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| Effective From | AY 2024/25 (Fall term) |
| Compliance From | AY 2025/26 (Fall term) |

SCHOOL POLICY

on

STAFF WELLBEING



Introduction

The provision of a supportive work environment is essential to cultivating a healthy professional and social setting that contribute to staff wellbeing, which is one of the leading factors for retaining, motivating, and enhancing the productivity of staff. This policy sets out the basic requirements for schools' commitment to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and professionally, to enabling staff growth through continuous professional development, and to respecting staff privacy and wellbeing.

Purpose

- Create a school environment that is welcoming for all staff.
- Enable a collaborative, caring, and supportive environment with safe spaces to discuss any dimension of wellbeing.
- Improve staff experiences and wellbeing to achieve higher work satisfaction for all staff.

Definitions

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| Duty of Care | The obligation to safeguard stakeholders, to maintain their health, safety, and wellbeing, and to take steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable while under the school’s supervision (on its premises, utilizing its systems, or engaging in school-organized activities off-campus). |
| Grievance | An unresolved issue concerning the application of school policy, practice, or procedure. This includes disciplinary action, involuntary termination, and allegations of discrimination or unfair treatment from a staff member or line manager. |
| Staff | An individual employed by a school on a remunerated contractual basis regardless of employment mode (internal, external/third-party, etc.). |
| Whistleblowing | An instance where an individual passes on information about organizational malpractice (e.g., fraud, corruption, miscarriage of justice, risk of serious harm to an individual, risks or damage to the environment and other actions against public interest) taking place at, or near, their place of employment or education. |



Policy

1. Staff Wellbeing Strategy

- 1.1 Staff Wellbeing Strategy: As part of their overall wellbeing strategy, schools shall develop a staff wellbeing strategy that includes the following at a minimum:
1. Statement recognizing and committing to schools, under the leadership of the Principal and/or the Governing Board (when the Principal's wellbeing is concerned), having the obligation of duty of care towards its staff.
 2. Schools shall adopt a holistic framework for promoting staff wellbeing within the school environment that considers the wellbeing (social, physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional) of all staff and also addresses the more targeted needs of specific types of roles (leaders, teachers, etc.).
- 1.2 Staff Wellbeing Committee: Schools shall appoint a Staff Wellbeing Committee or Lead to serve as the central body that plans and executes all staff wellbeing initiatives and develops, implements, monitors, and reviews policies to manage all aspects of staff wellbeing and grievances within the school. The following components shall be incorporated by all schools into the Staff Wellbeing Strategy:
1. Roles and responsibilities of the School Wellbeing Committee.
 2. Calendar of staff wellbeing events.
 3. General wellbeing guidelines and recommendations for staff (e.g., best practices on identifying burnout, how to manage stress, etc.).
 4. Staff onboarding initiatives (e.g., onboarding buddy programs, orientation events to learn about the school's work culture, etc.).
 5. School initiatives focusing on various aspects of wellbeing (e.g., staff lunches, sports events, celebrating birthdays, etc.).
 6. Healthcare services, including the provision/referral of counseling services as per the school's insurance policy.
 7. Mechanisms to address staff work-life balance (e.g., time off in lieu (TOIL), overtime compensation, staff "me-time" initiatives, etc.).
 8. Proactive check-ins for staff wellbeing.
 9. Grievance resolution mechanism and whistleblowing process.
 10. Others at the school's discretion.

2. Supporting Staff Wellbeing

2.1 Staff Support Mechanisms: Schools shall regularly check in on the wellbeing of staff and support any member who may be displaying early signs of concern or potentially may be at risk of harm.

1. Schools shall develop a process to identify staff who may be at risk of harm (e.g., showing signs of severe burnout or depression) and develop mechanisms to support and positively engage with staff.
2. If a serious staff wellbeing concern is identified that could have a potentially harmful impact on the concerned staff or others (e.g., suicidal ideation), schools shall have in place a process for confidential reporting within the school (e.g., to the Counselor, Student Protection Officer) for further escalation as appropriate.

2.2 Counseling Support: Schools are permitted to provide counseling assistance and support to staff (as required and with the consent of the parties involved) by leveraging nurses or school counselors to deliver the first level of aid. For serious instances, referrals shall be made to external social and healthcare professionals.

3. Grievances and Whistleblowing

3.1 Grievances: Schools shall ensure that school communication channels enable the reporting of staff grievances in a convenient and confidential manner.

1. Schools shall outline a mechanism to report and resolve all staff grievances in a transparent and timely manner.
2. Schools shall review the grievances received and implement measures to resolve issues to maintain a conducive work environment for all staff, where appropriate.

3.2 Whistleblowing: Schools shall establish a whistleblowing procedure as per the [ADEK School Values and Ethics Policy](#). If the whistleblowing concern is raised by a member of staff or concerns a member of staff, then schools shall abide by the following requirements:

1. A staff member reporting a whistleblowing concern to law enforcement authorities shall not be deemed to be in breach of any non-disclosure or confidentiality agreement with the school.
2. Schools shall record and investigate whistleblowing concerns reported by staff or in which a staff member is the subject while protecting their identity and implementing appropriate sanctions.
3. Investigation Processes: Schools shall have in place a clear, standard, transparent process to investigate concerns reported including:

- a. Investigation of reports and imposition of appropriate sanctions as deemed necessary on the relevant stakeholders according to laws and regulations in force.
- b. Provision of support to staff throughout the investigation process to minimize negative impacts on their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- c. Adherence to applicable policies, regulations, and laws in the UAE in implementing sanctions.

4. Staff Wellbeing Records

- 4.1 Confidential Records: Schools shall uphold the confidentiality of staff wellbeing information as per the applicable Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 Concerning the Protection of Personal Data, and the [ADEK School Records Policy](#). Such information may include:
1. Staff medical records and information to which the school has access.
 2. Staff medical information reported to schools.
 3. Information and records on health or social care support provided by the school.

5. Compliance

- 5.1 This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). Schools are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).
- 5.2 Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the school is found to be in violation of its obligations.



References

- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 Concerning the Protection of Personal Data

Publication

2024 (September) ADEK_School_Staff Wellbeing Policy_v.1.1

Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Private and Charter Schools in Abu Dhabi. However, any circular issued prior to this policy or issued specifically for Charter Schools thereafter supersedes the requirements of this policy.

Past version:

2024 (January) ADEK_School_Staff Wellbeing Policy_v.1.0

