



# **SHINING STAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ABU DHABI**

## **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Shining Star International School (SSIS) recognizes the significance of promoting the well-being of its students, staff, and parents to foster a positive learning environment. The school is committed to spreading happiness and cultivating an atmosphere of innovation and creativity. This Pastoral Care Policy is designed to address the holistic development of students, encompassing their mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being.

## **II. RATIONALE/OBJECTIVES**

### **Promoting Well-being**

To enable students, staff, and parents to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, capabilities, and attributes necessary for mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being by implementing various evidence based models such as PERMA Model.

### **Empowering Choices**

Empowering choices refer to the ability and opportunity for individuals, particularly students in this context, to make decisions that enhance their well-being, development, and future prospects. It goes beyond mere decision-making to encompass the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to make informed and positive choices.

### **Cultivating a Positive Environment**

Cultivating a positive environment involves intentionally fostering an atmosphere that promotes optimism, productivity, collaboration, and personal growth. It encompasses creating spaces, whether physical or virtual, where individuals feel valued, respected, and supported in their endeavors. This can entail fostering open communication, encouraging creativity and innovation, and providing opportunities for learning and development.

### **Inspiring Positive Thinking**

Inspiring positive thinking involves encouraging individuals to adopt an optimistic and constructive mind-set towards life's challenges and opportunities. It entails promoting a belief in one's abilities to overcome obstacles, find solutions, and achieve goals. This can be

achieved through various means such as providing encouragement, sharing inspirational stories, and offering practical strategies for reframing negative thoughts into positive ones.

### **Teaching Belongingness**

Teaching belongingness involves creating an inclusive learning environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and accepted. It goes beyond traditional pedagogical methods by fostering a sense of community, connection, and emotional safety within the classroom or educational setting. Educators prioritize building relationships, promoting empathy, and acknowledging diverse perspectives to cultivate a culture of belonging. This approach acknowledges that students' sense of belonging significantly influences their engagement, motivation, and academic success.

## **III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Principal**

The role of a principal in pastoral care within a school is vital for fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for students' holistic development. Here are the typical roles and responsibilities of a principal in pastoral care:

#### **Overall Leadership**

The principal provides overall leadership in promoting a positive school culture conducive to the emotional, social, and academic well-being of students.

#### **Student Support Services Oversight**

Overseeing the provision of student support services such as counseling, mentoring, and special education to address individual needs.

#### **Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity**

Ensuring that pastoral care practices promote inclusivity and respect for diversity, including cultural, religious, and regional.

#### **Parent and Community Engagement**

Collaborating with parents, guardians, and the wider community to support students' well-being and address any concerns related to pastoral care.

## **2. Head of Inclusion**

The Head of Inclusion in a school plays a pivotal role in ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or needs, have equitable access to education and opportunities for success. Here are the typical roles and responsibilities of a Head of Inclusion:

### **Strategic Leadership**

Providing strategic leadership in promoting an inclusive school culture that celebrates diversity and respects the unique abilities and needs of all students.

### **Collaboration with Stakeholders**

Collaborating with teachers, staff, parents, and external agencies to develop and implement inclusive practices that meet the needs of diverse learners.

### **Professional Development**

Providing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in inclusive teaching practices, differentiation, and supporting students with diverse needs.

### **Individualized Support Plans**

Overseeing the development and implementation of individualized support plans, such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Personal Learning Plans (PLPs), for students with special educational needs or disabilities.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring the effectiveness of inclusion initiatives and support services, collecting data on student outcomes, and using evidence-based practices to evaluate and improve inclusion efforts.

### **Accessibility and Accommodations**

Ensuring that the school environment is accessible to all students and that appropriate accommodations are provided to support their learning and participation in school activities.

## **Collaborative Problem-Solving**

Collaborating with teachers, parents, and support staff to identify and address barriers to learning and participation for students with diverse needs, including behavioral, social, or academic challenges.

## **Advocacy**

Advocating for the rights and needs of students with disabilities or special educational needs within the school community and beyond, ensuring that they receive appropriate support and accommodations.

## **Community Engagement**

Engaging with the wider community to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity, organizing events, workshops, or awareness campaigns to foster an inclusive school community.

## **Crisis Intervention**

Providing support and guidance in crisis situations involving students with diverse needs, including behavior management, de-escalation techniques, and coordination with external agencies as needed.

