ثانوية رفيق الحريري
RAFIC HARIRI HIGH SCHOOL

RHHS Wellbeing

Policy and Procedures

26 - 27

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Well-being cannot exist just in your own head. Well-being is a combination of feeling good as well as having meaning, good relationships and accomplishment. Martin Seligman

Vision

Empowering a community of self-directed learners and responsible global citizens.

Mission

RHHS aims to develop compassionate, respectful, and lifelong inquirers. We are committed to promoting well-being, education for sustainability, and innovation, nurturing learners to become proactive change agents in an interconnected world.

INTRODUCTION

At RHHS, we are committed to promoting the well-being and mental health of our students, staff, and the entire school community. We believe that a healthy and supportive environment is essential for learning and personal growth. This Well-Being Policy outlines our commitment to fostering well-being and provides a framework for the implementation of well-being initiatives within our school.

Rafic Hariri High School recognizes that school is a crucial period in the development of a child where the health and safety of the entire school community is essential to promoting and establishing an effective, positive, and supportive learning environment.

In the presence of crises such as COVID-19 pandemic's effects, consequences, and disruptions to traditional learning, the school has undertaken the need to update our procedures around the topic of mental health and wellbeing.

As an IB world school, we believe that well-being policy is one of the most effective means for improving students' attainment outcomes. Therefore, creating a school environment that promotes well-being is essential to ensuring that students feel supported, valued, and motivated to learn. In this context, promoting well-being at school involves not only addressing physical and mental health but also addressing the social and emotional needs of students. This approach can help to create a positive school culture that encourages students' engagement and success in their academic pursuits.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

This document details the school's policy and procedures that ensure emotional and mental wellbeing. The aim of RHHS is to support and develop positive learning and working environments necessary for all community members to feel safe and welcome.

We have developed our policy to promote positive well-being, build resilience to mental health, and help all community members engage in a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.

The main objective of this document is to clarify the following aspects:

1. Our beliefs
2. What well-being is
3. Common mental health and well-being issues
4. Signs of mental health and well-being concerns
5. Well-being support
6. Well-being initiatives at RHHS
7. Referral process
8. Communication protocols and reference personnel

OUR BELIEFS

At RHHS, we believe that:

- Well-being is central to helping learners feel good, flourishing, functioning well and accomplishing.
- Well-being is a commitment from all staff in the school community.
- The acquisition of knowledge and intellectual abilities is undoubtedly an essential pillar. However, the development of attitudes as well as the ability to behave and adapt appropriately to the various situations encountered remains a keystone of the education and healthy development of our learners.
- Maintaining the well-being of learners is an ongoing process.
- The integration of social-emotional learning into ritual and daily routines helps the learner develop resilience, a sense of empathy, tolerance, and compassion.

- Integrating well-being into our school policy and practice is a part of the successful implementation of the IB programs and the valuable input from staff members is essential in the writing of the wellbeing policy.
- Well-being is an outcome of interactions among complex factors manifested in, and influenced by, various **contexts:**
    - Micro-level influencers—family, peers, teachers, school, and proximal natural environment
    - Meso-level influencers—community culture, participation in, and access to, various services and opportunities.
    - Macro-level influencers—national and global factors that indirectly influence overall student well-being.

"WELL-BEING", WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Well-being is the state of feeling good and functioning well in your life. One of the most influential conceptual models to explain well-being is known using the acronym PERMA. PERMA was put forth by Martin Seligman, a pioneer in the field of positive psychology, and consists of five pillars that collectively define well-being (Seligman 2011).

- Positive emotions—feeling good
- Engagement—being completely absorbed in activities
- Relationships—being authentically connected to others
- Meaning—purposeful existence
- Achievement—a sense of accomplishment and success

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CONCERNS

• Fear and Anxiety

o This also includes phobias, panic attacks, obsession, limited eye contact, and stress especially during exams. Low level anxiety is common to most of us as part of regular daily life; however, feelings of anxiety sometimes persist for extended periods of time especially with children and young people. This can be caused by several factors including but not limited to academic pressure, social-relationships, or personal issues.

• **Depression**

o This includes changes in mood, changes in eating or sleeping habits, feelings of sadness or hopelessness, lack of interest in fun activities, low energy levels or general tiredness. Depression can impact their academic performance and social interactions. At times of depression, some young people may develop suicidal feelings.

• **Bullying**

o It can cause lasting harm to students' mental and physical health. Victims of bullying may experience a range of negative emotional responses, such as anxiety, depression, and low selfesteem, which can affect their academic performance and social relationships. In severe cases, bullying can lead to physical harm and trauma. The negative effects of bullying can also extend beyond the victim, impacting the wider school community by creating an environment of fear and distrust.

• **Eating and sleeping disorders** o This can significantly impact a student's physical and mental health, as well as their academic performance. • **Self-harm**

o This is a serious issue that can affect students' physical and mental well-being. Some students engage in self-harm (typically cutting or burning) or have thoughts of suicide, especially teenagers. Such acts are serious and require immediate help and support.

• **Body Image**

o Concerns around body image can emerge when students develop negative perceptions of their own physical appearance, often influenced by social media, peer comparisons, or cultural standards. These concerns can manifest as low self-esteem, disordered eating, social withdrawal, or compulsive exercising. Promoting healthy body image includes encouraging selfacceptance, critical thinking about unrealistic beauty standards, and fostering environments that celebrate diversity in shapes, sizes, and appearances.

