

FOOD, NUTRITION AND ALLERGY POLICY

Policy Owner	Head of School and Medical Team
Approved by	Ms Sapna Changrani (Head of School)
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1. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND POLICY STATEMENT

Healthy eating plays a vital role in children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, learning and overall development. Diet influences the potential for learning as well as health. This single policy brings together the school's approach to healthy eating, nutrition and the management of food allergies, so that students, staff, parents and the canteen operator work to one consistent set of expectations.

Dubai Scholars Private School is an allergy-aware school. We are committed to reducing the risk of exposure to nuts and other food allergens and to protecting students with food allergies. Although precautions are taken, a completely nut-free or allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed.

Adults, including staff and parents, are important role models in helping children understand how balanced nutrition contributes to health, happiness, growth and wellbeing. The school encourages parents and staff to reinforce healthy eating practices at home and at school.

This policy applies to all food and drink brought onto school premises, consumed on school trips or at school events, or sold and served by the school canteen.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The school aims to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of students, staff and the wider school community through healthy eating and nutritional awareness.
- Promote an environment that encourages and supports long-term healthy eating habits.
- Ensure that every student has access to safe, nutritious food and clean drinking water throughout the school day.
- Ensure that students and staff are well informed about a healthy and balanced diet.
- Protect students with food allergies and other medical dietary needs through a consistent, school-wide system.
- Ensure all food provided on school premises complies with Dubai Municipality requirements and approvals.
- Promote lifelong healthy lifestyle habits through education, awareness and positive role modelling.

3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This policy is aligned with the following. Published documents are listed in Section 17:

- Dubai Municipality, Guidelines and Requirements for Food & Nutrition in Schools, which sets the standards for food provided, sold and promoted in Dubai schools. This is the primary local standard for this policy.
- Dubai Health Authority (DHA) requirements for the School Clinic, medication storage and emergency treatment.
- KHDA guidance on student health, safety and wellbeing.
- World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on healthy diets, used as supporting international guidance.

4. PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY EATING

Consuming a healthy diet throughout life helps to prevent malnutrition in all its forms, as well as a range of non-communicable diseases and conditions. Increased production of processed foods, rapid urbanisation and changing lifestyles have shifted dietary patterns: many people now consume more foods high in energy, fats, free sugars and salt/sodium, and too few eat enough fruit, vegetables and wholegrains.

The exact make-up of a balanced diet varies with age, gender, lifestyle, physical activity, cultural context and locally available foods, but the basic principles remain the same. The school encourages balanced meals that include fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and adequate water, and limits foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat, in line with the Dubai Municipality school food guidelines.

5. CURRICULUM AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE EDUCATION

Healthy eating education is a whole-school responsibility, integrated throughout the curriculum and daily routines. The school supports healthy living by encouraging handwashing, daily physical activity and healthy food choices. Students learn about balanced nutrition, food groups, food origins, hydration and sustainability through Science and Health and Wellbeing education, as well as assemblies, health initiatives, educational field trips and the school's Organic Garden Project. The Medical Team also delivers classes on healthy eating.

6. LUNCH BOXES, SNACKS AND DRINKS

6.1 Food from home

- Parents are encouraged to provide balanced and nutritious lunch boxes, including fresh fruit, vegetables, salads, wholegrain bread and healthy homemade meals, with vegetables included in meals and fresh seasonal fruit and raw vegetables as snacks.
- The following are discouraged: fast food, deep-fried foods, pizza, fried chicken, burgers, French fries, crisps, sweets, chocolates, cakes, desserts, biscuits and sugary snacks.
- As a guide, a balanced lunchbox includes foods from at least four of the six food groups, without repeating the same group, and always includes a drink, with water the best choice. The school helps parents plan packed lunches and reminds families about the importance of a proper breakfast and enough sleep.
- Energy drinks and fizzy drinks are strictly prohibited on school premises.

6.2 Hydration

Students are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle daily. Water is available at all times, including during breaks, and water filters and refill stations are available across the campus. Adequate hydration supports concentration and wellbeing, particularly during the hotter months, in line with the school's Adverse Weather Policy.

6.3 Food sharing

To protect students with allergies and to respect religious and cultural dietary requirements, students must not share or swap food. Students should not eat or drink anything of unknown ingredients offered by another student.

6.4 Lunchbox monitoring

With a student population of this size, lunchbox checks are carried out on a structured, rotating basis rather than for every student every day, so that monitoring stays practical and consistent:

- Each class or year group's lunchboxes are spot-checked by the class teacher or the Medical Team on a rotating weekly schedule.
- Where a lunchbox repeatedly does not meet this policy's standards, the class teacher informs the parent directly, in the first instance through a friendly reminder.
- Where the pattern continues, the Medical Team follows up with the family to understand and address the cause, consistent with the school's guidance-first approach to non-compliance.

7. BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

- To support the health and safety of all students, birthday cakes and celebration food are not permitted in school.
- Food items brought in for celebrations will be sent home and may not be consumed in class.
- This is in place to protect students with allergies and to ensure inclusivity for all children.
- The same restrictions apply to school trips and events.
- Food and drink sold or distributed at school events, fundraisers and promotions must follow the same standards as the canteen (Section 12).

8. ALLERGY-AWARE APPROACH AND RESTRICTED FOODS

All food brought to school should be free from nuts. Products containing nuts, or carrying nut cross-contact warnings, must not be brought onto campus, on school trips or for celebrations. Food supplied by approved school suppliers should not contain nuts or nut products.

Restricted items include: nuts, nut butters, Nutella or similar nut-based spreads, chocolate containing nuts, muesli bars, baklava, nougat, biscuits containing nuts, Turkish delight, homemade cakes and marzipan.

Because the school cannot control every product that enters the site, including items brought by visitors or products carrying "may contain" traces, families of students with allergies should treat the school as allergy-aware rather than allergen-free, and students with severe allergies must follow their individual health care plan at all times.

9. FOOD ALLERGIES AND MEDICAL NEEDS

- The School Clinic owns, maintains and regularly updates the food allergy register, including students' parent and emergency contacts.
- Parents must inform the School Clinic and class teacher of any diagnosed allergy at the beginning of the school year and whenever there is a change.
- The Medical Team informs all relevant staff of students with food allergies.
- The Medical Team maintains an Individualised Health Care Plan for each student with a chronic illness or severe allergy.
- Where a student has a specific medical or religious dietary requirement, parents inform the Medical Team so that it can be recorded and supported.

10. ANAPHYLAXIS EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Emergency procedures for food allergies and anaphylaxis management are also set out in the school's Medication Management Policy.

- Recognise: signs may include hives, swelling of the lips, face or tongue, difficulty breathing or wheezing, persistent cough, throat tightness, vomiting, abdominal pain, dizziness, pallor or collapse.
- Act immediately: follow the student's Allergy Action Plan. Administer the prescribed adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector without delay in line with training and clinic protocol. Note the time given.
- Call for help: alert the school clinic and call an ambulance (998). Do not wait for symptoms to worsen.
- Position: lay the student flat with legs raised (or sitting if breathing is difficult); do not allow the student to stand or walk.
- Monitor and repeat: stay with the student, monitor breathing and consciousness, and administer a further dose only as directed by the Allergy Action Plan and clinic protocol.
- Notify and hand over: inform parents/guardians immediately. Brief paramedics on the allergen, symptoms, time and doses given. The student must be transferred to hospital even if symptoms improve.
- Record and review: the medical team documents the incident and reviews how it occurred. Findings are used to strengthen prevention.

11. EMERGENCY AUTO-INJECTOR AVAILABILITY

- Prescribed auto-injectors must be readily accessible to authorised staff and must never be locked away during an emergency.
- The School Clinic maintains records of medication locations, availability and expiry dates.
- The school's spare emergency auto-injector is kept in the School Clinic only. The Clinic ensures that all relevant trained staff know this location. Storage and use must comply with applicable DHA requirements.
- For school trips, staff must confirm that the student's prescribed emergency medication and health care plan are available, and a first aid box with an auto-injector is carried.

12. SCHOOL CANTEEN, FOOD STANDARDS AND ALLERGEN LABELLING

School canteen services are provided by Grandiose Catering. All food and drink sold, displayed or distributed on school premises, and at school events, fundraisers and promotions, must meet the Dubai Municipality Guidelines and Requirements for Food & Nutrition in Schools and the school's Cafeteria Policy.

12.1 Suppliers and oversight

- Food is purchased only from suppliers holding a valid Dubai Municipality permit, a trade licence covering the relevant activity, and Dubai Municipality-approved menus for all food items supplied to the school. Suppliers with a red or yellow inspection card must not supply the school. The school maintains records of each supplier's permits, inspection details, and Dubai Municipality menu approvals.
- The canteen operator sells only foods approved on its permit. Any change to the menu, ingredients or suppliers is approved before it is introduced.
- The school manages and operates the canteen directly and appoints a formally trained Person in Charge (PIC) responsible for overseeing nutrition, food safety, and hygiene standards. The school clinic has shared the list of students with identified food allergies and dietary restrictions with the PIC, who maintains an updated copy for reference. The PIC is fully aware of these students and ensures that appropriate precautions are taken to safeguard their health and well-being.
- The Operations and Facilities Team monitors food quality, hygiene and compliance, and coordinates with the Medical Team and the canteen operator on allergen safety and incident reporting.
- The canteen menu is made available to parents.
- Students may purchase meals using their Student ID cards or direct payment methods.

12.2 Meals, snacks and drinks

- Meals follow the portion sizes and calorie ranges for each age group in the guideline, include at least three of the five food groups, and lunch includes a protein source.
- Fried food is not served with meals.
- At least one vegetarian option is available for each meal type sold.
- Water is available at all times, including during breaks.
- Items on the guideline's restricted food list, including carbonated, energy and sugar-sweetened drinks, deep-fried foods, confectionery, and deli and processed meats, are not displayed, sold or promoted. Limited items such as savoury snacks and bakery products follow the frequency and portion limits in the guideline. Salt is not placed on tables and sauces are provided in mini sachets.

