



Policy:	Food and Nutrition Policy
Date Published	February 2025
Evaluation & Review:	Reviewed in February 2026, Next review- February 2027
Rationale:	This policy sets out the basic requirements for providing healthy and sustainable food environments. In fostering the wellbeing of the school community, GES have a duty to create a safe and healthy food environment and to actively promote and encourage healthy food choices.
Roles of Responsibility	Parents, teachers, School Nurse, Social Worker, Student Welfare Officer, School Administration, SLT, Safe guarding committee.

Purpose:

- Ensure full compliance with ADEK, ADG2, ADAFSA, ADPHC, and DoH requirements
- Promote healthy, balanced, and sustainable eating habits
- Protect students with allergies, intolerances, or dietary needs
- Provide clear guidance on lunchboxes, food services, events, and food sharing
- Establish robust monitoring, communication, and enforcement procedures
- Establishes clear guidance for special events involving food

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All food and beverages consumed on school premises
- Home-packed meals and snacks
- School canteens, cafés, kiosks, and vending machines
- School trips, extracurricular activities, and events
- Large-scale community events

Policy

1. School Food and Nutrition Policy

1.1 Policy Requirements: GES shall develop and implement a Food and Nutrition Policy, in line with this policy and the ADG2 requirements. The policy shall:

1. Set out the school's commitment to creating a culture of healthy eating, food safety, and sustainability, and the steps to be taken in relation to this, including:
 - a. Measures to foster an environment conducive to healthy eating.

- b. Measures to improve the sustainability of food consumption practices, in line with the school's sustainability strategy.
2. Set out the school's commitment to adhering to the hygiene and food safety standards prescribed in the ADG2 requirements in relation to food preparation, packaging, transportation, and handling.
3. Set out measures for large-scale events that are open to the larger school community (e.g., international day) to ensure that any food prepared meets the ADG2 requirements, and reinforcing the prohibition of “Red List” items (e.g., alcohol, carbonated drinks, pork, allergens; as outlined in Appendix A. Restricted Foods and Beverages on the Red List as per ADG2 Requirements).
4. Schools are authorized to commit to further stringent measures for shared events, to ensure stricter healthy eating guidelines and/or sustainable practices.
5. 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).
6. Be published on the school website and made accessible to staff, students, vendors, and parents.

2. Promotion of Healthy Eating

2.1 Healthy Eating Promotion:

GES shall create a healthy food culture that encourages a healthy eating environment of nutrition-rich foods for all members of the school community, in line with the ADG2 requirements.

1. ADG2 requirements are applicable to the school canteens, and food brought from home. This includes any food served during the school day (e.g., in class) in addition to school-sponsored activities and events as per Section 7. (Scope) in the ADG2 requirements.

2.2 Active Supervision:

GES shall have measures in place for staff to actively supervise students

1. Conducting visual compliance spot checks (see Section 2.8 Enforcing Lunchbox Compliance)
2. Ensuring that all students have access to a meal every day (unless fasting). For schools that have a food service, a meal shall be provided to the student, with parents being notified through supportive communication and reminded that they will be charged for the provision.
3. Being vigilant about concerning food-related behavior (eating disorders, food-related bullying/misconduct, etc.) and having a school-based system to report incidents/observations to parents (e.g., through the nurse, school counselors, teachers, or other staff concerned with student wellbeing).
4. Modeling good eating habits by encouraging staff to eat together with students (where appropriate) as per Section 11.10.2 (School Staff Participation) in the ADG2 requirements and obligating all students to clean up after themselves.
 - a. For KG and Cycle 1, staff on duty (any staff member who has breakfast/lunch duty as determined by the school) shall sit with and supervise groups students during their meals.
 - b. Staff shall be encouraged to participate a portion of this time shall be occasionally dedicated to educational purposes, preferably through play (e.g., teaching proper utensil usage, table manners, identifying food groups, encouraging students to try new foods, cleaning up after oneself, repacking all wrappings in one's lunch box to practice "zero-waste" habits).

23 Balanced Meals:

GES shall ensure that only balanced meals that meet the ADG2 "**MyPlate**" requirements as per Section 11.2 (Composition of a Balanced School Meal) are served/consumed at lunch time, in line with the quantities recommended in Section 11.3 (Nutritional Requirements for Meals) in the ADG2 requirements.

