

**Cambridge International School****Student Mental Health and Well-being  
Policy and Procedures**

NAME OF POLICY	Student Mental Health and Well-being Policy and Procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	September 2025
SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	August 2026
RELATED POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GEMS Safeguarding Policy</li><li>• E-Learning Policy</li><li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li><li>• Student Code of Conduct Policy</li><li>• Attendance Policy</li></ul>

## Purpose

At Cambridge International School (CIS), we are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all students, families, and staff. We provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our whole school vision and mission has wellbeing at the core of everything that we do:

**Vision:** *At CIS we collaborate with passion, innovate with purpose and succeed with excellence.*

**Mission:** *At CIS, we prioritise wellbeing and inclusion, fostering a nurturing community where every student thrives as a high-performance learner. Guided by our core values of respect, empathy, honesty, responsibility, and perseverance, we empower students to collaborate, innovate, and succeed.*

## Scope:

This policy guides all parents and staff – including non-teaching and LAB members – outlining CIS's approach to promoting mental health and emotional well-being. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies. We uphold GEMS values and pledge to **care** for all stakeholders within our school

## Excellence Plan:



# CARE

I respect the needs of my stakeholders. I will ensure they feel listened to and cared for.

- **At CIS** we will embed Leadership Gemstones throughout the school placing leadership and character building at the heart of our school community.
- **At CIS** we will continue to develop and deliver outstanding practice in the areas of inclusion and continue to support our most vulnerable students.
- **At CIS** we will ensure that the wellbeing of students and staff is considered and prioritized at all times.
- **At CIS** we will secure outstanding ratings for all aspects of Safeguarding and Health and Safety.
- **At CIS** we will actively promote and integrate UAE national identity, Emirati culture, and the National Agenda throughout the curriculum and school life, ensuring students develop a deep understanding and appreciation of the values, heritage, and vision of the United Arab Emirates.

## Policy Aims

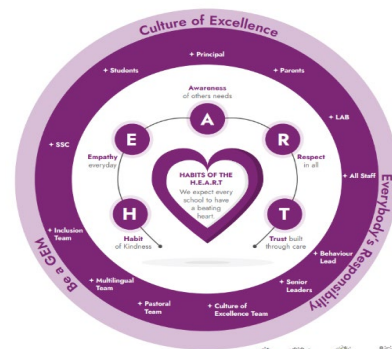
- ✓ Promote positive mental health, resilience, and emotional wellbeing for all students.
- ✓ Provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment responsive to the needs of each learner.
- ✓ Foster positive relationships between students, staff, and parents.
- ✓ Ensure early identification of mental health needs and timely intervention.
- ✓ Embed wellbeing in daily practice through evidence-based approaches, curriculum, and culture.

## Culture of Excellence and Be A GEM Ethos

At CIS, wellbeing is inseparable from our Culture of Excellence. This culture is underpinned by the GEMS values of *Care, One Team, Always Learning and Excellence* and is lived daily through the Be a GEM ethos.

The Be a GEM approach ensures:

- Accentuating the Positive: We deliberately highlight, praise, and reward behaviours that reflect our values, ensuring positive recognition outweighs negative consequences.



- Finding the Genius: We actively look for moments where students shine, reinforcing confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset.
- Shared Routines: Consistent routines across the school (e.g., the GEMS Gateway greeting, positive endings to each day) build rhythm, security, and belonging.
- Celebration and Recognition: Students are regularly recognised through certificates, postcards, GEM of the Week, Sparkling GEMS awards, and Leadership Gemstone celebrations.

Through this ethos, we cultivate a school environment where students are encouraged to be the best version of themselves—resilient, respectful, and ready to learn.

