

Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy

(Aligned with ADEK Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy v1.1, September 2024)

Signed by: K. George Mathew (Principal/CEO)

Date: 1 – 1 – 2025

Review date: 1-4-2027

1. Introduction

GEMS United Indian School (GUIS) recognizes that **a safe and healthy diet is essential to physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing**, and is therefore a vital aspect of holistic student development.

In fostering a culture of wellbeing, GUIS is committed to creating a **safe, nutritious, and environmentally responsible food environment** that promotes healthy choices and sustainable habits.

The school also ensures that all food services and canteen operations comply fully with the requirements of the **Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK)** and relevant public health authorities.

This policy sets out the requirements and responsibilities for ensuring the provision, promotion, and monitoring of **healthy eating and food safety** throughout the school community.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all GUIS food services (canteen operations, food-related events, and activities) comply with the **Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food in Educational Institutions (QCC, 2022)** and all applicable ADEK standards.
- Promote **healthy, balanced, and sustainable meal practices** among students, staff, and parents.
- Raise **nutritional awareness** and foster long-term healthy habits through education, supervision, and engagement.

- Support the **wellbeing, inclusion, and safety** of all students, including those with food allergies, intolerances, and additional learning needs.
- Reduce the **environmental impact** of food practices and waste in line with the school's sustainability goals.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Canteen	The designated facility for preparing, distributing, and selling approved healthy food and beverages to students and staff.
Food Services	All arrangements made by GUIS for providing food to students and staff during the school day, extracurricular programs, and events.
Healthy Eating	Consuming a balanced variety of foods that meet nutritional needs while promoting sustainable food practices.
Food Label	Information displayed on food packaging that indicates ingredients, nutritional values, and allergen content.
Sustainable Meal Practices	Practices that minimize carbon footprint and waste, promote local and plant-based options, and support environmental stewardship.
Waste Management	The proper collection, segregation, and disposal of food waste and packaging in compliance with environmental standards.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	Provides overall oversight and ensures compliance with ADEK Healthy Eating and Food Safety standards. Approves school food policies, vendor contracts, and canteen operations.
Vice-Principal	Monitors the implementation of this policy and ensures alignment with student wellbeing initiatives and curriculum integration.

Role	Responsibilities
Academic Supervisors	Integrate healthy eating awareness into the curriculum and monitor student engagement during snack and meal times.
Assistant Supervisors	Support classroom and canteen supervision; report food safety or nutrition concerns to the Vice-Principal.
Manager, School Operations (MSO)	Manages canteen contracts, inspections, licensing, waste management, and ensures hygiene standards and facility maintenance.
Teachers	Model and reinforce healthy eating habits, monitor student food choices, and report any health or allergy-related concerns.
Parents	Support healthy eating by following school guidelines for packed meals and reporting any food allergies or medical conditions.
Students	Make responsible food choices, follow canteen and hygiene rules, and show respect for food sustainability and diversity.

5. Policy Guidelines

5.1 School Commitment

GUIS commits to:

- Providing only **nutritionally balanced, approved food options** in its canteen and food events.
- Actively **promoting a healthy food culture** within classrooms, assemblies, and community events.
- Ensuring that all food preparation, packaging, and handling meet **Abu Dhabi Food Safety and Hygiene Standards**.
- Prohibiting restricted or harmful items such as **carbonated beverages, energy drinks, pork, alcohol, and high-sugar snacks**.

5.2 Healthy Food Promotion

1. All foods offered on campus must comply with the **Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food in Educational Institutions**.
 2. Teachers and staff will monitor snacks brought from home to discourage the inclusion of unhealthy or allergenic items (e.g., nuts).
 3. The school will promote nutrition awareness through classroom learning, posters, and themed events.
 4. Unsafe food items or allergenic foods will be immediately removed, and parents informed.
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5.3 Nutrition Education

- Healthy eating principles will be incorporated across subjects such as Science, Moral Education, and Physical Education.
 - Students will learn to **read food labels**, identify nutritional content, and understand the environmental impact of their choices.
 - Activities such as health weeks, cooking demonstrations, and awareness competitions will be encouraged.
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5.4 Parent and Community Engagement

1. GUIIS will share clear **healthy food guidelines** with parents at the start of each academic year, including permitted and restricted foods.
 2. Parents will be encouraged to send balanced meals and avoid items such as fried snacks or sugary drinks.
 3. Communication regarding any food-related incidents or concerns will occur on the same day through official channels.
 4. The school will share relevant **ADEK, QCC, ADPHC, and ADAFSA** updates on nutrition and food safety.
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5.5 Food Safety and Canteen Operations

- The **MSO** shall ensure that canteen providers possess valid licenses and inspection certificates.

- All food handlers must complete mandatory hygiene and food safety training.
 - Daily temperature checks, storage monitoring, and hygiene inspections shall be recorded.
 - External food deliveries (e.g., Talabat, Deliveroo) for students are strictly prohibited.
 - Student feedback on canteen meals shall be collected and reviewed regularly.
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5.6 Special Considerations

Students with Allergies and Intolerances

- A comprehensive **student allergy register** shall be maintained and shared with teachers and canteen staff.
- All food served must include clear **allergen labeling**.
- In case of a medical emergency, staff shall follow established response protocols and inform parents immediately.

Cultural and Religious Considerations

- Food items and preparation practices shall respect **Islamic dietary laws** and the diverse cultural values of the GUIIS community.
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5.7 Sustainability Practices

- The school shall promote **eco-friendly food consumption and waste management** through:
 - Reduction of plastic packaging and single-use containers.
 - Encouragement of reusable lunch boxes and bottles.
 - Proper segregation of biodegradable and recyclable waste.
 - The MSO will coordinate with service providers to ensure sustainable canteen operations and waste disposal.
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6. Compliance and Monitoring

- The school shall be fully compliant with this policy by the start of **AY 2025/26**, in accordance with ADEK requirements.
- Regular internal inspections will be carried out by the MSO and Vice-Principal.
- Any violation of hygiene or safety standards will result in corrective action and, if necessary, ADEK notification.

7. Enforcement and Review

- Failure to comply with this policy may lead to **internal disciplinary action** or **ADEK enforcement measures**, as per the **ADEK School Compliance Policy**.
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal, Vice-Principal, and MSO to incorporate ADEK updates and school feedback.

8. References

- ADEK Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy (v1.1, Sept 2024)
- Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food in Educational Institutions (QCC, 2022)
- Federal Decree Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating Crimes and Penalties
- ADEK School Sustainability Policy
- ADEK School Compliance Policy

This policy ensures GEMS United Indian School maintains a safe, inclusive, and sustainable food environment that meets all ADEK regulatory standards and fosters lifelong healthy habits among students and staff.



مدرسة جيمس الهندية المتحدة ذ.م.م.
P.O.Box: 10996
Baniyas
Abu Dhabi - U.A.E.
GEMS UNITED INDIAN SCHOOL L.L.C.

K. George Mathew

Principal /CEO