The school follows the ADG2 **MyPlate model**:

- ½ fruit and vegetables
- ¼ whole grains
- ¼ lean protein

1. GES is authorized (and are highly encouraged) to introduce further measures to promote balanced meals,
2. Sweets and desserts without excess sugar/fat that meet the ADG2 requirements may only be served at breakfast (if applicable) or during snack times (not during lunch) and shall be limited to a single portion per student per break period. All snacks shall meet the standards of Section 11.4 (Nutritional Requirements for Snacks) in the ADG2 requirements.
3. Home-packed meals shall be prepared as per Section 11.8.1 (Guidelines for Home-Packed Lunchboxes) in the ADG2 requirements.

2.4 ADG2 "**Red List**": GES shall ensure adherence to the banning of "**Red List**" food for any

food consumed by students on the school premises (whether provided at school or brought from home).

1. As schools are equally authorized to institute a full ban on non-halal meat options, **Global English School** has officially implemented a comprehensive ban on all non-halal foods within the campus premises.
2. Staff, parents, and students shall abide by the school's policy on this matter, and ADEK nor the school shall not be held responsible for any incidents.

2.5 Hydration:

GES shall regularly remind students (through water breaks, posters, etc.) to stay hydrated by drinking water, which shall be the “default beverage served during school meals and special events” (QCC, 2025). This is particularly importantly before, during, and after physical activity as per the *ADEK School Physical Education and School Sports Policy*. Water shall be available throughout the school and at critical times and events as per Section 11.5 (Hydration and Beverage Requirements) in the ADG2 requirements.

2.6 Sharing of Food:

GES have the discretion to ban the sharing of food in class and during the regular school day. While not recommended in order to prevent any food-related incidents (e.g., food allergies, potential foodborne illnesses due to improper handling/storage, to respect individual cultural or dietary considerations), the sharing of food is authorized under the following conditions:

1. Food sharing is only authorized for students who have parental consent to consume food that is not provided by the school's licensed food services, in line with any individual dietary restrictions.
2. Shared food shall meet the ADG2 requirements (strictly excluding prohibited “Red List” items)
3. Food is handled properly and stored in appropriate containers and settings to maintain optimal temperatures.
4. Schools shall encourage in-class celebrations (e.g. birthdays, lesson completions, etc.) using alternative means (e.g. small gifts, party favors) in line with ADG2 requirements to “use non-food-based rewards such as school-wide recognition (e.g., announcements, noticeboards, letters to parents) or tangible items (e.g., stationery, games, sports equipment)” (QCC, 2025).
5. For larger school-wide events (e.g., fairs, international day), all food shall be properly identified with labels where appropriate) to respect individual dietary restrictions.

1. Schools shall inform parents of the requirements around the sharing of food, but shall not be held responsible for any food-related incidents stemming from these occasions.
- 2.7 Microwaves: Microwaves shall not be placed in visible areas nor be authorized for usage by students in order prevent any incidents (e.g., potential burns from uneven heating, risk of explosions caused by improper food container materials, hygiene concerns, possible degradation of food quality caused by incorrect usage).

2.8 Enforcing Lunchbox Compliance:

GES shall ensure home-packed lunchboxes are aligned with sections 4.2 (Key Regulatory Shifts) and 11.8 (Guidelines for Home-Packed Lunchboxes) in the ADG2 requirements:

1. GES shall conduct daily visual spot checks on a sample of lunchboxes to ensure compliance with the school's nutritional standards. -
2. The Schools is authorized to confiscate or ask students to put away non-compliant food items to be returned home under the following conditions:
 - a. Schools With Food Services: Following 3 non-compliance notifications sent to parents, a healthier alternative shall be offered from the school's food services, with parents being notified that they will be charged for the alternative provision.
 - b. Confiscation is only authorized if schools have a system in place to donate non-compliant items. The disposal of food otherwise is not authorized to prevent the promotion of wastefulness.
 - c. Students are not authorized to eat confiscated/returned non-compliant foods on the school premises, including on the bus, and both students and parents shall be reminded of this rule regularly.
3. The school is authorized to charge parents for alternative food provision offered to students from their own food services in the above cases, or if a student did not bring food to school for any reason. This provision shall be explicitly stated in the parent-school agreement and in each of the 3 non-compliance notifications sent prior to replacing student meals with healthier alternatives from the school's food services.
4. In the case of repeated non-compliance, schools shall further engage with parents through appropriate parties (e.g., school counselor, nurse, wellbeing lead, dean of students, child protection officer, etc.)

