

**21/22  
May  
2025**

.....  
Sofitel Downtown  
Dubai

**Enhance your inclusion  
and wellbeing provision  
to build an environment  
where everyone is  
supported to flourish.**

# MENA Inclusion and Wellbeing Summit

## EXPERT SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

### **Nina Jackson**

SEND, Mental Health  
and Wellbeing  
Consultant

### **Sam Garner**

Mental Health and  
Inclusion Consultant,  
Founder of  
Balanced People

### **John Bell**

Principal,  
Bloom World Academy

### **Berna Bouwer**

Corporate Head of  
Inclusion,  
GEMS Education

## **Refresh**

Update your high-quality teaching practices to ensure inclusive teaching for all.

## **Lead**

Lead inclusion and wellbeing with a clear strategy that supports all.

## **Communicate**

Navigate parental and external relationships to create a joined-up approach.

# Welcome

**Welcome to Optimus Education's MENA Inclusion and Wellbeing Summit.  
We're delighted to see you!**

Meet your chairs:



**Nina Jackson**

SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Consultant



**Sam Garner**

Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant,  
Balanced People

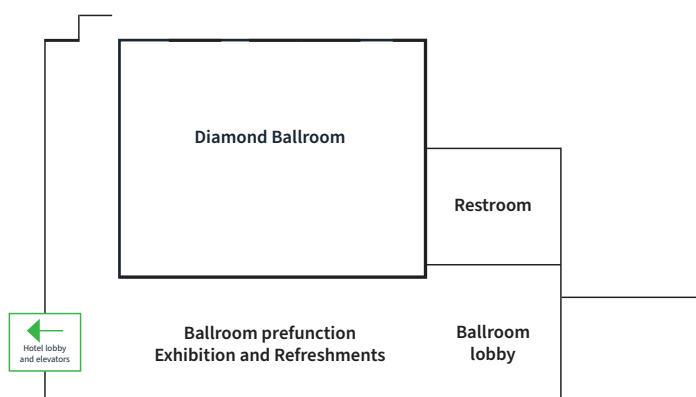
Copies of all speaker slides can be accessed here:

[View inclusion speaker slides >>](#)

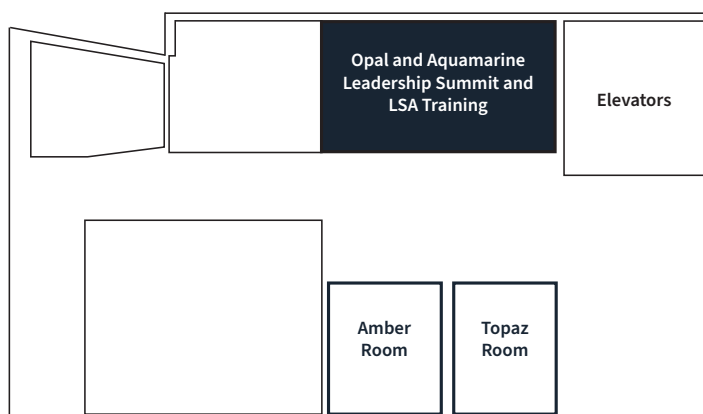
[View wellbeing speaker slides >>](#)

## Floorplan

### Ground floor



### First floor



**The Diamond Ballroom**  
**Ballroom prefunction**  
**Amber and Topaz**  
**Opal and Aquamarine**

Keynotes and Workshops  
Exhibition and Refreshments  
Workshops  
Leadership Summit and LSA Training Day

## Thank you to our exhibitors

We are excited to introduce our exhibitors for the conference, each showcasing innovative solutions and industry-leading expertise. These organisations bring a wealth of knowledge and products that will inspire and elevate your experience. Be sure to visit their stands and discover the latest advancements they have to offer.

[View our exhibitors >>](#)

## Preferred partners

Helping us to deliver our services to thousands of educational establishments, our partners are experts in professional development and school improvement. We handpick the best education suppliers to collaborate with.

Here are the organisations we're proud to call our partners.

[View our partners >>](#)

# Inclusion Programme

**08:15 – 09:00 Registration, refreshments, and networking**

**09:00 – 09:05 Welcome from Optimus Education**

**09:05 – 09:15 Chair's welcome**

*Nina Jackson, SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultant*

**09:15 – 09:45 Support individual needs in a whole class**

Offer a personalised approach for students within the classroom with effective adaptation and scaffolding.

*Olivia Mottram, Primary Manager, Aldar Training Academy*

**09:45 – 10:15 Inclusion by design**

Develop inclusive practices that are embedded into all elements of the school day for all students.

*John Bell, Principal, Bloom World Academy*

**10:15 – 10:35 Inclusive education as a catalyst for mental health and emotional wellbeing**

Bridge the gap between mental health, education and technology to support school inclusion.

*Dr Dhaval Mody, CEO and Founder, SpEd@school*

**10:35 – 10:50 Questions using [www.sli.do](https://www.sli.do) #oeMENA**

**10:50 – 11:30 Morning refreshments, networking, and exhibition**

**11:30 – 12:30 Workshop choices 1**

**1A. DIAMOND BALLROOM**

**Emotionally based school avoidance**

Increase your understanding of EBSA and gain techniques to support students and remove barriers to learning.

*Sam Garner, Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant, Balanced People*

**1B. AMBER**

**Embrace neurodiversity**

Ensure a sense of belonging for neurodivergent students and staff within an inclusive culture.

*Nina Jackson, SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultant*

**1C. TOPAZ**

**From paper to progress: realising the potential of IEPs**

Create and utilise high quality individual education plans to support students.

*Dr Dhaval Mody, CEO and Founder, SpEd@school*

**12:30 – 13:30 Lunch, networking, and exhibition**

**13:30 – 14:30 Workshop choices 2**

**2A. AMBER**

**Ensure all staff support Inclusion**

Onboard teachers into your inclusive culture, ensuring they are confident teaching all students with adaptive pedagogy.

*Sarah Al-Maawali, Advisory Inclusion Teacher, Nadia Sultan, Educational Psychologist, Owner and Founder, Inspire Educational Consultancy*

**2B. TOPAZ**

**Empower students of determination for lifelong success**

Equip students with the life skills and confidence to thrive beyond the classroom and lead fulfilling lives.

*Ceanlia Vermeulen, Head of Inclusion and Wellbeing, Redwood Montessori*

**2C. DIAMOND BALLROOM**

**Inclusive technology and AI**

Boost the confidence and outcomes of students with additional needs by incorporating technology and AI as a learning tool.

*Nina Jackson, SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultant*

**14:30 – 14:50 Afternoon refreshments, networking, and exhibition**

**14:50 – 15:50 Workshop choices 3**

**3A. TOPAZ**

**Autism**

Boost your understanding of Autism spectrum condition to support skill development and engagement of your learners.

*Sam Garner, Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant, Balanced People*

**3B. DIAMOND BALLROOM**

**Early identification: what should you be noticing?**

Identify and recognise early signs of neurodevelopmental conditions to benefit early intervention.

*Dr Wafa Saoud, Clinical Psychologist, Lead of Children and Adolescent Services, Sage*

**3C. AMBER**

**Support transitions of English language learners**

Lead high-quality English language provision across the curriculum so learners can quickly adjust to their new environments and gain a sense of belonging.

*Gemma Donovan, Head of Whole School EAL, Southview School, Dubai*

**15:50 – 16:15 Parent partnerships**

Confidently engage hard-to-reach parents, align support and ensure your students benefit from positive parental partnerships.

*Berna Bouwer, Corporate Head of Inclusion, GEMS Education*

**16:15 Conference close**



# Wellbeing Programme

08:00 – 08:45	Registration, refreshments, and networking		
08:45 – 08:50	Welcome from Optimus Education		
08:50 – 08:55	Chair’s welcome <i>Sam Garner, Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant, Balanced People</i>		
08:55 – 09:15	Wellbeing in the heart of learning <i>Fatma Mohamed Al Janahi, Executive Director of Resolution Commission, KHDA</i>		
09:15 – 09:45	Wellbeing first: redefining success in schools through evidence and action Prioritise wellbeing with a data driven approach, strengthen emotional resilience, and establish a school culture where both students and staff truly succeed. <i>Dr Funke Baffour-Awuah, Corporate Head of Wellbeing, GEMS Education</i>		
09:45 – 10:15	Practical tools to support anxious pupils With numbers of students with anxiety rising, develop positive relationships and gain tools to support early intervention. <i>Nina Jackson, SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultant</i>		
10:15 – 10:35	Embed emotional literacy in the classroom Explore how to embed emotional literacy in everyday classroom practice and move beyond reactive strategies to develop long-term understanding and resilience. <i>Elanie Ademokun, Programmes Director, Jigsaw Education</i> <i>Julie Serrao, Head of Primary Social Studies and Moral Education, Fairgreen International School</i>		
10:35 – 10:50	Questions using <a href="http://www.sli.do">www.sli.do</a> #oeMENA		
10:50 – 11:30	Morning refreshments, networking, and exhibition		
11:30 – 12:25	Workshop choices 1		
<b>1A. DIAMOND BALLROOM</b> <b>Wellbeing interventions</b> Assist students that require extra support with personalised wellbeing interventions and support plans. <i>Nina Jackson, SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Consultant</i>	<b>1B. TOPAZ</b> <b>Changing our wellbeing culture</b> Explore our journey of developing the experiences and life chances of young people in their education. <i>Rob Faulkner, Head of Middle School and Etab Sharf Elddin, Head of Inclusion, Al Dhafra Private School, Abu Dhabi</i>	<b>1C. AMBER</b> <b>ELL and wellbeing: Consider the mental health of English as an additional language students</b> Gain tangible ways to improve the mental health of ELL students and their experiences with social integration, assessment and attainment. <i>Emily Powell, Head of Customer Success, FlashAcademy® and Anjali Khanna, Head of Primary ELL, GEMS Wellington Academy</i>	
12:25 – 13:25	Lunch, networking, and exhibition		
13:25 – 14:20	Workshop choices 2		
<b>2A. AMBER</b> <b>Engaging parents with wellbeing</b> Effectively communicate the importance of wellbeing with your parent community, ensuring they are supportive stakeholders in their child’s wellbeing. <i>Louise Dawson, Education Consultant and Inclusion Specialist</i>	<b>2B. TOPAZ</b> <b>Coaching culture</b> Develop your support mechanisms for staff with dedicated coaching and supervision as part of professional development. <i>Sarah Curran, Head of Wellbeing, Dubai English Speaking School</i>	<b>2C. DIAMOND BALLROOM</b> <b>Address low-level disruption with positive behaviour management</b> Gain positive techniques to limit low-level disruption in the classroom, supporting whole-class focus and wellbeing. <i>Dr Funke Baffour-Awuah, Corporate Head of Wellbeing, and David Irish, Senior Vice President of Children’s Services, GEMS Education</i>	
14:20 – 14:40	Afternoon refreshments, networking, and exhibition		
14:40 – 15:35	Workshop choices 3		
<b>3A. DIAMOND BALLROOM</b> <b>Student wellbeing in a virtual world</b> In a world that is viewed through screens, ensure your students understand risks and can manage their own wellbeing effectively. <i>Sam Garner, Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant, Balanced People</i>	<b>3B. TOPAZ</b> <b>Address staff wellbeing challenges</b> Understand common staff wellbeing challenges and gain tangible approaches to implement and support all staff. <i>Mark Swaine, Secondary Wellbeing Coach and Counsellor, Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai</i>	<b>3C. AMBER</b> <b>Classroom-based wellbeing activities</b> Enhance mood, concentration and behaviour with short wellbeing activities implemented into lessons. <i>Nancy Hee Chung, School Counsellor and Psychologist, Summit International School</i>	
15:40 – 16:00	Prioritise your own wellbeing Build self-compassion, prioritise yourself and ensure capacity to support your students. <i>Sam Garner, Mental Health and Inclusion Consultant, Balanced People</i>		
16:00	Conference close		



# Empower pupils with essential life skills...

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# THE KNOWLEDGE HUB



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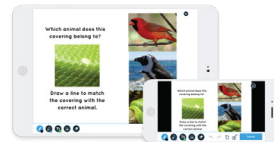
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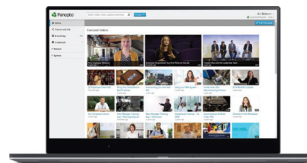
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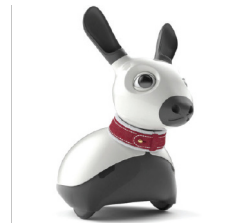
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# EXPERT CARE FROM PEOPLE WHO CARE



## WHAT SETS SAGE CLINICS APART IS THE STRENGTH OF ITS EXPERT TEAM.

Sage Clinics is a premium mental health and wellbeing provider founded by well-established UAE healthcare professionals, with the goal of delivering high quality, evidence-based mental health care.

The Sage team comprises international, western-trained mental health specialists – psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and dietitians – who work as an integrated team using evidence-based practice to deliver the best outcomes for every individual, couple, family, group or company they work with.

## WHAT WE OFFER:

- Talks and workshop
- Training
- Policy development
- Parent coaching
- Reflective practice supervision
- Individual, couples and family therapy
- Specialist assessments for neurodiversity and learning challenges







MENA SCHOOL  
EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**You are invited to nominate your school for**

# **MENA SCHOOL EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026**

**To celebrate impact and achievements in your international school**

**Nominate my school >**



**OPTIMUS** EDUCATION



# Upcoming conferences

Optimus Education's conferences bring school leaders and managers together, helping you go back to your school ready to implement practical strategies and new policies that work.

## June 2025

### Leading Safeguarding

12 JUNE, LONDON

Annual convention for people passionate about careers.

#oeSafeguarding

## September 2025

### Child Protection in Education

23 SEPTEMBER, LONDON

#CPinEd

## October 2025

### Child Protection in Education

2 OCTOBER, MANCHESTER

#CPinEd

## November 2025

### Mental Health & Wellbeing Conference

13 NOVEMBER, LONDON

#oeWellbeing

### MATs Summit 2025

26 - 28 NOVEMBER, LEICESTERSHIRE

#oeMATs

### SEND Leadership

12 AND 19 NOVEMBER, DIGITAL - ZOOM

#oeSEND

## February 2026

### MENA Inclusion and Wellbeing Summit

4 - 5 FEBRUARY, DUBAI

#oeMENA

### MENA School Excellence Awards

5 FEBRUARY, DUBAI

#oeMENA

For more information please visit: [oego.co/upcomingconferences](https://oego.co/upcomingconferences)

# Committed to school improvement across the globe

Enhance and celebrate inclusive education that elevates the quality of education for all.

## What are the Inclusion Awards for Schools?

These Awards celebrate schools dedicated to inclusive education, recognising excellence in creating supportive environments and improving practices for students of determination. They provide tools, resources, and professional development to help schools drive positive change and showcase their commitment to fostering inclusive communities.

Both awards are anchored in parts of UAE Federal Law and reflective of the wider Inspection Framework and national policies. They align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achievement reflects internationally recognised statutory and regulatory standards, supporting best practices and global benchmarks in educational inclusivity. The awards ensure schools develop systems and strategies that support both immediate progress and long-term sustainability.

## Our Inclusion Awards for Schools



### The Inclusion Award for Schools INVESTOR

For schools committed to harnessing the transformative impact of inclusive education.

- Recognises schools committed to improving inclusion to enhance educational quality for all.
- Supports schools in building capacity to progress beyond foundational inclusive practices with evidence-based approaches.
- Focuses on creating a cohesive and supportive environment for students of determination and the wider school community.
- Designed for schools actively developing their inclusion practices to reach higher standards over time.

Tailored for schools rated 'Good' or below, this award is designed to support improvement and growth.



### The Inclusion Award for Schools EXCELLENCE

For schools that consistently perform at the highest standards of inclusive education.

- Recognises schools achieving the highest standards in inclusive education and demonstrating leadership in this area.
- Celebrates institutions excelling across key pillars of inclusion and setting benchmarks for best practice.
- Highlights schools on the path to becoming national and international leaders in inclusive education.
- Aimed at schools with well-established, impactful practices benefiting students of determination and the broader community.

Tailored for schools rated 'Very Good' or higher, this award is designed to enhance excellence and further achievement.

Enquire now >>