• **Violence and Indicators of Abuse or Neglect**

o Exposure to violence—whether physical, emotional, or domestic—can severely impact a student's mental and emotional health. Warning signs may include unexplained injuries, frequent absences, sudden changes in behavior, heightened fearfulness, difficulty concentrating, or reluctance to go home. Indicators of neglect may involve persistent poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, or unmet medical needs. Students affected by such experiences may show symptoms

of trauma, depression, or aggression. It is vital to remain vigilant, provide safe channels for disclosure, and take immediate protective action when indicators of violence or neglect are observed.

SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CONCERNS

STUDENTS

Annex number 1 – checklist of warning signs

STAFF

- An increase in absences and sick leave
- Physical symptoms like head and back aches, tiredness, and low energy levels
- Change in behavior (anger issues, anxiousness, tearfulness) and attitude toward students and school load
- Changes in the overall performance
- Not getting things done on time, unusual errors, forgetfulness, conflict with team members

WELL-BEING SUPPORT

RHHS is committed to fostering a supportive and nurturing environment that helps students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Our comprehensive well-being support system is designed to address a wide range of needs and challenges that students may face during their time at our school.

STUDENTS

Our school psychologist and other stakeholders follow up on student well-being. This is achieved by:

- setting clear expectations and instructions at the beginning and throughout the year where assemblies are conducted for all grade levels and the student-parent handbook is communicated to all stakeholders.

- following a clear discipline policy that is put in practice around bullying and labeling to promote a culture of respect, kindness, and empathy.

- encouraging learners to express their feelings and emotions.

- increasing achievement by assessing emotional barriers to learning by encouraging persistence rather than perfection.

- encouraging positive and supportive relationship between students and teachers.

- supporting the development of students' self-esteem by encouraging student leadership and initiative through school's daily activities and programs.

- encouraging learners to participate in extracurricular activities.

- training staff to look for and identify signs of potential mental well-being concerns, while equipping them with strategies such as active listening, emotional first aid, and creating opportunities for students to express and share their feelings, helps ensure timely support and referral to specialized services. By fostering a culture of openness and empathy, schools can intervene before difficulties escalate and safeguard the holistic development of every child.

- providing specialized counseling and mentoring (in groups or one-one) for students who are struggling with social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

- enhancing understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds to reduce bullying and to reinforce empathy and compassion in the school community.

In addition, cooperative learning in the classroom is essential for well-being. Young people benefit from seeing themselves as part of a team; they can benefit from competition when it is team-based rather than focused on individuals.

PARENTS

The school believes that parent involvement is crucial to sustaining and promoting student wellbeing. This is achieved by:

- guiding parents in skills needed to enhance home–school collaboration.

- providing referrals and support services.
- maintaining open lines of communication with parents.
- regularly communicating school news, upcoming plans, adjustments, and expectations

STAFF

Staff well-being is taken very seriously at RHHS. The school is keen on upholding staff morale, motivation, and general well-being. This is achieved by:

- building capacity through ongoing professional development for all staff.
- promoting staff specific activities to allow them to socialize together, relieve stress, and build relationships in a non-academic context.
- holding staff meetings during the school day and being open to their feedback.
- maintaining regular contact and communication with staff.
- developing a culture where staff feel comfortable voicing their concerns.
- providing adequate training material on how to care for students' well-being as well as their own.
- making sure that the school environment is safe and inclusive for everyone.

WELL-BEING INITIATIVES AT RHHS

Mental Health Support: A dedicated school psychologist is available to provide ongoing support and counseling to students and staff. This includes informative sessions on psychological topics, such as stress management, emotional regulation, classroom and individual interventions, and strategies for promoting positive mental health. Supervisors and the school nurses are well trained by the school psychologists in psychological first aid and equipped with the necessary skills to support students during high-stress periods, such as exams and challenging projects.

Child Protection Policy: RHHS implements a comprehensive Child Protection Policy in partnership with HIMAYA. This policy ensures that all staff are trained to recognize, respond to, and report any signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Clear procedures are in place to safeguard students, provide immediate support when concerns arise, and create a safe environment where children's rights are respected and protected at all times.

Crisis Psychological Support: This support is provided by the school psychological to support students and staff in the aftermath of a significant crisis. This includes individual and group counseling sessions to help individuals cope with trauma and stress.

Anti-Bullying Programs: We are in the process of implementing anti-bullying programs to foster a safe and respectful school environment.

Physical Activity: We encourage physical activity through physical education classes, extracurricular sports, and opportunities for movement during the school day.

Healthy Eating: We promote healthy eating habits through nutritious school meals, educational programs, and access to clean drinking water.

Parent and Community Involvement: Parents and the community are engaged in well-being initiatives, including seminars, events and awareness podcasts created and shared by our school psychologist.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Annex number 2 – Referral process guide

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS AND KEY PERSONNEL

The school principal, heads of divisions, and the school's psychologist are responsible in conjunction with the leadership team for the entire school community's well-being and the implementation of this policy. The students' opinions are also taken into consideration.

Confidentiality and Child Protection Role: The school psychologist also serves as the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO). All cases and reports are handled with strict confidentiality to protect the dignity and privacy of students and their families. Clear agreements and reporting protocols are shared with staff to ensure consistency and accountability. When reporting concerns, communication is done with discretion, avoiding the mention of the full name of the student in emails or official notes, unless strictly necessary for legal or safeguarding procedures.

PARENTS

Parents can contact the school directly for any well-being concerns through the lines of communication mentioned in the student-parent handbook.

STUDENTS

Students can refer to their teachers, supervisors, or any individual they trust in school at any time to discuss any issues of concern. The school's psychologist, in collaboration with the school principal/heads, decides on the best way to address the situation, and inform the parents.

STAFF

The school management team maintains an open-door policy where staff are encouraged to openly voice and discuss their issues and ask for support.

Note: This policy is reviewed and revised as necessary to remain current and in accordance with school objectives and legal requirements

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