2.9 **Personal Hygiene:** The school shall ensure that all students follow basic personal hygiene practices by:

1. Washing/disinfect their hands before eating.
2. Schools shall display handwashing/sanitization signage in eating areas.
3. Staff shall be mindful of younger children and assist them with any hygiene issues (e.g., make sure they do not have food on their person after eating).

2.10 **Nutrition Education:** Schools shall deliver nutrition education to students through the formal curriculum and other engagement strategies

1. Healthy and balanced eating.
2. Reading of food labels.
3. Sustainable meal practices.
4. Impact of food marketing on dietary choices.

2.11 **Staff Awareness:**

GES shall conduct awareness sessions to teachers and canteen staff attend training conducted by the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (ADPHC) and other relevant entities in relation to healthy eating, allergen identification and emergency response, to enable them to promote healthy eating and guarantee the safety of students, when supervising, participating, and/or interacting with students.

2.12 **Parent Engagement:**

1. The school shall share guidelines with parents regarding healthy and balanced eating practices at the beginning of the academic year (and to new students upon admission).

2. GES shall distribute to parents any relevant guidelines shared by ADEK, Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (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.

- The school ensures procedures for students with allergies, dietary restrictions, or additional support needs.
- Allergy records are maintained and shared appropriately by the school nurse.
- All school food is clearly labelled
- Risk assessments and emergency procedures are in place
- Dietary accommodations are managed collaboratively with families.

3. Schools shall organize nutrition education sessions (at least once per term) to assist parents with lunchbox planning and ideating healthier alternatives for children's favorite food items as per Section 1.1.8.4 (Communication with Parents) in the ADG2 requirements.

4. All communication must be "clear, non-blaming, and responsive to cultural and individual dietary needs" and schools shall partner with parents "to reinforce consistent, supportive nutrition and body image messages at home" as per Section 1.1.8.4 (Communication with Parents) in the ADG2 requirements.

5. For events where food sharing/sales has been authorized by ADEK, schools shall communicate to parents that any food brought in shall adhere to the ADG2 requirements.

6. The School shall communicate all food-related concerns

2.13 **Records of Food-Related Complaints:** GES shall keep records of all food-related complaints and establish response procedures to address these complaints, in line with the *ADEK School Records Policy*.

2.14 **Continuous Improvement and Engagement:** GES shall actively engage parents, staff, students, and food service providers in feedback mechanisms (e.g., food tasting sessions, suggestions for new menu items, age-appropriate surveys) to develop a healthy eating culture at the school and ensure ongoing quality enhancement.

3. Food Services

3.1 **Quality Control and Compliance:** Schools shall adhere to the ADG2 requirements and Federal Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety in the provision of food services (including canteen meals) and obtain and maintain valid licenses and inspection records/notices.

- 3.2 The school shall ensure that contracts with food service providers explicitly require compliance with the ADG2 and ADPHC requirements. Food services may be provided by:
 1. SEHHI-certified and approved suppliers, or
 2. New suppliers, provided that they are formally registered and operate under the

condition of obtaining SEHHI certification prior to continuing services.

Reporting of Non-Compliance by Food Services: Schools shall report non-compliance by food services to ADAFSA.

- 3.3 Food Delivery Services: GES shall not permit students to use external food delivery services (e.g., Talabat, Careem, Noon, Deliveroo, Instashop) during school hours. Staff using these services shall use discretionary measures to avoid the unintentional promotion of unhealthy food items (e.g., picking up a fast-food delivery in a tote bag, ordering healthier alternatives on days when they are assigned mealtime supervision), in line with the ADG2 requirements on limiting student exposure to the marketing of non-nutritious food.

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 ADG2 requirements:
 - 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, GES shall:
 - a. Consider students' allergies and intolerances when planning school activities and meals/snacks 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, in line with the *ADEK School Health and Safety Policy*.
 - f. Appropriately label and store medicines required to manage student allergies.

- 4.3 For students with special dietary requirements (alternative quantities, restrictions, or meal timings for high performance athletes, those with medical conditions, etc.), parents shall submit written requests (with justification) for accommodations, and schools shall collaborate with approved suppliers to provide inclusive menus that meet diverse dietary needs in line with ADG2 requirements.

