مدرسة رويال الأمريكية
ROYAL AMERICAN SCHOOL

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Academic Year 2026-2027

This policy has been read and adopted by the Royal American School Board of Trustees and Principal:

Review date August 2026

Introduction

As set out in the RAS Wellbeing Policy, wellbeing is fundamental to student progression and success. Royal American School (RAS) has a responsibility to nurture and sustain the mental wellbeing of its student community, and to identify and support students at risk of poor mental health. This policy sets out RAS's requirements for educating students about mental wellbeing and providing mental health support services, and should be read alongside RAS's other wellbeing policies, in line with the ADEK Student Mental Health Policy.

Purpose

- To ensure mental health is prioritized and integrated across all aspects of the RAS environment.
- To promote mental health community-wide through awareness campaigns and initiatives aimed at all stakeholders.
- To support early identification and intervention through clear systems and protocols for addressing mental health concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to all RAS students, the School Counselor, the Social Worker (RAS's Child Protection Coordinator), the Head of Inclusion, teachers, and parents.

Definitions

Behaviors of Concern	A significant change in behavior, or a repeated pattern of behavior, with the potential to negatively affect a student's wellbeing or that of others.
Confidentiality	A professional's commitment to respect a counselee's privacy, except under specific, agreed-upon conditions.
Coping Mechanism	Any conscious or non-conscious adjustment that decreases tension and anxiety in a stressful situation.
Counseling	Personalized therapeutic support provided by qualified professionals to address a student's academic, career, and social-emotional development needs.
Documented Learning Plan (DLP)	A plan outlining personalized learning targets, modifications, or support agreed by school staff, parents, and students, such as an IEP, ISP, ILP, or BSP.
Emotional Regulation	A student's ability to appropriately feel, identify, reflect on, and act on their emotions.
Mental Health	A state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes their own abilities, copes with normal life stresses, works productively, and contributes to their community (WHO, 2022).
Parent	The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, as defined by Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema).
Protective Factor	A behavior or characteristic that reduces the likelihood or impact of negative outcomes on an individual.
School Counselor	The RAS staff member who provides social, emotional, and academic support, guidance, and counseling to students.
Social Worker	The RAS staff member who supports students and families with social problems, acting as a link between school, home, and community.

Suicidal Ideation	Thoughts about or a preoccupation with killing oneself.
Wellness Space	An area within RAS accessible to all students, designated for recuperation and the promotion of calmness and mental/emotional health.
Young Caregiver	A student who tends to the needs of a parent or family member living with a short- or long-term illness, injury, or disability.

Policy Statement

Policy Requirements

- RAS's Student Mental Health Policy covers student awareness and education, the provision of counseling, referral pathways, support during vulnerable phases, wellness resources, and the inclusion of students with additional learning needs.

Mental Health Awareness and Education

- RAS teaches students about mental health and healthy, balanced living, focusing on mindfulness, social and emotional learning, emotional regulation, resilience, stress and time management, and reducing stigma around seeking support, in line with the National School Health Screening Guideline.
- For Cycle 2 and 3 students, RAS additionally covers depression, anxiety, substance use, eating disorders, digital gaming addiction, suicide and suicidal ideation, maltreatment concerns, and how to access help.
- RAS informs parents of its mental health policy and initiatives, and offers engagement opportunities through resources, workshops, and participation in relevant surveys.

Counseling and Support Services

- RAS provides all students with access to counseling, with each step of the process documented in line with the RAS Reporting Policy.
- RAS employs its School Counselor(s) internally as staff members, meeting the requirements of the RAS Staff Eligibility Policy. The Counselor works with teachers and parents (within confidentiality requirements) and liaises with external bodies (e.g. psychiatric centers, child protection specialists) as needed.
- RAS's Social Worker, who also serves as the Child Protection Coordinator, supports students and families as the link between school, home, and community, working with the interdisciplinary team to evaluate needs and provide emotional and behavioral support; the Social Worker is not authorized to provide therapy or counseling.
- The School Counselor leads RAS's Mental Health Committee, which promotes awareness of mental health and social-emotional learning across the school.