## **IV. COUNSELLOR**

The counselor in a school setting plays a crucial role in providing pastoral care, supporting students' emotional well-being, and facilitating their overall personal and social development. Here are the typical roles and responsibilities of a counselor for pastoral care in a school:

### **Individual Counseling**

Providing one-on-one counseling sessions to students who may be experiencing emotional distress, mental health issues, academic challenges, or personal difficulties.

### **Group Counseling**

Facilitating group counseling sessions to address common issues among students, such as peer relationships, grief and loss, stress management, or social skills development.

## **Assessment and Referral**

Conducting assessments to identify students' needs and concerns, and referring them to appropriate support services or external agencies for specialized assistance, such as mental health professionals or social workers.

## **Psychoeducation**

Providing psychoeducational resources and workshops to students, teachers, and parents on topics related to mental health, emotional well-being, conflict resolution, and coping strategies.

## **Collaboration with Stakeholders**

Collaborating with teachers, administrators, parents, and external agencies to support students' holistic development and address their individual needs within the school community.

## **Preventive Programs**

Developing and implementing preventive programs and interventions to promote positive mental health and prevent issues such as bullying, substance abuse, or academic stress.

## **Advocacy**

Advocating for students' needs and rights within the school system, including advocating for appropriate accommodations, support services, or adjustments to facilitate their academic and personal success.

## **Confidentiality and Ethics**

Ensuring confidentiality and adhering to ethical guidelines in counseling practice, maintaining students' trust and privacy while providing effective support and intervention.

## **Parental Support**

Providing support and guidance to parents or guardians who may have concerns about their child's emotional well-being or behavior, offering resources, referrals, and strategies for supporting their child at home.

### **Collaborative Problem-Solving**

Collaborating with students, parents, and school staff to identify underlying issues affecting students' well-being and develop strategies for addressing these issues in a collaborative manner.

### **Advocacy for Mental Health Awareness**

Advocating for greater awareness and understanding of mental health issues within the school community, reducing stigma, and promoting a culture of empathy, acceptance, and support for all students.

## **V. PASTORAL CAREGIVER**

The role of a Pastoral Caregiver in a school is crucial for the overall well-being and development of students. Pastoral Caregivers typically work within the framework of the school's pastoral care program, which aims to support students academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Here are some common roles and responsibilities associated with this position:

### **Mentoring and Counseling**

Providing one-on-one counseling and guidance to students who may be experiencing personal, social, or emotional difficulties. Offering mentorship to help students navigate challenges and make positive choices in their lives.

### **Supporting Student Welfare**

Monitoring and promoting the overall welfare and well-being of students within the school community. Collaborating with teachers, administrators, and parents to identify and address any issues impacting students' welfare. Intervening when necessary to ensure the safety and security of students, both on and off-campus.

### **Promoting Positive Behavior and Discipline:**

Implementing strategies to foster a positive and respectful school environment. Developing and enforcing school policies related to behavior and discipline in collaboration with other staff members. Providing guidance and support to students to help them understand and adhere to behavioral expectations.

### **Facilitating Peer Support Programs:**

Organizing and overseeing peer support programs or initiatives to encourage positive relationships among students. Training student leaders to act as peer mentors or mediators within the school community. Providing guidance and supervision for peer support activities and initiatives.

### **Promoting Positive Relationships with Families**

Communicating regularly with parents or guardians to update them on their child's progress and well-being. Providing support and guidance to families facing challenges that may impact their child's education or well-being. Collaborating with families to develop strategies for supporting students' holistic development both at home and at school.

### **Professional Development and Collaboration:**

Engaging in ongoing professional development to stay current on best practices in pastoral care, counseling techniques, and youth development. Collaborating with other school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, to create a cohesive support network for students.

Participating in team meetings, case conferences, and professional learning communities to share insights and expertise in supporting student well-being.

## **VI. FORM TUTORS**

Form tutors play a crucial role in providing pastoral care within schools, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for students. Their responsibilities typically include:

### **Mentoring and Guidance**

Form tutors serve as mentors and guides for their assigned group of students. They provide academic advice, offer guidance on personal development, and help students set and achieve goals.

### **Monitoring Progress**

Form tutors track the academic progress and overall development of their students. They review grades, attendance records, and behavior reports to identify any areas of concern and intervene when necessary.



## **Building Relationships**

Form tutors establish strong relationships with their students, creating a safe and trusting environment where students feel comfortable discussing any issues or concerns they may have.

## **Supporting Well-being**

Form tutors promote the well-being of their students by addressing any emotional or social challenges they may face. They offer support and guidance during difficult times and refer students to appropriate resources, such as counselors or support groups, when needed.