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 School 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/snacks 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).

6. Food Marketing

- 6.1 Promotion: As per Section 11.9.1.1 (Visual Nudges and Messaging) in the ADG2 requirements, GES shall employ marketing strategies to promote and encourage healthy and safe eating practices, including verifying that food service providers are engaged in promotional marketing in compliance with the ADG2 requirements.
- 6.2 Prohibition: GES shall prohibit the display, sale, and advertisement of non-compliant food (and related brands) on its premises and any school-sponsored events as per Section 11.9.4. (Marketing and Advertisement Rules) in the ADG2 requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:
1. Events where food is provided or sold, such as sport days, national/international celebrations, school breakfast/lunch programs, fundraisers, and classroom activities.
 2. Unintentional marketing by staff when carrying food delivery bags displaying restaurant logos or eating non-compliant items from home in front of students.
 3. Marketing techniques that “may be used to influence food and beverage purchasing, including sports sponsorships, promotions and deals, and gifts, toys and prizes” (QCC, 2025).
 4. Select “appropriate sponsorship from a wide range of commercial entities, if sponsorship of school events is required” (QCC, 2025).

APPENDICES

Restricted Foods and Beverages on the Red List as per ADG2 Requirements

1. Red List Items

1.1 High Fat and High-Sugar Foods:

1. Deep-Fried Foods:
 - a. Examples: Fried chicken, falafel, samosas, fries, and other deep-fried food options.
 - b. Reason: High oil absorption leads to elevated saturated/trans fats and extra calories.
 - c. Alternatives: Oven-baked, air fried or roasted versions of the examples covered above.
2. Sweets and Desserts with Excess Sugar/Fat:
 - a. Examples: Cakes, donuts, croissants, sweet pastries, marshmallows, candy, lollipops, ice cream, slushies, chocolate (less than 50% cocoa), and other high fat and sugar dessert options.
 - b. Reason: Contributes to excessive sugar, saturated fat, and empty calories that can undermine dental health and weight management.
 - c. Alternatives: Portion-controlled whole-grain muffins with minimal sugar, fruit-based desserts, dark chocolate (more than 50% cocoa).*

1.2 Unhealthy Beverages:

1. Soft Drinks (All Types):
 - a. Examples: Regular, diet, or zero-calorie artificially sweetened sodas.
 - b. Reason: Often high in sweeteners (sugar or artificial) and phosphates, high in caffeine, lacking nutritional value.
 - c. Alternatives: Water, carbonated water, unsweetened fruit-infused water, low-sugar 100% fruit juices (max 200 ml).
2. Energy and Sports Drinks:
 - a. Exception: Energy and sport drinks are not allowed but Isotonic sports drinks can be allowed under specific conditions.**
 - b. Reason: Typically high in caffeine, sugar, and other stimulants not appropriate for children's daily intake.
 - c. Alternatives: Water, electrolyte solutions specified by health professionals.
3. Caffeinated Beverages:
 - a. Examples: Hot/iced coffee and teas.
 - b. Reason: Excessive caffeine can impact blood pressure, sleep, and concentration in children.
 - c. Alternatives: Herbal teas without caffeine, warm milk (complying with banned additives).

*Refer to section 11.4.2 table 9 for the accepted baked good portions in the ADG2 Requirements.

**Refer to section 11.7.3 for more details on Athletes and Physically Active Students in the ADG2 Requirements.

4. Fruit Syrup Juices:
 - a. Example: Juice that contain the statement “Made from real fruit juice” or “beverage, cocktail, drink”.
 - b. Reason: Syrup-based juices are essentially sugar-loaded drinks lacking the fiber/vitamins of real fruit.
 - c. Alternatives: 100% fruit juice (max 200 ml) without added sugar, artificial flavoring and/or coloring. It can be diluted with water or carbonated water. Freshly blended smoothies without added sugar can be made with low fat dairy.*

1.3 Processed and High-Fat Meals:

1. All Non-Halal Meat Options:
 - a. Examples: Food items containing pork derivatives or with added alcohol (ethanol) or one of its products.
2. Processed Meats:
 - a. Examples: Hotdogs, sausages, mortadella, pepperoni, salami, smoked turkey, smoked salmon, bacon and other Deli meats options.
 - b. Reason: High sodium, preservatives, and saturated fats; linked to long- term health risks.
 - c. Alternatives: Lean poultry, fish, or unprocessed meats (baked or grilled).
3. High-Fat Meat Products:
 - a. Examples: All high fat meat cuts coming from beef, lamb and camel.
 - b. Reason: Contributes to excess saturated fat, processed meats, and high sodium, increasing the risk of various health concerns which can undermine healthy weight management.
 - c. Alternatives: Chicken breast, trimmed beef, or plant-based proteins (legumes).

