جيمس مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية، دبي
GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai

Wellbeing Framework

Vision

GEMS OOD is a listening school dedicated to inclusion, holistic well-being, fostering life skills, and empowering every student and teacher to pave his/her own path to success.

Mission

Providing opportunities to students and staff in a safe, stimulating and fun place to learn, work and grow.

Rationale

As a school we have been trusted with the world's most valuable resource: children. Therefore, we recognize it is essential that we foster their Wellbeing, for both short- and long-term benefits. Research has found that students who are happy and healthy tend to:

- be successful in their academic pursuits.
- develop better self-esteem, behaviour and a positive mindset.
- have a sense of belonging to a school environment that is safe and secure.
- improve concentration, motivation and energy levels.
- develop coping skills for life and successfully overcome challenges.
- build and maintain better relationships.
- create a supportive parent community.

Aim: The focus is on prioritizing wellbeing development, integrating and monitoring wellbeing outcomes. By this we also intend to align ourselves with UAE's National Wellbeing Framework, be a catalyst for human development by being a connected school community, nurturing thriving students and adults.

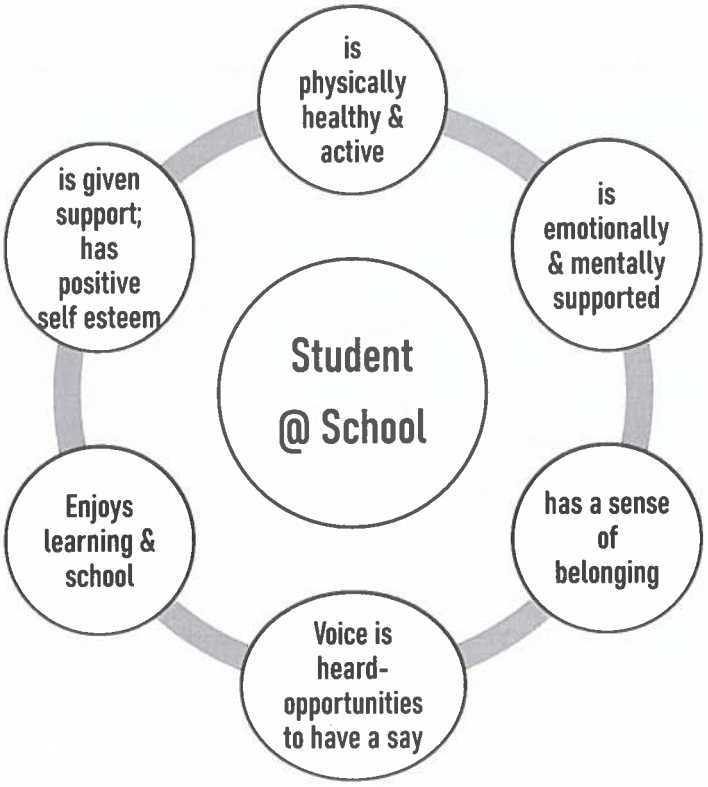
Wellbeing Approach

Wellbeing refers to physical, mental and emotional as well as social well-being. Our whole school approach to wellbeing is about ways and means of promoting the social and emotional skills and inculcating healthy behaviours amongst students and staff of GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai. This includes:

- promoting practices such as healthy eating, physical activity / exercises and protection from weather hazards for physical health and wellbeing.
- inculcating mindfulness activities, discovering personal strengths, engaging in reflection and gratitude logs for mental and emotional resilience and through that their wellbeing.
- providing opportunities to collaborate, to communicate, improve connections, relationships and bonding for social wellbeing, thereby creating a cohesive connected community.

Wellbeing Framework

At the centre point of our framework is the student. All the adults at school are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of all students.



Wellbeing Initiatives at School

At OOD we celebrate whole school days on a weekly basis – ***Mindful Monday, Turbo Tuesday, Wellbeing Wednesday, Thankful Thursday and Fun Friday*** so as to infuse enthusiasm and strengthen wellbeing of students and staff alike.

Mindful Monday

Children of all ages can benefit from mindfulness, the simple practice of bringing a gentle, accepting attitude to the present moment. It can help by promoting happiness and relieving stress. This can be done by the Supervisor / Class Teacher / Students. Relaxing music can be played, like this sample music https://podcasts.google.com/search/relaxing%20muxic

If there's no music, the class can be asked to be quiet and a simple instruction like this given:

Sit straight. Close your eyes. Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel the flow of breath. Empty your mind. Take a minute to be still. As soon as your mind wanders, bring it back to your breath.