## **Encouraging Attendance and Participation**

Form tutors encourage regular attendance and active participation in school activities. They monitor attendance records and work with students to address any issues that may be affecting their attendance or engagement.

## **Promoting Positive Behavior**

Form tutors reinforce positive behavior and values within their tutor groups. They address any instances of misconduct or disciplinary issues promptly and work with students to help them understand the importance of respectful behavior.

## **Facilitating Communication**

Form tutors serve as a point of contact between students, parents, and other school staff. They communicate regularly with parents to provide updates on their child's progress and address any concerns they may have.

## **Providing Academic Support**

Form tutors offer academic support to their students, helping them with homework, study skills, and exam preparation. They may also identify students who require additional support and coordinate with subject teachers or learning support staff to provide targeted interventions.

## **Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity**

Form tutors create an inclusive and diverse environment where all students feel valued and respected. They celebrate differences and promote understanding and acceptance among students from various backgrounds and cultures.

## **Professional Development**

Form tutors engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge in pastoral care. They attend training sessions, workshops, and conferences to stay informed about best practices and emerging trends in student support and well-being.

## **VII. HOUSE SYSTEM**

The house system in our school is designed to foster a sense of community and healthy competition among students. We have four houses, each with its unique identity: Hercules (Green House), Aquarius (Blue House), Leo (Yellow House), and Phoenix (Red House). The benefits of the house system include Community Building, Competition and Excellence, Leadership Development, Character Building, Recognition and Rewards and Inclusivity.

### **House In-charges**

The house in charges play a crucial role in overseeing the activities and tasks of their respective houses. They encourage participation of Houses in different activities and competitions, sports inculcating a spirit of team building and sportsmanship among students.

### **House Captains**

House captains play a crucial role in the school house system, serving as leaders and representatives of their respective houses. Their responsibilities encompass leadership, organization, motivation, and representation within the school house system. Their contributions are vital to the success and effectiveness of the system as a whole.

### **The Student Council**

The Student Council is a representative structure for all the students in the school. It provides students with the opportunity to become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents. It should always work for the benefit of the school and its students. The Student Council will always work in consultation with the school management. The Student Council have responsibility for:

- Working with the staff in the school
- Communicating and consulting with all of the students in the school

- Involving as many students as possible in the activities of the Council
- Planning and managing the Council’s programme of activities for the year
- Giving presentations on the work of the committee at assemblies
- Being a role model for the school
- Representing the School at special events
- Helping to organize cultural and academic events
- Caring of new students who join the school.

### **VIII. LIAISON WITH PARENTS FOR PASTORAL CARE**

We see ourselves as partners with parents in the education of pupils. Mutual support and cooperation is an essential element in achieving our objectives. On-going activities to ensure communication and parental involvement include:

- Regular parent/teacher meetings
- Progress reports
- Awards for positive behavior and achievement
- Consultation with parents regarding policies
- Electronic communication
- Coffee with Principal
- Principal and Student Council Meetups
- Mann Ki Baat Principal Kay Saath

### **IX. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Pastoral care remains a permanent feature of our School Development Plan and subsequently staff development and training are considered essential to support this. Our ongoing development programme helps teachers identify the attitudes, values, skills and knowledge which will enable them to carry out their pastoral roles. Training programmes are organised through:

- On Site Courses
- Online Courses

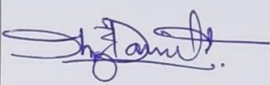
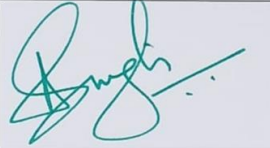
A good Pastoral Care System recognises the importance of teacher welfare and morale. We are committed to developing support in these areas.

## **X. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

- The Pastoral Care Policy will be disseminated to all members of the school community and readily available.
- A designated Pastoral Care Team will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the policy.
- Regular review and evaluation will be conducted to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective, incorporating feedback from all stakeholders.

## **XI. COMMITMENT**

Shining Star International School is committed to fostering a positive and nurturing environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. We believe that prioritizing well-being is essential for academic success, personal growth, and preparing future leaders who contribute positively to the world.

	Name	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Dr. Aby Daniel A. Head of Inclusion		20/09/2024
Policy Review Approved by:	Mrs. Abhilasha Singh (Principal)		03/10/2024

## **REFERENCES:**

1. ADEK Guidelines on Student Well-being and Pastoral Care
2. UAE National Strategy for Well-being 2031
3. School-Based Pastoral Care Programs (School Policies)
4. Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) Well-being Framework

## 5. UNESCO International Guidelines on School-Based Well-being