CAS | مدرسة المدينة الأمريكية CITY AMERICAN SCHOOL

# Wellbeing & Counselling Policy

## 1. Purpose

1. To promote student wellbeing, resilience, and personal growth.
2. To establish accessible and confidential counseling services that support students' academic, social, and emotional development.
3. To ensure compliance with UAE and accreditation requirements for safeguarding, student support, and wellbeing.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

1. All students enrolled in the school.
2. All teaching and non-teaching staff.
3. Parents, guardians, and external stakeholders supporting student wellbeing.

## 3. Description of Wellbeing and Counseling Efforts

The school's wellbeing and counseling efforts aim to promote emotional, social, and academic development among students. These services ensure that every student feels supported, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. The Wellbeing and Counseling Policy establishes clear procedures aligned with UAE inspection standards and safeguarding laws.

### Commitment to Wellbeing

The school is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that nurtures wellbeing, resilience, and positive relationships. Wellbeing is embedded across the curriculum, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs, aligning with UAE national frameworks emphasizing student safety and emotional health.

### Counseling Provision

The counseling program provides accessible, confidential, and developmentally appropriate services that address academic, personal, social, and emotional needs. Counseling services are structured to ensure early intervention, prevention, and crisis response.

Counseling services include:
- Individual Counseling: Confidential one-on-one sessions for emotional, behavioral, and academic concerns.
- Group Counseling: Support for students facing shared challenges such as stress management or peer relationships.
- Preventive Programs: Awareness workshops, assemblies, and campaigns on mental health, digital wellbeing, and resilience.
- Crisis Intervention: Immediate response to emotional or behavioral emergencies.
- External Referrals: Collaboration with external professionals when specialized intervention is required.

## Career Counseling

Career counseling is an integral part of the school's wellbeing framework, ensuring that students are guided in making informed academic and career choices. The career counseling program includes:
- Individual and group sessions for career exploration and goal setting.
- Career assessments to identify students' strengths, interests, and aptitudes.
- Guidance on elective subject selection, university admissions, and scholarship opportunities.
- Collaboration with universities, industry professionals, and parents to enhance career awareness.
- Workshops on employability skills such as communication, leadership, and time management.

## Policies and Procedures

The wellbeing and counseling framework operates under strict ethical and legal guidelines to protect students' confidentiality and safety.

Key procedures include:
- Confidentiality and Ethics: Counselors maintain confidentiality, except in cases involving self-harm, harm to others, or child protection concerns.
- Safeguarding Compliance: All cases of suspected abuse or neglect are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer in accordance with UAE Child Protection Law (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016).
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular analysis of wellbeing and counseling data, including surveys, attendance, and behavioral indicators.
- Annual Review: The policy is reviewed each academic year to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with regulations.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Wellbeing is a shared responsibility across the school community. The School Leadership Team provides resources, oversight, and training. The Wellbeing and Counseling Team delivers services, tracks wellbeing indicators, and leads awareness programs. Teachers

integrate wellbeing into classroom practices and refer students for additional support, while parents engage with counselors and participate in awareness initiatives.

### Wellbeing Promotion and Culture

The school fosters a wellbeing-centered culture through continuous engagement and positive reinforcement. Initiatives include annual wellbeing surveys, a Wellbeing Action Plan, the establishment of safe spaces such as the Student Hub and Counseling Office, and celebration of key events like Mental Health Day and Anti-Bullying Week.

### Rationale and Impact

By integrating wellbeing and counseling into every aspect of school life, students develop resilience, empathy, and confidence. The comprehensive approach ensures academic success and emotional stability, equipping students with the skills needed to navigate life's challenges and achieve their long-term goals.

## 4. Alignment with UAE Inspection Framework

**UAE Framework (Wellbeing & Protection):**

1. Student wellbeing and safety are integral to personal and academic success.
2. Schools must provide proactive programs that nurture resilience, inclusion, and positive relationships.
3. A dedicated wellbeing team must monitor and respond to students' needs.
1. Schools must ensure that students' social, emotional, and personal development is prioritized.
2. Student support services (counseling, health, wellbeing) must be available, accessible, and effective.
3. Data from wellbeing monitoring must be used for continuous improvement.

## 5. Objectives

1. Ensure every student feels safe, respected, and supported.
2. Provide counseling services that are proactive, preventive, and responsive.
3. Embed wellbeing into the curriculum, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.
4. Strengthen partnerships with parents and the wider community to support student growth.
5. Monitor wellbeing outcomes and use data to inform improvement.

## 6. Roles & Responsibilities

**School Leadership:**

1. Provide resources and training for wellbeing initiatives.
2. Ensure compliance with UAE inspection requirements and accreditation standards.
3. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of wellbeing and counseling services.

**Wellbeing & Counseling Team:**

1. Deliver individual and group counseling services.
2. Lead wellbeing initiatives across the school.
3. Maintain confidentiality, except in safeguarding or child protection cases.
4. Track wellbeing indicators and report to leadership.

**Teachers:**

1. Promote wellbeing through inclusive and positive classroom practices.
2. Identify and refer students in need of additional support.
3. Integrate wellbeing themes into teaching and learning.

**Parents / Guardians:**

1. Engage in partnership with the school to support their children's wellbeing.
2. Participate in awareness programs and communication channels.

## 7. Counseling Services

1. **Individual Support:** Confidential sessions for personal, academic, or emotional concerns.
2. **Group Support:** Small group interventions for shared challenges (e.g., peer conflict, stress management).
3. **Preventive Programs:** Awareness workshops, wellbeing campaigns, and resilience-building programs.
4. **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate response in case of emotional, behavioral, or safeguarding concerns.
5. **Referrals:** Partnership with external professionals when specialized intervention is required.

## 8. Wellbeing Promotion

The school will:

1. Conduct annual wellbeing surveys aligned with UAE frameworks.
2. Establish a **Wellbeing Action Plan** with measurable targets.
3. Provide safe spaces such as the Student Hub and Counseling Office.
4. Celebrate key international and national wellbeing events (e.g., Mental Health Day, Anti-Bullying Week, UAE National Child Day).
5. Monitor students' attendance, conduct, and engagement as wellbeing indicators.

## 9. Safeguarding & Child Protection

1. Counselors are mandated to follow UAE **Child Protection Law (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016)** and school safeguarding policy.
2. All suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or risk of harm must be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and lead(DSO/L).

## 10. Confidentiality & Ethics

1. Counseling services are confidential in accordance with ethical guidelines.
2. Exceptions apply in cases of self-harm, harm to others, or safeguarding concerns.

## 11. Monitoring & Review

1. The Wellbeing & Counseling Policy will be reviewed annually.
2. Data sources: student surveys, counseling records (anonymous trends), attendance, behavior logs, parent and staff feedback.
3. Reports will be shared with leadership and governing bodies.

## 12. Approval & Implementation

This policy is approved by the School Leadership Team and the Governing Body. It will be communicated to staff, students, and parents through the school portal, staff handbook, and orientation sessions.

Implementation – AY 2020/2021

Reviewed – August 2026