12.3 Nutrition and allergen labelling

- Every food and drink item sold is labelled with the nutrition information required by the guideline.
- Allergens must be declared on the menu or label whenever present, regardless of the amount. These include peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, soybeans, fish, crustaceans, eggs, milk and gluten-containing cereals.
- Ingredient information must be verified against supplier labels and updated whenever ingredients or suppliers change.

12.4 Training and inspection

- PIC receive formal training in nutrition and food safety relevant to their roles.
- The school cooperates with Dubai Municipality inspections of the canteen and keeps records of inspection results and corrective actions.

13. CULTURAL AND DIETARY ACCOMMODATION

Given the diversity of the school community, families are encouraged to pack lunches that reflect their own cultural, religious or medical dietary requirements, provided these remain consistent with the healthy eating and allergy principles in this policy.

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 Head of School

- Communicate this policy to teachers, parents/guardians and students.
- Organise in-service training for all school staff as part of implementation, including allergy awareness and EpiPen use.
- Ensure all staff comply with this policy.

14.2 Operations Manager

- Review the policy in coordination with the Medical Team.
- Coordinate with the canteen operator so that food allergen information is clearly available.
- Maintain a non-identifiable log of allergy-related incidents (date, location, type, action taken) in coordination with the Medical Team. The clinical record of each incident, and the allergy register, are held by the School Clinic and the Operations Manager.
- Inform parents promptly of significant incidents.
- Liaise with the Medical Team on operational safety measures.
- Evaluate and monitor the training certificates of all medical staff and first aiders.
- Ensure the canteen meets the requirements in Section 12, including supplier permits, the trained person in charge and the school representative as second in charge.

14.3 Medical Team

Dubai Scholars Private School Clinic is a DHA-registered Outpatient Care Facility. All medical staff are BLS certified; the school doctor is PALS certified; one nursing staff member is ACLS certified.

The Medical Team:

- Keeps the allergy register and parent contacts, and informs all staff of students with food allergies.
- Provides first aid and appropriate treatment promptly.
- Trains all staff in the use of an EpiPen, and trains staff on healthy and balanced diets.
- Maintains Individualised Health Care Plans.
- Provides educational and policy material to all stakeholders and delivers classes on healthy eating.
- Supports lunchbox checks (Section 6.4) and coordinates with parents, updating them regularly about a student's health in school.

14.4 Teachers and staff

- Be aware of this policy and of the list of students with food allergies and their contact details.
- Reinforce healthy eating, and teach the effects of junk food on health.
- Make children feel safe and comfortable by explaining the risk-reducing measures the school takes.
- Check lunchboxes in line with Section 6.4.
- Recognise the need for first aid in case of a food allergy and refer promptly to the School Clinic.
- Carry a first aid box with an EpiPen on field trips, and confirm students with a prescribed auto-injector carry it.

14.5 Parents, guardians and caregivers

- Provide healthy, balanced and allergy-aware food in the lunchbox, and avoid sending unhealthy food.
- Provide medical information to the School Clinic at admission, and update it whenever it changes, including any recent illness.
- Provide an in-date prescribed auto-injector for a child with a severe allergy.
- Provide consent for basic first aid to School Clinic staff.
- Reinforce healthy eating at home, and remind children not to eat or drink anything of unknown ingredients given to them by another student.

14.6 Students

- Be familiar with this policy and make healthy food choices.
- Drink sufficient water and restrict junk food.
- Do not bring food containing nuts or nut products, and do not share food with anyone.
- Carry an EpiPen if there is a confirmed case of severe food allergy.
- Depending on their developmental level, take an active part in managing their own allergy and tell a trusted adult immediately about any symptoms or exposure.

15. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will continuously train staff, parents and students on this policy and monitor its effectiveness through regular interaction with students, parents and teachers, alongside the structured lunchbox monitoring in Section 6.4. The school also periodically evaluates how well the policy is working, for example the consumption of healthy food items, students' and teachers' knowledge and attitudes, and students' activity levels.

16. CONTACT

For queries, please contact the School Clinic:

- Dubai Scholars Private School Clinic
- Email: clinic@dubaischolars.com
- Phone: 04 706 9000, ext. 303

17. REFERENCES

- Dubai Municipality, Food Safety Department (Nutrition Unit), Guidelines and Requirements for Food and Nutrition in Schools in Dubai [confirm year from the PDF cover: the document states January 2017; the Dubai Municipality website lists 29/07/2020]. dm.gov.ae/documents/guidelines-and-requirements-for-food-and-nutrition-in-schools-in-dubai/
- World Health Organization, Healthy Diet Fact Sheet ([who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet)).

18. POLICY REVIEW

 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to reflect operational needs, changes in legislation, or updated guidance from DHA.