

Mission Statement:
Creating tomorrow's successful and caring citizens today.



GFM Safeguarding and Inclusion Policy

| Policy Updated By | Latest Publish Date | Monitoring Cycle |
|--|---------------------|------------------|
| Akram Tarik Jaqueline Morris Kausor Amin-Ali | January 2024 | Annually |

Schedule for Development / Monitoring / Review

| | |
|---|---|
| This policy was approved by the Governing Body on: | January 2023 |
| The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the: | Principal and Senior Leadership Team |
| The Policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments. The next anticipated review date will be: | January 2024 |
| Should serious incidents take place, the following external persons/agencies should be informed: | Akram Tarik (Principal) and in his absence (Vice Principal) |

SAFEGUARDING AND INCLUSION



GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE ADDITIONALLY VULNERABLE DURING PERIODS OF REMOTE LEARNING

All staff conduct throughout digital and remote learning must remain in line with GEMS Safeguarding Policy Manual, GEMS Safer Working Practice Guidance and all other relevant policies. The conduct of all parties, including students, parents and staff includes the strict prohibition of cyber bullying, online harassment and the use of inappropriate language in any communication.

In line with wider safeguarding and inclusion policies, it is important that we continue to meet the individual needs of all our students, especially through these times of remote and digital learning.

You may have additional concerns about how we do this for our most vulnerable learners. The information

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below provides schools with guidance when developing distance learning protocols relating to safeguarding and inclusion.

This does not serve as an exhaustive list but offers points for consideration when making decisions about the provision you will be putting in place for these students.

KEY RISKS



WHEN IDENTIFYING KEY RISKS, YOUR SCHOOL SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Students with existing mental health conditions
- Students in high-risk households, including potentially abusive environments Cessation of regular emotional well-being services
- Increased social isolation Increased family-stress
- Potential for students to be left unsupervised Excessive screen-time
- Online safety. Schools should consider revisiting and re-publishing any school online safety guidance (see Section 7)

Note: For high need cases, planning should be undertaken on an individualised basis through a multi-disciplinary approach. This should include key personnel to create a team around the child such as the school counsellor, DSL, SEN Teacher and, wherever possible, involvement by the child in keeping themselves safe.

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Regular updates for high need cases should be shared with Senior Leaders. If any of the above are applicable, you may wish to consider:

- Making more frequent communication with the family (ensuring that during any welfare checks, you speak with the child as well as any adult)
- Recording all instances of home communication (dates, times, context and content of discussion) Reminding all class teachers of the child's vulnerable status to ensure they remain vigilant and report. This does not need to include the sharing of sensitive and confidential information but advising there have been previous concerns is appropriate
- Offering the family additional virtual counselling services

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES



MAINTAIN YOUR SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR REPORTING AND RECORDING STUDENT CONCERNS

- Remind staff of the need to remain vigilant and report anything they are concerned about
- Recirculate your school's procedure for reporting and recording any concerns
- Continue to report through GUARD
- Review any existing plans (IEPs, Pupil Passports, Safety Plans, Medical Care Plans) and make necessary adjustments to account for the change in environment
- Ensure staff are aware of the need to keep senior leaders informed where there are significant concerns around a vulnerable student's access to education. This may relate to safeguarding concerns or to special education educational needs and disabilities.
- Ensure you review what platforms and opportunities are in place for students to raise any concerns (what if the concern relates to teacher? Parent? Peer? School leader?) What processes do you have to effectively action and escalate these concerns

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- Ensure that students, parents and staff are all aware of how students raise concerns e.g. etc. and who will take action (See section 7)

Note: In the event of an emergency, advice and guidance remains available from Akram Tarik, Jaqueline Morris and Kausor Amin Ali. Primary contact email: a.tarik_gfm@gemsedu.com

KEEP CONNECTED



KEEP CONNECTED WITH YOUR FAMILIES

You may do this by:

- Sending an initial letter to families clarifying your school's methods of communication throughout this period.
- Making use of platforms such as SeeSaw and TEAMS.
- Creating a simple data-capturing system to enable parents to track and record target achievements from home.

- Signposting families to community-based services or therapy centres. Establishing a process for regular check-in with high risk cases.

Vision Note: When contacting families or children, you should always use a work phone / work email and never your personal mobile / personal email. Staff should not arrange face-to-face meetings with students outside any permitted activities.