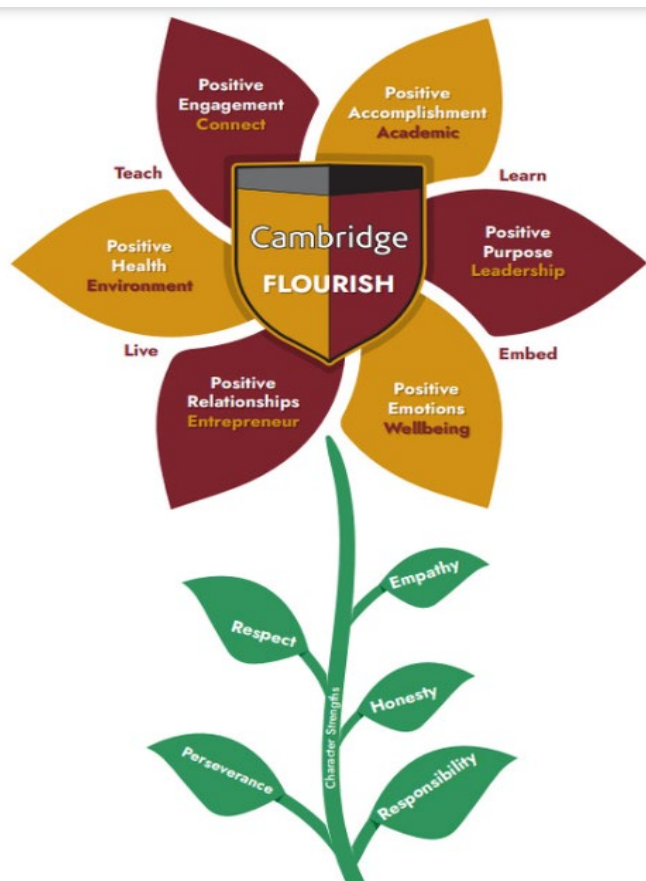
### Leadership Gemstones

The Leadership Gemstones framework is central to our character and wellbeing education. Each month a Gemstone theme (e.g. *Resilience, Respect, Compassion, Integrity, Responsibility*) provides a shared focus across the school.



- Offers a consistent language for character and leadership.
- Encourages students to practise leadership habits that build trust, courage, and empathy.
- Connects directly to our **Stand Up, Speak Out** anti-bullying framework, reinforcing that resilience includes speaking up for oneself and supporting others.
- Delivered through explicit Curriculum For Life and student-led initiatives, including class lessons, assemblies, and home activities that strengthen our *Family First* approach.

### Teaching and Learning



We recognise the importance of Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology approach at CIS, which underpins our bespoke **Curriculum For Life** through the **Positive Education Enhanced Curriculum (PEEC/ VIA)**. It is a proactive approach across the whole school to provide students with skills and knowledge for when difficulties arise. Lessons build coping skills, resilience, and awareness of emotions, aligned with **MSCS** guidance. We always strive to adopt a strength-based/accultuate the positive approach, the idea of having a language about what is right within our community and upholds the GEMS core values.

Time allocation for wellbeing and CFL is reviewed annually, with age-appropriate approaches across EYFS, Primary, and Secondary. Programs within CFL include: **Beyond 100, Leadership Gemstones, Squirrel, My Compass, Unifrog, Lifeology.**










### Family First

Through the **Family First** initiative, we provide parents with simple, practical strategies to nurture positive habits and wellbeing beyond the classroom. Families are encouraged to take part in home learning linked to **wellbeing and the Leadership Gemstones**—such as gratitude reflections, movement challenges, and “Be a GEM” activities. This shared approach ensures that the

values of **Respect, Empathy, Honesty, Responsibility, Perseverance**, and the **Beyond100 daily habits** are consistently reinforced at home and at school, fostering a culture where every child can flourish.

Capable **Kids** (EYFS), **Junior Duke** (Years 1 – 6), and the **Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)**

(Secondary) is a program that builds resilience, leadership, teamwork and service to the community that can be achieved at home. The **DofE Award** is an internationally recognised youth development program and students work through three levels (bronze, silver and gold).