Confidentiality

- RAS and its School Counselor adhere to confidentiality requirements under Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 and the DCD Social Care Professionals Code of Conduct & Ethics.
- The Counselor may share information with parents, the Principal, or Vice Principal where necessary to protect the student's best interests or where legally required. Suspected maltreatment or potential significant self-harm is shared with the Social Worker (as Child Protection Coordinator); suicidal ideation or severe substance abuse is immediately reported to school leadership.
- The Counselor explains the limits of confidentiality to students in age-appropriate terms.

Parental Consent

- RAS seeks parental consent for regular or structured counseling; where counseling is needed but parents decline, they must indicate this in writing, acknowledging their responsibility for the student's wellbeing.
- Consent is not required for unstructured interactions with the Counselor, or where the Counselor determines that informing parents could adversely affect the student's wellbeing. Where a parent refuses consent and access to counseling is deemed necessary to prevent significant harm, RAS reports this as neglect to the Child Protection Specialist/Unit, in line with the RAS Student Protection Policy.

Referral Pathways

- RAS refers students requiring support beyond the Counselor's qualifications to external professionals, and designs referral pathways covering: self/other-referral procedures to the Counselor, Social Worker, and external professionals (including identifying and reporting young caregivers to the Family Care Authority for counseling); procedures for informing and engaging parents, in the student's best interest; and procedures for collecting mental health monitoring information in line with the National School Health Screening Guideline.
- RAS publishes its referral pathways in the Parent Handbook and treats all referral information confidentially.

Support During Vulnerable Phases

- RAS identifies periods of heightened stress (e.g. examinations, university applications, cycle transitions) and provides study leave (up to 4 weeks annually, in line with the RAS Assessment Policy), end-of-semester teacher-student office hours, and workshops to build coping skills.

Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs

- The Head of Inclusion works with teachers, specialists, parents, and the School Counselor to safeguard the mental health of students with additional learning needs, ensuring Documented Learning Plans are holistic and take their level of functioning into account.
- RAS offers reasonable accommodations for these students' mental health needs, such as a shortened timetable with breakout time for high anxiety, flexible uniform norms for sensory needs, and close monitoring of students at risk of teasing or bullying.

Procedures

- The School Counselor delivers or coordinates mental health education across all cycles, with additional Cycle 2/3 content as required by ADEK.
- Students or staff refer a student of concern to the School Counselor or Social Worker via the published referral pathway; the Counselor documents each step in line with the RAS Reporting Policy.
- Where structured counseling is needed, the Counselor obtains written parental consent, or a documented refusal acknowledging parental responsibility.
- Where confidentiality limits are triggered (suspected maltreatment, self-harm risk, suicidal ideation, or severe substance abuse), the Counselor immediately informs the Social Worker (Child Protection Coordinator) and/or school leadership.

- The Social Worker identifies and reports young caregivers to the Family Care Authority and refers them for counseling.
- The School Counselor refers students needing specialized support to external DoH-licensed professionals, coordinating within confidentiality requirements.
- The Head of Inclusion is consulted whenever a Documented Learning Plan intersects with a student's mental health needs, to ensure accommodations are holistic.
- The School Counselor, as Mental Health Committee lead, organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and vulnerable-phase support (study leave, office hours) throughout the academic year.

Responsibilities

- **School Counselor (Mental Health Committee Lead):** delivers counseling, mental health education, and awareness campaigns; manages referral pathway documentation; liaises with external professionals.
- **Social Worker (Child Protection Coordinator):** supports students and families as the school-home-community link; receives and escalates maltreatment/neglect and self-harm concerns; identifies young caregivers.
- **Head of Inclusion:** ensures mental health support and Documented Learning Plans address the needs of students with additional learning needs.
- **Teachers:** identify and report behaviors of concern via the referral pathway, and support end-of-semester office hours.
- **Parents:** engage with awareness resources and workshops, and provide or document consent for structured counseling.

Compliance

This policy has been effective since the start of Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term), and RAS has been fully compliant since the start of Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term). Failure to comply with this policy may result in legal accountability and penalties in accordance with ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, in addition to any penalties under Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments, or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene where RAS is found to be in violation of its obligations.

Related Policies and References

- ADEK School Student Mental Health Policy
- RAS Wellbeing Policy
- RAS Student Protection Policy
- RAS Inclusion Policy
- RAS Reporting Policy
- RAS Assessment Policy
- RAS Staff Eligibility Policy