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ENCOURAGE SELF-REGULATION



ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PARENTS TO THINK ABOUT SELF-REGULATION

You may do this by:

- Sharing sensory and brain-break tips
- Sharing emotional regulation charts or templates
- Providing advice on developing and maintaining a routine at home Signposting families to online resources to support independent learning

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DIFFERENTIATE YOUR CURRICULUM DELIVERY



CONTINUE TO DIFFERENTIATE YOUR CURRICULUM DELIVERY

You may do this by:

- Re-sharing IEPs with all families
- Establishing an online platform (Seesaw) where the Inclusion Team can provide advice and guidance on lesson plans
- Ensuring each Team's classroom has two staff members in it (when possible) providing levelled and extension tasks for lessons
- Providing students with options for task completion
- Adapting your lesson format to meet the child's profile of need Chunking written information at a level appropriate for the student Providing students with stationary packs
- Providing a physical toolkit of practical activities
- Offering webinar sessions for counselling services. For safeguarding reasons please ensure two practitioners are present during any individual delivery
- Signposting to websites and online learning platforms as part of a lesson plan

Note: If you are signposting families to web-links or online resources, or are using online resources yourself, please ensure these have been viewed in their entirety to guarantee their suitability for the age and stage of the student.

WORK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES





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MAINTAIN JOINT WORKING WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

You may do this by:

- Ensuring professional contact details for your DSL/Heads of Inclusion are re-shared with all staff Establishing an online platform for information sharing such as Microsoft Teams, or Seesaw.
- Agreeing pre-arranged times for departmental virtual meetings.
- Clarifying the process for physical teacher meetings with your Principal.
- Encouraging colleagues to regularly check in with each other – the risk of social isolation is not just a risk for students, but teachers, too!
- Ensuring staff have a buddy system or similar and know who they can talk to if they are struggling

ONLINE SAFETY

ONLINE SAFETY FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS



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- Do not utilise your personal subscriptions / personal (Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet) accounts to conduct online classes. Ensure you utilise only school provided platforms and accounts.
- Do not permit students to join online classes using their personal accounts. (i.e. to join online classes as guests). Students are only allowed to join online classes using their school provided accounts.
- Encourage students to:
 - ✓ Generate unique passwords with at least 8 characters in length that do not contain dictionary words or words that can be easily guessed (Pet's name, country of residence etc.)
 - ✓ Not share passwords with friends
 - ✓ Not share meeting details online (through Twitter, Facebook or Instagram) or invite external participants.
 - ✓ Never publish meeting details (including meeting link and meeting ID/password) online (e.g. your Twitter, Facebook or Instagram account)
 - ✓ Never admit a guest participant in the meeting if you are unsure who it is
- Ensure that you are aware of the status of consent for recording for each student, IT will provide regular updates of any changes to consent
- If you are providing a blended learning model, ensure that during lessons in school, the video is trained on the teacher rather than students.
- A Cybersecurity guide for Parents and Students providing them guidance on best practices has been made available to parents through GEMS Parent Portal and GEMS Connect Mobile app. A copy of it can be found in Parents & Students Cybersecurity Guide.
- What plans are in place for staff to reinforce online behavioural expectations with students? Will these be visited before each session as you may if you were physically in a classroom?
- Ensure there is a quality assurance process in place to assure the safety and welfare of students. This would include middle and/or senior staff being members of any relevant Microsoft team e.g. Head of Schools, Deputy Head of School, Assistant Head of school.
- Discuss with your middle and senior leadership teams who would be most suitable to be allocated to classes and then consider a framework for QA that includes safeguarding monitoring which can be led by the DSL/Principal

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- Ensure that staff, parents and students are aware that a variety of live and recorded sessions will be randomly monitored and why it is important
- If staff are in live sessions at home, ensure they have checked the background or blurred the background so that their place of residence cannot be identified and there are no personal/unprofessional materials in the background e.g. papers with addresses, personal photos etc. It should not take place in a bedroom
- Review how children can raise concerns about online behaviours. Whether that is a concern about an adult or other student. Which platforms do you use?

Can these be accessed by students at home? What happens to that information – who will action/escalate the concern? Do ALL staff know that their responsibility for taking action is the same whether they are onsite or undertaking remote learning and if so, do they all know what to do.

Revisit Safe Working Practice with staff to avoid behaviours that may be outside of the GEMS Safer Working practice guidance and any relevant codes of conduct.

FURTHER GUIDANCE ON LIVE LESSONS:

For these purposes the assumption is that you have been operating with the teacher on video and students' video/audio muted or a mix. We are aware that this is not necessarily consistent across the group, but it is not the intention to be prescriptive as each school context and need is very different.