1.4 Additive-Contain Foods:

1. Food and Synthetic Colorings and Flavors:
 - a. Examples: Sunset yellow E110, Quinoline yellow E104, Carmoisine E122, Allura red E129, Tartrazine E102, Ponceau 4R E124, RED40, YELLOW5, YELLOW6, BLUE1 and Food containing artificial sweetener, preservatives, colors or flavors manufactured from chemicals.
 - b. Reason: Chemical dyes or chemical food flavoring can cause hyperactivity or allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.
 - c. Alternatives: Natural colorings from vegetable juices (beetroot, carrot, turmeric), or fresh fruits.
2. Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) and Flavor Enhances:
 - a. Reason: Can cause headaches or allergic-like reactions in sensitive children; encourages overconsumption of high-sodium foods.
 - b. Alternatives: Use fresh herbs, spices, onion, garlic, or citrus for flavor enhancement.
3. High Fructose Corn Syrup:
 - a. Reason: HFCS correlates strongly with obesity and metabolic issues.
 - b. Alternatives: Use minimal sugar, honey, or fruit purees for sweetness; still in moderation.

*Refer to section 11.5.2 table 12 for more details on juice specifications in the ADG2 Requirements.

4. Artificial Sweeteners:
 - a. Examples: All sweeteners that are not listed under the UAE technical regulation UAE.S 192:2019 Additives.
 - b. Reason: Some artificial sweeteners that are not listed under UAE technical regulations are possibly carcinogenic to humans.
 - c. Alternatives: Sweeteners as listed in the UAE technical regulation UAE.S 192:2019 Additives Permitted for Use in Food Stuffs. An example of an acceptable sweetener is stevia (made from the leaves of the *Stevia rebaudiana* plant).

1.5 Dairy and Soy Products:

1. Dairy Drinks:
 - a. Examples: Flavored and sweetened dairy products and those that exceed set sugar/fat thresholds.
 - b. Reason: Excess saturated fat, and sugar can overshadow nutritional benefits of milk.
 - c. Alternatives: Unflavored full fat or low-fat milk, unsweetened yogurt, and natural cheese.
2. Soy Products:
 - a. Examples: Soy milk, and sauces that contain soy and its derivatives.
 - b. Reason: Many soy products contain flavor enhancers, sweeteners, or other chemicals.
 - c. Alternatives: Other plant-based milks (unsweetened coconut milk, or oat milk).
3. Cheese Imitations:
 - a. Example: Imitation cream cheese, sandwich slices, flavored cheese slices and other highly processed imitation cheese products.
 - b. Reason: Overly processed cheese spreads/imitations can be high in trans fats, salt, and additives.
 - c. Alternatives: Low-fat mozzarella, reduced-fat cheddar, other low-fat dairy options.

1.6 Other Restricted Items

1. Pickled Vegetables (High Salt/Preservatives):
 - a. Reason: Excess salt and preservatives clash with low-sodium requirements.
 - b. Alternatives: Fresh or lightly marinated vegetables using vinegar/herbs with minimal salt.
2. High Caloric Spreads, Salad Dressings and Sauces:
 - a. Examples: Mayonnaise, liquid and dried chili, ketchup. ready sauces such as ranch sauce, jalapeno sauce, Italian sauce and others.
 - b. Reason: High sugar, salt, or fat sauces with artificial flavoring or/and coloring.
 - c. Alternatives: Low-sodium, low-fat homemade sauces (tomato-based with herbs, yogurt-based dressings). Low fat mayonnaise, low salt and sugar ketchup.
3. Allergens: Nuts, Soybean, Sesame
 - a. Examples: All nuts and their products, peanuts and their products, soybean and its products, and sesame seeds and its products.
 - b. Reason: Allergen concerns.
 - c. Alternatives: Seeds such as chia seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds (unsalted).

References

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