Approved by: Principal	Date: 30 January 2026

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#	Description of Changes	Rev. No	Date of Issue
1	First Issue	00	21 June 24

ICS Vision

The “School of Choice” inspiring, challenging, and empowering a 21st-century learning community through an ethical and innovative education system.

ICS Mission

Provide a safe, friendly learning environment where lifelong learners follow an international curriculum which promotes academic excellence and nurtures key values and competencies in our global-minded, future leaders.

Introduction

- ICS recognizes that student wellbeing is crucial for academic success and personal development.
- The school is committed to maintaining and nurturing the mental health of its students.
- ICS aims to identify and support students at risk of poor mental health by providing timely intervention and mental health services.

Purpose

- Prioritize mental health within all areas of the ICS school environment.
- Encourage a community-wide approach by promoting mental health through awareness campaigns involving students, staff, and parents.
- Support early identification, prevention, and intervention for mental health concerns through established systems and protocols.

Definitions

- **Additional Learning Needs:** Individual accommodations required for students who face barriers to learning, access, or interaction, including those with disabilities or other unique needs.
- **Confidentiality:** Respecting a student's privacy by not disclosing information unless specified under agreed conditions.
- **Coping Mechanism:** Adjustments or adaptations to alleviate stress and anxiety in challenging situations.
- **Counseling:** Personalized therapeutic support from qualified professionals for students' academic, career, and social-emotional needs.
- **Concerning Behavior:** Significant changes in behavior that could negatively impact the individual's or others' wellbeing.
- **Emotional Regulation:** The ability to appropriately manage emotions in response to internal and external stimuli.
- **Mental Health:** A state of wellbeing enabling individuals to realize their potential, cope with stress, work productively, and contribute to their community.
- **Suicidal Ideation:** Thoughts about or a preoccupation with killing oneself.
- **Wellness Space:** An area in the school accessible to all students, designated for recuperation and the promotion of calmness and mental and emotional health.
- **Young Caregiver:** A student who tends to the needs and concerns of their parents or other family members with short-term or long-term limitations due to illness, injury, or disability.
- **Neglect:** Failure of a parent or any adult supervising a student to provide for the basic needs and rights of a student toward their physical safety, development, and wellbeing, which may lead to a failure to thrive in the context of the resources reasonably available to the parent. Such failure causes or has a high probability of causing significant harm to the student's health and/or physical, social, educational, mental, spiritual, or moral integrity.
- **Parent:** The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per the Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights.
- **Protective Factor:** Behavior or characteristic that reduces the likelihood or impact of negative outcomes on an individual (e.g., having social support networks).
- **Protective Factor:** A behavior or trait that reduces the likelihood or impact of negative outcomes.
- **School Counselor:** A social care professional offering guidance and counseling to promote student wellbeing.
- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Knowledge and skills that enable self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience.
- **Documented Learning Plan:** A plan which outlines any personalized learning targets, modifications to curriculum, additional support, or tools for learning which are agreed by school staff, parents, and students (where appropriate), including Individual Educational Plans (IEP), Individual Support Plans (ISP), Individual Learning Plans (ILP), Behavior Support plans (BSP), Advanced Learning Plans (ALP), etc. This may be to address any specific identified academic, behavioral, language, or social and emotional need.

Mental Health Awareness and Education

- At ICS, we are committed to teaching students about mental health and promoting balanced, healthy living.
- Our goal is to increase protective factors and help students develop effective coping mechanisms.
- We teach mindfulness, social and emotional learning (e.g., emotional regulation and resilience), stress management, time management, and organization.
- We emphasize fostering a supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking help for mental health concerns.
- Actions that may lead to stigmatization are avoided.
- For older students, we address specific mental health challenges, including:
    - Recognizing and managing depression and anxiety.
    - Coping with family-related issues like separation or divorce.
    - Understanding the dangers of substance abuse and how to prevent it.
    - Identifying eating disorders and their causes.
    - Navigating digital gaming addiction.
    - Learning about suicide prevention and identifying warning signs of suicidal ideation.
    - Understanding how to access help for maltreatment concerns.
- At ICS, we are dedicated to raising parental awareness by:
    - Regularly informing parents about our mental health policies and initiatives.
    - Providing opportunities for parents to engage in discussions about their child's mental health and wellbeing.