Whole school timings for the explicit teaching of Well-being:					
Beyond 100 whole school program incorporated within the school day: 	<b>Monday Move Beyond</b> (physical activity and energy) 5 minutes	<b>Tuesday Nourish Beyond</b> (healthy nutrition and habits) 5 minutes	<b>Wednesday Rest Beyond</b> (sleep and recovery) 5 minutes	<b>Thursday Think Beyond</b> (mindset and purpose) 5 minutes	<b>Friday Align Beyond</b> (reflection and growth) 5 minutes
<b>Early Years Foundation stage</b> <i>Daily Emotion tracker at the start of the day</i>	<b>Emotional check in/ DEAR Time</b> 20minutes <b>Assembly –</b> 30mins (Once a month)	<b>PEEC/ VIA lesson –</b> 20mins	 20 minutes	<b>PEEC/ VIA lesson –</b> 20mins	<b>Emotional check in/ DEAR Time</b> 20minutes <b>Life Skills</b> Focus of the Month 20 mins
<b>Years 1 - 2</b> <i>Daily Emotion tracker at the start of the day (Year 1)</i> <i>Upstrive Tracker during Registration (Year 2)</i>	<b>PEEC/ VIA and Character Strengths (VIA)</b> 20 minutes	<b>Emotional check in/ DEAR Time</b> 20minutes	 20 minutes	<b>Emotional check in/ DEAR Time</b> 20minutes <b>Life skills:</b> Focus of the month <b>W4</b>	<b>Y1 &amp; 2 Collective Celebration Assembly</b> 40 minutes
<b>Years 3 – 4</b> <i>Upstrive Tracker during Registration</i>	<b>PEEC and Character Strengths (VIA)</b> 20 minutes	Financial Literacy <b>Squirrel</b> 20 minutes	 20 minutes	Future Careers <b>My Compass</b> 20 minutes	<b>Primary Collective Celebration Assembly</b> 40 minutes
<b>Years 5 – 6</b> <i>Upstrive Tracker during Registration</i>	Future Careers <b>My Compass</b> 20 minutes	<b>PEEC/ VIA and Character Strengths (VIA)</b> 20 minutes	Financial Literacy <b>Squirrel</b> 20 minutes	 20 minutes	
<b>Years 7 – 8</b>	<b>Assembly</b> 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/</b>  HOY/ Suzie 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/</b> Future Careers <b>My Compass</b> 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/ DEAR Time</b> 30minutes	Registration Time Reflection
<b>Year 9 – 10</b>	<b>Upstrive/</b>  HOY/ Suzie 30 minutes	<b>Assembly</b> 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/ DEAR Time</b> 30minutes	<b>Upstrive/</b> Future Careers <b>My Compass/Unifrog</b> 30 minutes	Registration Time Reflection
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Upstrive/ DEAR Time</b> 30minutes	<b>Upstrive/ Unifrog</b> 30 minutes	<b>Assembly</b> 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/</b>  HOY/ Suzie 30 minutes	Registration Time Reflection
<b>Years 12 and 13</b>	<b>Upstrive/ Unifrog</b> 30 minutes	<b>Upstrive/ DEAR Time</b> 30minutes	<b>Upstrive/</b>  HOY/ Suzie 30 minutes	<b>Assembly</b> 30 minutes	<i>Year 12 and 13 have flexible CFL time based on the upcoming Career Fairs</i>

### **Beyond100**

CIS is proud to be part of Beyond100, a pioneering wellbeing and longevity programme. **Beyond100** integrates five wellbeing pillars into daily school life:

- Move Beyond (physical activity and energy)
- Nourish Beyond (healthy nutrition and habits)
- Rest Beyond (sleep and recovery)
- Think Beyond (mindset and purpose)
- Align Beyond (reflection and growth)



These 5-minute daily habits help students develop resilience, focus, and healthy routines, supporting both immediate learning and long-term wellbeing. This initiative complements our Leadership Gemstones and Be a GEM ethos, ensuring that both character and wellbeing are strengthened every day.

## The Four Quadrants

At CIS, we use **four quadrants** to ensure that **student voice, well-being, personalised learning, and preparing for the future** are key drivers within our explicit and implicit teaching of well-being.

## Student Voice

We empower students to take ownership of their wellbeing. In FS, children share feelings at registration using visual prompts, while from Year 3 onwards they use Upstrive to identify emotions, make choices, and seek support. All students can raise concerns via *Speak Up* and *Phoenix*, monitored by the School Counsellor. Roles such as *Well-being Leaders* and *Mental Health First Aiders* further encourage peer support and advocacy.

## Student Wellbeing

Every CIS student has the right to be respected, to learn, and to feel safe. Our leadership teams, LAB, and Parent Wellbeing Team keep wellbeing at the heart of our school. Staff act as trusted adults, supported by School Counsellors, and we celebrate achievements through daily *Phoenix Points* as rewards to support a culture of positivity, *Weekly Awards* that recognise students who exemplify our GEMS values, *Positive Postcards* to acknowledge students who have achieved point thresholds, and *Monthly Awards* recognise our Leadership Gemstone. Half-termly **Sparkling GEMS Assembly** recognises students that uphold GEMS values as we celebrate collectively.

## Personalised Learning

The *Curriculum for Life (CFL)*, built on the Positive Education Enhanced Curriculum, explicitly teaches wellbeing skills to help students flourish. Tools like the *PASS survey* and *Leuven Scale* track needs, while targeted interventions with teachers, parents, and external experts provide holistic support.

## Preparing for the Future

Through CFL, students build independence, resilience, and life skills. They engage in financial literacy, sustainability, and career programmes such as *Squirrel*, *Earth Cubs*, *My Compass*, and, in Secondary, *Unifrog*, *My Mentor*, and the *Duke of Edinburgh Award*.