Please bear in mind the following if you are planning on using video more extensively with students to encourage community and connection within their class and peers.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Examine: Why you are delivering the lesson in the way you have planned?
- To deliver the learning necessary do you need to see the children? E.g. letter formation with FS students etc If so when, why and for how long – can they switch their video and audio on and off

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e.g. when they answer a question? For the youngest children can you sub-divide the class into small groups? Can you work with video on and parent/carer present/in the same room?

- Can the lesson be delivered just as well without video cameras on for children?
- If you decide that using video with students is necessary – what are the risks to adults and students and how are you mitigating them? Do all the students have access to working cameras and microphones? If not, how do you support them to contribute to the class?
- Is the teacher comfortable in using video? Are students competent in the technical aspects of muting and unmuting themselves?
- Do you want all children to greet each other on screen when they arrive in the lesson and then mute audio and video until needed? How will you manage this?
- What will you do if a student arrives on camera and is in a state of undress or in an inappropriate place?
- How will you engage with any students that do not have permission to be recorded?
- How will the teacher manage distractions that can arise when video is on?
- How will teachers ensure that everyone contributes? Not only for formative assessment and engagement purposes but for tracking attendance. Do all staff know how to escalate concerns regarding poor attendance of students/missing students?
- Teachers need to be clear about responses to and strategies for, the management of behaviour as they would in any classroom: low level disruption, inappropriate language, behaviours outside of the behaviour policy.
- What are your expectations if you decide to deliver a lesson with student cameras on (whether intermittent or continuous?)– students should blur the backgrounds, parent/carer in sight or hearing, behavioural expectations – are there any tweaks needed to your class or school behaviour policy to incorporate inappropriate behaviour in remote classrooms?
- Is everyone clear what the escalation route is if someone witnesses something they are concerned about during the session (this includes staff, students and parents?) Does everyone know how to contact the DSL if it is a safeguarding concern?

PASTORAL SUPPORT:

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Some schools have asked for guidance for Counsellors. Due to the work that they do, this group of staff need particular consideration when thinking about the assessment and management of risk for safeguarding adults and children.

In partnership with the GEMS Counsellor Network, based on guidance from the Council of International Schools and the International School Counselling Association, you may wish to consider the following:

- Counsellors are likely to be involved in a variety of activities with students these might be: individual counselling sessions that are working towards a specific outcome for a student, daily welfare checks, group work etc.
- Counsellors should prioritise only their most urgent cases for individual sessions. These will most often be students who are already involved with external Child Protection services and are potentially at risk of significant harm or have already experienced harm.
- Other students that have planned pastoral support in school such as anxiety groups, friendship groups etc. can still go ahead in small groups with the same safeguards in place as any 'live' lesson as if it were a general class.
- For ongoing counselling sessions with the few priority students identified above, Counsellors should not record any 'counselling' sessions with individual students as this is not ethically acceptable.
- If the student is happy to include an additional member of staff in the session then do so. If not, which is often the case with older students, the following additional safeguards should be considered if this is an essential activity to safeguard the student.
- Transparency and open communication are essential, there should be nothing taking place that could be viewed as 'secretive.'
- The Counsellor should have a 'supervisor' who could be the DSL, line manager, fellow Counsellor etc. who is aware of all calls that are being made to students by the Counsellor. They should ensure that they are aware of the date, time, student name, potential duration of the call and the general subject (emotional support, anxiety etc.) The 'supervisor' does not need to know details of the concern for the student.
- Once the call (either telephone or Teams call) has been made, the Counsellor should update the 'supervisor' that this has been completed. The Supervisor does not need to

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know the details of the counselling session but if anything has arisen that is a safeguarding concern, then the Counsellor should escalate this and follow the safeguarding policy.

- The Counsellor will continue to keep their regular written notes and a brief chronology of calls made as normal practice.

With special thanks to the following practitioners for their contributions:

Gayatri Ruparelia and Nariman Ramzan GEMS Founders Al Mizhar

Bianca Nelson and Mitzi Amaral , GEMS Founders Al Mizhar

Sarah Oliver-Browning, Cambridge International School Abu Dhabi

Tracey Ferguson, GEMS Metropole School

Nadine De Mascarel, Jumeirah Primary School Suzie Hachez, Cambridge International School

Dubai Janet Foley, GEMS Founders Al Barsha

Rhys Headley, GEMS FirstPoint School

The GEMS Counsellor's Network

GEMS Legal, Information Security and the GEMS Education teams

Signed..... Date.....

Vice Principal

Signed.....
Principal/CEO

Date..... Feb 23.....

Policy review date: January 2024

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