Counseling and Support Services

- ICS ensures that every student has access to counseling services whenever needed.
- Each step of the counseling process is meticulously documented to align with required policies.
- Counselors at ICS:
    - Are carefully selected, either hired internally or through authorized external providers.
    - Work collaboratively with teachers, parents, and other relevant parties to support each student's mental health.
    - Refer students to external experts when more specialized care is required, while maintaining strict confidentiality.
- ICS has a dedicated social worker to:
    - Support students and their families.
    - Bridge the gap between the school, home, and broader community.
    - Help students overcome personal, social, and emotional challenges while ensuring academic and social success.
- To raise mental health awareness, ICS:
    - Has established a mental health lead to promote social-emotional learning.
    - Ensures the role promotes a culture of openness and understanding about mental health within the school.

Confidentiality

- At ICS, confidentiality is a top priority in all mental health matters.
- Counselors and social workers:

    - Strictly adhere to local laws concerning the protection of personal data.
    - Only share information with relevant parties when it is in the best interest of the student or legally required.
- Staff are trained to report concerns such as potential self-harm or maltreatment immediately to the safeguarding team.
- In cases of significant concerns like suicidal ideation or severe substance abuse, school leadership is immediately involved to ensure prompt action.
- Students are informed about the limits of confidentiality in age-appropriate language.

Parental Consent

- ICS seeks parental consent whenever counseling services are structured or provided regularly.
- Parental consent is not required for unstructured interactions, such as impromptu conversations.
- If informing parents may negatively impact the student's wellbeing, ICS prioritizes the best interest of the child.
- If parents refuse to consent to necessary counseling, this refusal is documented, and safeguarding steps are taken to ensure the child's safety and health.

Referral Pathways

- ICS is committed to providing students with the support they need.
- When a student requires specialized support beyond the school counselor's qualifications, we ensure they are referred to external professionals.
- The referral process:
    - Allows students, teachers, or other staff members to report signs of concerning behavior.
    - Gives special attention to students who may be young caregivers, ensuring they receive necessary counseling and support.
- Referral pathways are:
    - Communicated to all relevant stakeholders.
    - Published in the Parent Handbook to ensure the entire ICS community understands how to access mental health support.

Support During Vulnerable Phases

- ICS recognizes that certain periods during the school year can be particularly stressful for students.
- These periods might include:
    - Exam times.
    - University applications.
    - Transitions between grade levels.
- We take proactive steps to minimize student stress and enhance mental health by:
    - Offering study leaves for major exams, providing time and space for students to prepare effectively.
    - Holding one-on-one sessions at the end of each semester for feedback and emotional support.

- Offering workshops designed to help students build resilience and manage stress during these challenging times.

Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs

- At ICS, the Head of Inclusion works closely with teachers, specialists, parents, and counselors to protect and promote the mental health of students with additional learning needs.
- Each student has an individualized Documented Learning Plan (DLP) tailored to their level of functioning and specific needs.
- Reasonable accommodations are made, including:
  - Adjusting schedules to include more breaks for students experiencing anxiety.
  - Allowing flexibility in uniform requirements for students with sensory sensitivities.
  - Closely monitoring students at risk of being teased or bullied to ensure their safety.

Confidentiality

- All interactions between students and counselors will be confidential, in line with applicable legal requirements.
- Counselors will disclose information only when necessary to protect the student's wellbeing or when legally required.

Compliance

- The ICS Student Mental Health Policy will take effect at the beginning of the 2024/25 academic year.
- Full compliance is required by the 2025/26 academic year.
- Non-compliance may result in legal and institutional accountability measures.

Link Policies:

- Digital Policy
- Educational Risk Policy
- Extracurricular Activities and Events Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- In-School Specialist Services Policy
- Physical Education and School Sports Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Student Behavior Policy
- Student Mental Health Policy
- Student Protection Policy
- Sustainability Policy
- Wellbeing Policy