## Resilience and Anti-Bullying

Resilience is crucial in helping students stand strong, overcome challenges, and support one another. At CIS, resilience links directly to our **Stand Up, Speak Out** message on bullying. We teach that resilience includes:

- Finding the courage to speak up.
- Standing with and for others.
- Creating a culture where bullying, exclusion, and unkindness are not tolerated.

Our **anti-bullying framework** is aligned with the Leadership Gemstones. Monthly themes proactively teach students how to be upstanders, equipping them with the confidence and strategies to support peers and maintain a safe, respectful school environment [35†source] .

## Despite all we do to promote positive mental health and well-being we know that some students may suffer from poor mental health

## Identification process

We aim to identify student wellbeing and mental health needs as early as possible through proactive systems and regular monitoring. Key areas such as safeguarding, attendance, welfare, and health and safety are standing agenda items, ensuring emerging concerns are swiftly acted upon.

## How We Identify Needs

- Wellbeing calendar, surveys, and behaviour/attendance analysis.

- Staff reports, pupil progress reviews, and assemblies focusing on wellbeing themes.
- Transfer information from previous schools.
- Parent meetings, coffee mornings, and open channels for concerns.
- Student self-referrals via teachers, **Speak Up**, or **Phoenix**.

**Attendance** is closely tracked, as persistent absence may signal safeguarding or mental health concerns.

## **PASS**

Students flagged through **PASS surveys**, poor attendance, diagnosis, or external support are referred for intervention. Strategies are noted on lesson plans, including:

- Key actions and performance indicators to indicate small, achievable targets.
- Notes on condition/diagnosis, special requirements, or medication.

## **Upstrive**

'Upstrive' an online application is used daily from Y2-Y13 to monitor student well-being. Students complete their daily 'check-in' at the start of each morning which their Learning Manager views. The check-in asks, 'How are you feeling today?' each student's response is confidentially shared with their teacher. The student also has the option to write and disclose why they are feeling this way. Responses are reviewed by Learning Managers, Heads of Year, and School Counsellors, who act on any disclosures.

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

Wellbeing skills are explicitly taught through the **CFL**, assemblies, and the *Mental Health First Aiders* and *Happiness Ambassadors* plan awareness weeks throughout the year, such as online safety, anti-bullying, autism awareness. Lessons build coping strategies and resilience, aligned with MSCS guidance. Additionally, we use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

## **Signposting**

Information about internal, local, and national support services is shared via the screens in corridors, displays, newsletters, and the school website so students and families know: *what help is available, who it is for, how to access it, and what to expect*. The Safeguarding core team, Student Support Mentors and MHFA posters are positioned around the school.

## **Sources of support at school and in the local community / School based support:**

### **Local Support**

In Dubai, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support for mental health. A Government portal for Mental Health is available here - [Mental health - The Official Portal of the UAE Government](#)

Emirates Health Services which provides Mental Health Services - [Mental Health Services | Services Directory | Services | Emirates Health Services - UAE \(ehs.gov.ae\)](#)

### **Warning signs**

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student or colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert one of the Key Staff Members noted on page 2.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood.
- Lowering of academic achievement / enthusiasm for vocation.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope.

### **Targeted Support**

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health (e.g.,

young carers, those in care, experiencing trauma or family mental illness) and they receive tailored interventions from School Counsellors, the wellbeing team, and external agencies. Support may include care plans, early intervention strategies, and referrals.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural challenges.
- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs.
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, so that emotional, social, and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur.
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality.
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers.

*It is essential all staff members to recognise the boundary between support and professional health care. **Only suitably trained healthcare professionals are qualified to diagnose and treat health conditions, whether mental or physical.***

### Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive, and non-judgemental. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially using 'Guard' and raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy DSL). Our Mental Health First Aiders are trained so that any disclosures made to them will immediately be reported to the School Counsellor (who coordinates them) and ultimately Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy DSL as appropriate. Support will be available for Mental Health First Aiders through regular meetings with the School Counsellor.

### Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on serious concerns about a student to someone outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student and/or parents. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we are going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student and/or parents first; however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as when students are deemed to be in danger of harm. It is important to also safeguard staff emotional well-being. Sharing disclosures with a Key Staff Member or DSL as appropriate ensures one member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support. If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

### Working with Parents

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents of any concerns, there are questions we consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Can the meeting take place somewhere quiet without disturbance?
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents, Key Staff Members etc?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for any parent, hearing about concerns for their child can be upsetting and distressing. Staff should allow time for parents to reflect, while offering reassurance and signposting to further sources of support where helpful. Clear communication must be maintained after the meeting, with follow-up arranged

if needed. A record of the discussion and agreed actions should be added to the student's Guard record, and an Individual Care Plan created where appropriate.

