable adjustments, risk assessments and communication with parents and external professionals, subject to appropriate consent and safeguarding requirements.

8. Parental Involvement and Support

The school recognises that effective support for student mental health and wellbeing depends on constructive relationships between home and school.

Parents are encouraged to share information about circumstances that may affect their child's emotional wellbeing, including significant changes at home, emerging concerns or support being received externally.

Where the school identifies significant concerns, parents will normally be informed and involved in considering appropriate support and next steps.

The school aims to communicate sensitively, respect family circumstances and work collaboratively to support the child's best interests.

In exceptional circumstances, where sharing information with parents could increase a safeguarding risk, the DSL will determine the appropriate response in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parents may be encouraged to seek advice or assessment from external professionals when a child's needs extend beyond the school's capacity to provide appropriate support.

Where families have engaged external professionals, the school welcomes relevant recommendations that may help support the student in school. The school will communicate directly with these professionals with parental consent.

9. Staff Wellbeing

The ABC International School recognises that staff wellbeing matters in its own right and supports a positive, effective learning environment for students.

The school aims to foster a professional culture in which staff feel respected, supported, and able to raise wellbeing concerns without unnecessary stigma.

Staff wellbeing is a shared responsibility, with school leadership retaining responsibility for creating supportive working conditions and responding appropriately to concerns.

The school's approach includes:

- A positive professional culture - Promoting respectful working relationships, professional trust, collaboration and a sense of belonging across the school community.
- Supportive leadership and communication - Encouraging open communication, constructive professional dialogue and appropriate consideration of workload, working practices and individual circumstances.
- Access to support - Staff experiencing difficulties affecting their wellbeing may seek support from their line manager, Head of School, Human Resources, Principal or another appropriate member of leadership, depending on the circumstances.
- Professional learning and awareness - The school promotes awareness of mental health and wellbeing through relevant professional learning and safeguarding training. Key pastoral and safeguarding staff have additional relevant training and experience. The Heads of School are trained Mental Health First Aiders for adults and children.
- Staff Social and Wellbeing Team - The Staff Social and Wellbeing Team contributes to a positive school culture by organising activities and opportunities that encourage connection, participation and staff wellbeing. Its work complements, rather than replaces, the responsibilities of school leadership.
- Individual circumstances and confidentiality - Where a member of staff raises a personal wellbeing concern, the school will respond sensitively and consider appropriate support within its responsibilities and available resources. Personal information will be handled discreetly and shared only where necessary for appropriate support, employment responsibilities or safety, in accordance with relevant school procedures. The school recognises that it cannot provide clinical

mental health treatment to staff. Where appropriate, individuals may be encouraged to seek advice or support from qualified external professionals.

10. Confidentiality, Record-Keeping and Information Sharing

The school recognises the sensitive nature of information relating to mental health and wellbeing.

Information is handled with care and shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to provide support, fulfil professional responsibilities or protect safety.

Students and staff should not be promised absolute confidentiality. Where information indicates a risk of harm or a safeguarding concern, it must be shared with the appropriate safeguarding personnel in accordance with school procedures.

The school records student pastoral and safeguarding concerns through its established systems, including CPOMS, as appropriate to the nature of the concern.

The school maintains records and shares information in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where external professionals are involved, the school will seek parental consent before communicating directly with them about a student. This does not prevent necessary information sharing where safeguarding concerns require it.

11. Policy Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review

Promoting mental health and wellbeing is a whole-school responsibility.

The School's Senior Leadership team provides strategic oversight of the school's approach to student and staff wellbeing and supports an inclusive, supportive school culture.

Assistant Heads with pastoral responsibility oversee pastoral provision, support responses to more significant concerns and coordinate appropriate action with relevant staff and families.

Heads of Year provide day-to-day pastoral support, identify emerging concerns and coordinate appropriate responses within the school's established procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer and safeguarding team respond to safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Inclusion Lead works with pastoral and teaching staff where students' mental health, additional learning needs or other individual circumstances require coordinated support.

All staff contribute to a supportive environment, promote positive relationships, remain attentive to emerging concerns and follow the school's reporting and safeguarding procedures.

The school monitors its approach through pastoral and safeguarding records, student wellbeing information, attendance patterns and feedback from students, parents and staff. This helps identify trends, evaluate existing provision and inform improvements.

The Assistant Heads with pastoral responsibility will review this policy annually, under the oversight of the Heads of School. It may be reviewed earlier where changes in school practice, guidance or identified needs make this necessary.

Related School Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Support for Learning Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Document control and version history

Version	Date	Owner / reviewer	Summary of changes
2.0	October 2026	Whole School Safeguarding Officer	Applied the ABCIS controlled-policy template. Clarified pastoral support, safeguarding responsibilities, external referrals and staff wellbeing provision, including Mental Health First Aiders.