Turbo Tuesday

Hippocrates said, "Motion is Life". Our students have to be able to move well before they move further. Moving well means removing the restrictions and imbalances that affect the way the body should move.

With this in mind, have some simple movement exercises in class. Get the PE teacher to record some stretches and moves or low intensity aerobics. This takes care of the physical body's Wellbeing.

Wellbeing Wednesday

A healthy outside starts from the inside. Students must live the dictum you are what you eat. On this day, encourage students to have a healthy breakfast, as it is the most important meal of the day. Have students speak (J-A-M) on healthy options, nutrition, macro and micronutrients, seasonal fruits and vegetables, hydration etc.

Thankful Thursday

This day of the week is to be spent in a brief activity of reflection. It can be a simple activity like name 5 things you are most grateful for in the week and write it in a 'Gratitude Journal' or Diary. Research says gratitude can help us make friends, improve physical and psychological health, enhance empathy, reduce aggression, improve sleep, enhance self-esteem and increase resilience. And who doesn't want to improve these in such troubled times?

Fun Friday

The last Friday of every month, the whole school will be engaged in Friday Fun activities. different phases have different activities.

Other Whole School Initiatives

The Whole School ***Just-A-Minute*** activity gives 2-3 students from each class the opportunity to speak on a topic they choose during the Class Teacher's period. This helps to improve their speaking skills. The rest of the class is encouraged to give constructive feedback – this helps the students to see things in a positive light and suggest changes in a pleasing way without offending.

Another Whole School Activity that is held on the day before the last working day of the month is ***Our Own Writes***. In the session titled *Pret-a-Picture* is projected across all classes during the Class Teacher's period. Students and staff are encouraged to write about their views & ideas on the picture that is projected, and Coordinators collate the best write-ups for the grade.

On every last working day of the month, the entire school engages in ***Our Own Reads*** – a whole school activity when all stakeholders within the school, including support staff, read for a brief while. This aims to improve reading in the lines of ***Drop Everything And Read (DEAR***). To promote reading in Arabic we also hold ***Our Own Bel Arabi*** on the last working day of every month.

Another wellbeing initiative to promote healthy eating habits among the school community is ***Our Own Eats***, a breakfast programme wherein staff and students bring healthy, nutritious food to school and eat together during the recess.

Voices – OOD, a Listening School

At OOD, we take pride in being a listening school. Voice is paramount to us – big or small, relevant or irrelevant, we listen. We realize the impact of bringing together all stakeholders. By thoroughly understanding relevant issues from the viewpoint of people directly affected by a decision, we are more likely to gain support and thereby ensure a successful outcome. With this in mind, we have created Focus Groups to enable leaders to stay "in touch" with all those concerned (for example, teachers, parents, and students) on a regular basis. These help us to listen and attend to their needs, problems and concerns, likes and dislikes, and feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Student Wellbeing Focus Group (SWFG): We look at student voice as a mechanism for personal development, helping to build confidence and prepare young people for roles in society. With this in mind we have a Student Focus Group (SFG)each in all Grades from 2 to 12. One student represents every section of a grade. Each student represents the class for 3 months. Then there are a new set of representatives. The Group meets once a month, and the meeting is chaired by the Assistant Supervisor of the Grade. Thus, the Assistant Supervisors also gets the opportunity to hone her leadership skills. Through the SFG, students actively participate in the decision-making processes and collectively influence outcomes by putting forward their views, concerns and ideas.

Parent Wellbeing Focus Group (PWFG): Like the SFG, we have an active Parent Focus Group (PFG). Each Grade's Parent representatives meet the Supervisor once a month. Each parent who represents his / her ward's class for 3 months and through the year 3 parents get this opportunity to lend their voice on behalf of their child's class. This is a platform for parents to put forth their concerns, suggestions, ideas and compliments. The PFG has provided valuable inputs to strengthen systems and practices at school.

Teacher Wellbeing Focus Group (TWFG): Research says that teacher happiness affects student performance and the success of the learning process in school (Tadić et al., 2013) and that teacher happiness can be a predictor of student happiness as it affects their learning performance (Duckworth et al., 2009). To take care of teachers' wellbeing a Teacher Focus Group has been created. It is a platform to share their ideas, suggestions and concerns. Each Grade nominates 3 teachers who will represent their Grade through the year, 1 every 3 months. This meeting is also chaired once a month by the Executive Principal, with the Vice Principals as co-opted members.