### Supporting Parents

We recognise that the family plays a key role in influencing students' emotional health and well-being; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and well-being by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to material promoting social and emotional well-being and preventing mental health problems.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (social media, newsletters etc.).
- Offering support to help parents develop their parenting skills as appropriate.
- Offering bespoke 1:1 support and advice through our School Counsellors.
- Having open lines of communication between parents and class teacher or tutor, Head of Year and/or Key Staff Members.
- Well-being seminars to be held for parents by the School Counsellors.

### Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from poor mental health, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support them but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one-to-one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents, with whom we will discuss:

- What is it helpful for friends to know, and what should they not be told?
- How can friends best support and provide safe sources of further information?
- Things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Signposting where and how to access support for themselves.
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

### Roles and Responsibilities

All staff share responsibility for promoting student wellbeing. Specific roles include:

- **Class teachers, TAs, LSAs** to monitor student wellbeing and signpost for support if needed
- **Heads of Year, Director of Inclusion and Pastoral Leads (Student Mentors and Student Support Managers)** – monitor wellbeing data and provide support.
- **School Counsellors** – deliver targeted interventions and guidance.
- **Heads of Department** – oversee the delivery and curriculum planning for Moral, Social, Cultural Studies
- **Mental Health First Aiders, Leadership Gemstone Ambassadors and Wellbeing Ambassadors** – peer-to-peer support.
- **Safeguarding Team** – ensure safety and protection.
- **Senior Leadership Team** – oversee strategy, data, and provision.

If staff have concerns about a student's mental health or wellbeing, they should first inform the **Head of Year** and, where needed, refer to the **School Counsellor** (see Appendix 1). All concerns are shared with the Head/Deputy Head during weekly and SLT wellbeing meetings. If a student is at **immediate risk of harm**, staff must follow child protection procedures, notify the **DSL/Deputy DSL** without delay, and follow medical emergency protocols, including contacting emergency services if required.

### Heads of Years Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of the Year are key pastoral leaders at CIS and are responsible for monitoring and supporting students within their year group. HOY actively:

- Lead and oversee proactive programmes that promote student wellbeing.
- Analyse wellbeing and **PASS** and **attendance** data; ensure timely interventions are in place.
- Support **Learning Managers** in using *Upstrive* (Y2–Y13) and ensure daily wellbeing check-ins in **EYFS**.
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders on student behaviour, attendance, and wellbeing.
- Work with school medical staff to support students with identified or ongoing health needs.
- **EYFS**: Oversee Leadership Gemstones, B100, monthly life skills and *PEEC/ VIA* implementation with Learning Managers.

- **Primary:** Oversee *Squirrel, My Compass*, Leadership Gemstones, B100, and *PEEC/ VIA* implementation with Learning Managers.
- **Secondary:** Oversee *Unifrog, My Mentor*, Leadership Gemstones, B100, collate data with Learning Managers, and lead the *My Compass* careers programme.
- Develop and implement the school management policies and procedures.

### Training and Staff Wellbeing

All staff receive regular training in recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of child protection. Further training on supporting children's mental health is provided, with access to the **MindEd** online learning portal for self-directed learning. Additional CPD and targeted training are offered through performance management and in response to emerging needs. Staff are encouraged to discuss CPD suggestions with SLT and School Counsellors, who can advise on suitable opportunities.

There is a dedicated Director of Wellbeing, and the Staff Wellbeing Team (which includes school counsellors) that promote PERMAH and well-being throughout the school. An additional policy for Staff Well-being includes the procedures at CIS. The Staff Well-being policy is shared with staff and outlines pillars for support and tools to promote well-being. All staff have access to the school counsellors and can be signposted to external counsellors. Staff well-being feedback is collected and the data is analysed, an action plan is then created and processes and policies are reviewed accordingly.

All staff will:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect;
- Leaders and staff lead by example and execute routines exceptionally well using Be A GEM: leadership habit
- Understand their safeguarding duties concerning students' mental and physical health and well-being, and raise any concerns promptly with the DSL or other members of the safeguarding team;
- Adhere to this policy and any related policies and procedures.

CIS creates a supportive environment which allows students to flourish and live the core values of GEMS: *Care, One Team, Always Learning and Excellence*. Relationships are key to our success. Our approach to developing positive relationships and a school with a strong heart beat are summarised in the acronym HEART:

- » H – habit of kindness
- » E – Empathy everyday
- » A – Awareness of others' needs
- » R – Respect in all
- » T – Trust built through care

