



# Healthy Eating Policy

Sep 2021

**Date last reviewed** | Sep 2021

**Review period** | Annually

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

### **Policy Statement:**

As a school, we know that 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. We believe that adults (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 and the wider school community by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy diet.
- To ensure pupils are well-nourished at school and that every student has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day.
- Ensuring parents and careers prepare a healthy snack and lunch for their child/ren
- To ensure that food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs. (This is in each child's medical record and the class teacher has a copy to ensure the child needs are met) In order to protect children with food allergies and their religious beliefs with eating we encourage children not to share or swap food with one another.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

A healthy food guideline for parents and careers to follow: food groups to include in the lunchboxes each day are:

- Meat, fish and protein alternatives
- Dairy foods
- Grains, cereals, and starch vegetables
- Fruit and vegetables

(These foods can be stored in thermal containers to keep hot, cool bags with ice packs to keep cool. Both options will ensure food is kept fresh for your child to eat within the school hours)

### **Curriculum:**

- We regard healthy eating education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum. This starts with washing hands in the correct way many times throughout the day and doing some exercise each day.
- Healthy eating education forms an important part of our school's curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the Science, D.T. and PHSE curriculum.
- 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.



- Children have additional opportunities to learn about healthy eating through assemblies, school initiatives and extra-curricular activities, including Enrichment, such as cookery and the WEK Organic Garden.
- Washing hands throughout the day is equally encouraged throughout the school day across the school.
- Parents can get involved by having your child help with cooking at home a few times a week or preparing snack and lunch. You will find they will try new foods and enjoy the process of preparing healthy food.
- The school will run several healthy eating workshops throughout the school year that parents are able to attend with their child.

#### **Management of Expectation of Healthy Eating:**

- The school will promote and support the eating of healthy food in parent provided lunch boxes and via the externally provided school packed lunch (Slices)
- Periodically the school will evaluate parent and child views on the types of foods that are offered via surveys and feedback.
- All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day. Water coolers are located throughout the school for additional access to drinking water. This should be clearly marked with the child's name.
- Pupils' lunch boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Across a week parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables, brown bread, salad etc.
- Foods with high percentages of sugars and fats are discouraged. This includes fast/deep fried food (pizza, fried chicken, burgers, french fries), sweets, crisps, chocolates, deserts, cakes and biscuits. Children learn that these foods can be eaten as a treat but should not be consumed daily.
- Energy drinks and fizzy drinks are not permitted in school.
- The contents of pupils' lunchboxes, including portion sizes, will be monitored by the class teacher. Any concerns will be shared with the Head of Year, and, where necessary, the school nurse and Phase Leader. Where needed, a meeting will be held with the parents to ensure that lunch boxes are healthy and meet school policy.
- Those students who purchase a school lunch will be informed of healthy decisions. Choices will be monitored and any concerns communicated to parents, i.e. ensuring each child is getting a balanced diet.
- FS children eat their snack in class.
- FS children eat lunch in the multipurpose hall, after the initial settling in period.
- **No pork products are permitted in the school.**
- **We have a strict 'no nuts' policy for students and staff.**
- Pupils are not permitted to share packed lunches for medical reasons.
- Special events such as National Day, International day, The Bake Sale and end of term parties are times where 'treat foods' contribute to a sense of celebration.
- If a child/family brings a treat (cupcake/cake/'goodie' bag) for children to eat to celebrate a birthday, the treat will be given out at the end of the day and not eaten in school. Parents should decide whether the child eats the treat at home.

#### **Birthday Celebrations:**

We do not allow birthday cakes in any class in school due to dietary needs of students across the school. If you wish to bring in something to share we suggest fruit kebabs or similar, but please check with your



class teacher beforehand. Any foods brought in to share will be sent home with each child and are not permitted to be consumed in class due to the diverse range of allergies and dietary needs of our children.

**Food Allergies:**

- The school nurse regularly updates the food allergy register, informing teachers of any changes. All teachers have access to this register via the shared P Drive. 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, The Bake Sale etc.
- Teachers must be aware of the emergency procedures in place for children with food allergies.

**Slices**

School meals are externally sourced via Slices who cater for the school canteen and parent café. They must have healthy food as per the contract with the school. This is monitored by the Manager of Services and Operations at Head Office and is reported to the MSO of the school.

Parents may choose to purchase a meal to be consumed by their child either via their child's Slices account or by providing them with a healthy packed lunch.