Some decisions we have taken based on the TFG feedback are:

a) not to give any deadline for Monday as then teachers have to invest their holiday to accomplish it.

b) no mail to be sent during the weekend till Saturday afternoon.

The Annual Teachers' Picnic is a much-awaited fun day in the cooler months of the year – mostly in January.

Teacher Wellbeing Days are celebrated phase-wise in March, after annual examinations. This is a day of unwinding where teachers present programmes, play games and enjoy a sumptuous lunch at school.

Mindful art sessions - Fun Time - Painting and Craft- workshop by Art teachers are all held in the month of March as an outlet for teachers to unleash their creativity and to de-stress.

Teachers are given incentives in a variety of ways. Outstanding and Very Good teachers receive management points that translate into an extra allowance for 10 months in the year. They are celebrated in a rota at the Teachers Hall of Fame in the Lobby. Teachers who go beyond their call of duty are rewarded with participation in special events and international trips with students. 100% attendance at school is rewarded and celebrated with a monetary award, a plaque and certificate, which are given away at the School's Annual Prize Day. Teachers who demonstrate leadership skills, organizational acumen and talent have the chance to take up middle level leadership positions and be in charge of events like Interschool Events /Afternoon Enrichment Programme/Summer Camp etc. Plenty of professional growth opportunities are provided and details shared with them on a regular basis to enrich their professional journey.

Holistic Curriculum

Wellbeing, health & safety, child safeguarding & protection – all impact learning. Therefore, it is seamlessly integrated into Math, Science, English, other languages, Social Science, Moral & Cultural Studies as well as cocurricular and extracurricular activities. We seek to engage all staff and reinforce skills outside of the classroom, such as in corridors and playgrounds. This endeavour helps develop a supportive school and classroom ethos that builds warm relationships and a sense of connectedness with focus and purpose. We realize that creating a school ethos that promotes wellbeing, resilience and positive skills has been shown to improve individual and school performance, besides developing:

- pupil's self-esteem
- communication skills
- awareness about all aspects of risk
- strategies for safety and self-protection.
- a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults.
- non-abusive behaviour among pupils

Health & Safety @ OOD

GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai (OOD) seeks to establish a safe and healthy environment in the school with safe working procedures among staff and pupils and ensures the absence of risk to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances. To this end, we aim to:

1. Formulate effective procedures for use in case of accidents, fire and for evacuating the school premises as well as for a Lockdown.
2. Inform, instruct and supervise all employees and pupils about safety procedures and practices.

Pupils

1. Exercise personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and their fellow pupils.
2. Observe standards of dress consistent with safety and hygiene.

3. Observe all the safety rules of the school and the instructions of the staff in the event of an emergency.
4. Use and not willfully misuse, neglect or interfere with things provided for safety purposes.

School Staff

All staff are responsible for the health and safety arrangements in relation to staff, students, and volunteer helpers under their supervision. All staff must complete mandatory courses in First Aid, Fire Safety & Emergency Procedures, Lockdown, Covid Awareness, Information Security and Health, Safety, and Environmental Awareness twice a year. In particular, staff will monitor their own work activities and take all reasonable steps to:

1. Exercise effective supervision over everyone they are responsible for, especially pupils.
2. Be aware of and implement safe working practices and set a good example personally.
3. Identify actual and potential hazards and introduce procedures to minimize the possibility of mishap.
4. Ensure that any equipment or tools used are appropriate to that specific use meets accepted safety standards.

Child Safeguarding & Protection

GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its pupils and works to create an ethos in which pupils feel secure and listened to. It aims to provide clear direction to staff, and all concerned about expected codes of behaviour:

1. in dealing with Child Protection issues.
2. to make explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures so that child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child.
3. to integrate Child Protection issues into the curriculum.
4. to take account of policies in related areas such as behaviour and anti-bullying, cyber bullying and acceptable use of ICT.

Staff are appointed through safe recruiting procedures and with proper reference checks and documentation. All staff must complete mandatory courses in Child Safeguarding and Protection as well as Information Security twice a year. Leaders who are involved in recruitment must complete these as well as Safe Recruitment courses.

Thus, our Wellbeing Framework supports to create teaching and learning environments that enable both students and staff to be healthy, happy, engaged and successful so that they connect, succeed and thrive as a wholesome school community.

Dr. Sheeba Jojo
Principal