



GEMS

مدرسة جيمس وينشستر
Winchester School
ABU DHABI

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Aligned with ADEK School Food and Nutrition Policy
and ADG2: Abu Dhabi Guideline for Unified School Nutrition and Food Safety

Academic Year: 2025–2026

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Food and Nutrition Policy

Policy Statement

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi (WSA) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and sustainable food environment that promotes the wellbeing of all students, staff, and visitors.

This policy:

- Aligns with ADEK's School Food and Nutrition Policy and ADG2 (Abu Dhabi Guideline for Unified School Nutrition and Food Safety).
- Applies to all food and drink provided, sold, distributed, or consumed on school premises and during school-sponsored activities.

Purpose

At Winchester, this policy aims to:

- Ensure all food provision and food environments comply with ADG2 and ADEK expectations, including canteen operations, vending, school events, and food brought from home.
- Promote healthy, balanced, and sustainable eating habits for students and staff.
- Protect students with allergies and medical needs through clear systems and communication.
- Reduce food-related waste and support the school's wider sustainability and environmental strategy.
- Engage parents and the wider community as partners in establishing lifelong healthy eating habits.

Scope

This policy covers:

- The school canteen, vending machines, and any other on-site food outlets.
- All food served or sold during the school day (including, snacks, and after-school activity snacks).
- Food brought from home in lunchboxes or snack boxes.
- Food used at school events (e.g., sports days, National Day, International Day, fairs, bake sales).
- All students, staff, contractors, visitors, and parents while on school premises or at school-sponsored activities.



Key Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

- **Food** – Any substance eaten or drunk for human consumption (including water and beverages), excluding medicines.
- **Canteen** – Any school-approved area used to prepare, distribute, and/or sell food and beverages to students and staff.
- **Food services** – All arrangements made by WSA for food provision during the school day and school events.
- **Healthy eating** – Eating a variety of safe, nutrient-rich foods in appropriate amounts to support growth, learning, and wellbeing, while considering environmental impact.
- **ADG2 “Red List”** – Food and drink items prohibited in schools in Abu Dhabi due to their negative impact on health.
- **Sustainable meal practices** – Food choices and practices that are healthy, have a low environmental impact, and minimise waste.
- **SEHII program** - SEHII in schools is a program for all food suppliers and food establishments, where they are required to apply SEHII standards for food and beverages that facilitate the access and consumption of healthy food for students.
- **ADAFSA** - Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority, the governmental body in Abu Dhabi responsible for sustainable agriculture, food safety, food security, and biosecurity within the Emirate, overseeing regulations, pest control, food handler training ([EFST](#)), and initiatives like [Zadna Rating](#) for food establishments

Winchester Food and Nutrition Commitments

WSA will:

- Maintain a written Food and Nutrition Policy aligned with ADEK and ADG2 and publish it on the school website.
- Ensure all food services and school food environments comply with food safety and hygiene regulations.
- Foster a culture where healthy eating and sustainability are visible daily priorities.
- Put student safety first, including clear systems around allergies and intolerances.
- Continually review and improve food provision in consultation with students, parents, staff, and caterers.
- Promotion of Healthy Eating



Healthy Eating Culture

The school will:

- Create dining environments that are calm, clean, inclusive and allow adequate time to eat.
- Use displays, assemblies, curriculum links, and events to reinforce positive messages about nutrition, body image, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Active Supervision of Meals

Staff on duty will:

- Supervise students during snack and lunch times.
- Visually check a sample of lunchboxes for compliance with the school's lunchbox guidelines.
- Ensure every child has access to an appropriate meal.
- Be alert to possible signs of eating difficulties, food-related bullying, or disordered eating and follow school safeguarding procedures.
- Encourage students to clear their eating areas and dispose of waste appropriately.
- In FS and Cycle 1, staff will sit with children as far as possible, modelling good manners and healthy choices.

Balanced Meals and Snacks

- All meals provided through school food services must comply with ADG2 nutritional requirements for school meals and snacks.
- Canteen menus must offer balanced options including fruit/vegetables, wholegrains, lean protein, and healthy fats.
- Desserts or sweet items (where allowed) must be compliant with ADG2 and served in appropriate portion sizes.
- Home-packed lunchboxes should follow WSA's "Healthy Lunchbox Guide", shared with parents annually.

ADG2 "Red List" – Prohibited Items (Students)

The following are not permitted for students anywhere on site, whether sold at school or brought from home:

- Deep-fried foods.
- High-sugar or high-fat sweets and desserts.
- Soft drinks and energy drinks of any kind.
- Caffeinated beverages (coffee-based drinks, regular tea, iced coffee/tea).
- Sugary fruit drinks and juices that do not meet ADG2 standards.
- Processed meats (e.g., hotdogs, sausages, salami, mortadella, bacon).
- High-fat meat cuts and heavily processed cheese spreads.
- Products with banned artificial colourings, flavourings, or sweeteners.
- Very salty snacks and sauces that exceed ADG2 limits.
- Nuts and nut products, soybeans and derivatives, and sesame and sesame products (WSA adopts a nut- and sesame-aware environment due to allergen risk).



- Non-halal foods, including pork and products containing alcohol.

Hydration

- Plain drinking water is the default beverage during the school day and at all school events.
- Students are encouraged to carry refillable water bottles.
- Water stations will be accessible in key locations, especially near PE facilities and outdoor areas.

Food Sharing

- For safety and allergy reasons, food sharing during the normal school day is discouraged.
- If sharing is permitted for a specific class or event, it must have prior school approval, adhere to ADG2 guidelines, and clearly label ingredients and allergens where relevant.
- For birthdays and celebrations, WSA encourages non-food-based approaches (e.g., books, small gifts).

Microwaves

- