



HEALTHY EATING AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

2025 -2026

Introduction:

A safe and healthy diet is key to physical and mental health and is therefore an important factor in maintaining overall wellbeing. In fostering the wellbeing of the school community, school has a duty to create a safe and healthy food environment and to actively promote healthy food choices. In addition, schools have a responsibility to ensure that their food provision supports their efforts to improve the environmental sustainability of their operations. This policy sets out the basic requirements for schools in providing healthy and sustainable food environments.

THE PHILIPPINE SCHOOL, Abu Dhabi is committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and a healthy diet. We recognize the importance of offering children the opportunity to make informed choices about what, when, where and why they eat.

Purpose:

- Ensure that school canteens comply with the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in the Educational Institutions in relation to the healthy and safe provision of food services.
- Improve the nutritional awareness and meal practices of school community by increasing their understanding of healthy and sustainable food habits and fostering school environments that are conducive to such habits.

Policy Statement:

Food is fundamental to the quality of a child's life, not just in providing essential nutrition but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other. Staff and Parents should be role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general wellbeing. As eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating we encourage parents and careers to continue the importance of healthy eating at home as well as in school.

Aims and Objectives:

- To improve the health of students, staff
- Ensuring parents and cares to prepare a healthy snack and lunch.
- Foods can be stored in thermal containers to keep hot, cool bags with ice packs to keep cool. Both options will ensure food to keep fresh for your child to eat within the school hours.
- All pupils have the opportunity to learn about safe food preparation and to learn about where food has come from. Pupils learn about the requirements for plant growth, the food chain and the components of a healthy diet through the Science curriculum.
- The school will run several healthy eating workshops throughout the school year that parents are able to attend with their child.

Definitions:

Carbon Footprint	The amount of greenhouse gases released as the result of a particular activity.
Food Label	Any tag, brand, pictorial, or other descriptive matter marked on or attached to a food container or product, which provides information related to the food, including its ingredients, quality, and nutritional value (FAO and WHO, 2018).
Food Services	Arrangements made by schools for students and staff to obtain food during the school day, during extracurricular activities, and during any events organized by the school.
Healthy Eating	Consuming a variety of foods to ensure the intake of nutrients (carbohydrates, healthy fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals) and fluids in appropriate proportions and quantities to support the energetic and physiological needs of the individual and maintain overall health. Healthy eating includes sustainable practices that consider the health of the planet (Cena & Calder, 2020).
Nutritional Value	The measure of the healthiness of a food item based on the quantity of nutrients contained in it.
School Canteen	The measure of the healthiness of a food item based on the quantity of nutrients contained in a school.
Sustainable Meal Practices	Meal practices with low environmental impacts, including low carbonfootprint, and which are accessible, affordable, and healthy, while optimizing natural and human resources (FAO, 2010).
Waste Management	Processes and actions required to manage waste from its inception to its final disposal (Ebeid & Zakaria, 2021).

Policy:

1. School Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy

1.1 Policy Requirements: Schools shall develop and implement a Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy, in line with the ADEK Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy. The policy shall:

1. Set out the school's commitment to the provision of healthy food choices and the encouragement of healthy and sustainable meal practices, and the steps to be taken in relation to this, including:
 - a. Measures to foster an environment conducive to healthy eating in line with Section 2. Promotion of Healthy and Sustainable Eating.
 - b. Adherence to the nutritional standards prescribed in the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions, if the school offers food service.
 - c. Measures to actively supervise students during snack/mealtimes to:
 - Ensure that students are consuming acceptable foods (e.g., not bringing allergens that may harm other students, etc.).
 - Ensure all students have access to a meal every day (unless fasting).
 - To be vigilant about concerning food-related behavior (eating disorders, food-related bullying, etc.).
 - d. Measures to improve the sustainability of food consumption practices, in line with the school's sustainability strategy (see Section 5. Sustainability).
2. Set out the school's commitment to adhere to the hygiene and food safety standards prescribed in the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions in relation to food preparation, packaging, transportation, and handling.
3. Set out measures for shared events by the school to ensure certain food items (e.g., alcohol, carbonated drinks, pork, and allergens) are prohibited. Schools are authorized to commit to

further stringent measures for shared events, to ensure stricter healthy eating guidelines and/or sustainable practices.

4. Set out measures taken by the school to promote the inclusion of minority groups and the safety of students with allergies and food intolerances (see Section 4 Special Considerations).
5. Be published on the school website and made accessible to staff, students, vendors and parents.

2. Promotion of Healthy Eating

2.1 Healthy Food Promotion: Schools shall create a healthy food culture that encourages a healthy eating environment of nutrition-rich foods for all members of the school community.

1. Unsafe food items such as those containing allergens (e.g., nuts) are prohibited for personal consumption or distribution on school premises.

2.2 Healthy Food Services: Schools offering food services shall provide students and staff with healthy, nutrient-rich food in line with the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions.

1. Schools shall obtain the necessary valid licenses and maintain inspection records and notices.

2.3 Nutrition Education: Schools shall deliver nutrition education to students through the formal curriculum and other engagement strategies (e.g., competitions, and workshops) to enable them to make active and informed choices. Schools shall ensure that the curriculum covers the following topics, at a minimum:

1. Healthy and balanced eating.
2. Reading of food labels.
3. Sustainable meal practices.

2.4 Staff Awareness: Schools shall ensure teachers and canteen staff attend training conducted by the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (ADPHC) and other relevant entities in relation to healthy eating, to enable them to promote healthy eating when supervising and/or interacting with students.

2.5 Parent Engagement:

1. Schools shall share guidelines with parents regarding healthy and balanced eating. These guidelines shall include food restrictions (e.g., allergens like nuts, and caffeinated beverages) as mandated by the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC) and “unhealthy” food that the school recommends parents avoid packing (e.g., fried food). Schools shall make a reference to the guidelines in the school-parent agreement, as per the ADEK Parent Engagement Policy.
2. Schools shall share with parents any relevant guidelines shared by ADEK, ADPHC, QCC, Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA), or the Department of Health (DoH) in relation to children’s health, nutrition, and allergies.
3. For events where food sharing has been authorized by ADEK, schools shall communicate to parents that any food brought in shall adhere to the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions.
4. Schools shall communicate all food-related concerns (all instances included in Section 1.1.c) to parents on the same day as the concern was noticed.

3. Food Services:

3.1 Quality Check and Compliance: Schools shall adhere to the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions and Federal Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety in the provision of food services.

- 3.2 Food Delivery Services: Schools shall not permit students to use external food delivery services (e.g., Talabat) during school hours
- 3.3 Student Feedback: Schools shall engage the student body in planning and improving school food services (e.g., through feedback forms).

4. Special Considerations:

- 4.1 Consideration for Minority Groups: Schools shall take into consideration the religious, cultural, and ethical needs of minority groups, and shall involve these groups in decision-making related to food services and the use of food labels.
- 4.2 Consideration for Students with Food Allergies and Intolerances:
1. Schools shall undertake the following measures to support students with allergies, in line with the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions:
 - a. Maintaining records of students' food allergies and intolerances and keeping a copy of the records in the school canteen.
 - b. Ensuring that food labels provide warnings regarding allergens in food provided through the school's food services.
 2. Additionally, schools shall:
 - a. Consider students' allergies and intolerances when planning school activities and meals to ensure the basic food offering suits as many students as possible as it is or with minor modifications.
 - b. Require parents to notify the school immediately if their child develops an allergy and provide the relevant medicines to the school.
 - c. Share food allergy records of students with relevant staff members and respective parents and students to minimize the risk of accidental exposure to allergenic food substances.
 - d. Conduct risk assessments related to student allergies and implement appropriate risk mitigation measures.
 - e. Have procedures to effectively manage allergic reactions of students, including clear procedures to deal with severe allergic reactions.
 - f. Appropriately label and store medicines required to manage student allergies.

5. Sustainability

- 5.1 Sustainable Meal Practices: Schools shall develop and implement a strategy to improve the sustainability of their food services and promote sustainable meal practices, in line with the ADEK Sustainability Policy. This may include initiatives in relation to the following:
1. Sustainable practices in the delivery of food services:
 - a. Provision of sustainable meals and food products (e.g., plant-based meals, locally produced and low carbon footprint products)
 - b. Waste reduction and management (e.g., prevention of overstocking, portion control, waste recycling), including reduction and management of packaging
 2. Promotion of sustainable practices amongst staff, students, and parents (e.g., reduction of food waste, recycling, avoidance of single-use containers)

Management of Expectation of Healthy Eating:

TPS HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

Overview:

Our school environment supports the growth, health and well-being of students. A healthy diet is linked to improved academic achievement.

Water:

Each child must have a refillable water bottle with their name printed on it.

Lunches & Snacks:

Children must bring a healthy lunch and snacks from home to eat during their scheduled breaks. Our color coding system (see below) indicates the foods that children should and should not bring to school. This is in line with the Ministry of Education's regulations and the Department of Health in Abu Dhabi's recommendations. For health and safety purposes, microwaves are not available in the classrooms. Students must bring food items that do not require heating.

Foods are classified as

Red foods are not allowed to be packed for snacks or lunches. This is because they are high in calories, fat and sugar and low in vitamins and minerals and other healthy nutrients.

Amber foods are allowed to be packed but should only form a small part of the child's lunch and snack (about one third).

Green foods are highly nutritious and should form a major part of the child's lunch and snack (about two thirds).

Red Foods	Amber Foods	Green Foods
<p>Sodas, flavored milks and other sugary drinks, crisps or chips, chocolates, sweets, pastries and cakes, chocolate covered biscuits and cookies, fried foods, other junk foods.</p>	<p>White versions of bread, pasta and rice, highly processed meats and other foods, plain biscuits, butter and cheese.</p>	<p>Dairy foods, wholegrain versions of bread, pasta and rice, fruit and vegetables, lean and fresh meat, fish and eggs.</p>
<p>GUIDELINES for Red Foods: Not allowed. Will be reminded by the teacher not to bring this kind of food to school.</p>	<p>GUIDELINES Amber Foods: Allowed but should form a small part of a child's lunch and snack (about one third).</p>	<p>GUIDELINES Green Foods: Highly encouraged and should form a major part of a child's lunch or snack (about two thirds).</p>

We have a strict 'no nuts' policy for students and staff.

Food Allergies:

- The school nurse regularly updates the food allergy register, informing teachers of any changes. Parents are to update the nurse of any changes in your child's medical and dietary needs to ensure we can ensure your child's safety.

- Children must never be given foods that contain ingredients that they are allergic to. Teachers must be especially vigilant during special school events such as National Day, International Day.
- School meals are externally sourced by school canteen (Model Catering CO. L.L.C). They have healthy food and monitored by the Manager of Services and OHS Office.

Reference:

- <https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/news/eat-right-get-active-expands-to-include-50-private-schools>
- Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC). (2022). Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in the Educational Institutions (ADG2/2022) (3rd ed.).
- Cena, H. & Calder, P. 2020. Defining a Healthy Diet: Evidence for the Role of Contemporary Dietary Patterns in Health and Disease. *Nutrients*, 12(2): 334.
- Ebeid, E. Z. M. & Zakaria, M. B. (2021). Thermal analysis in recycling and waste management. In Ebeid, E. Z. M. & Zakaria, M. B. (Eds.), *Thermal Analysis: From Introductory Fundamentals to Advanced Applications* (pp. 247-300).
- Federal Decree Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2010. Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO), 2018. International Food Standards.

Approval

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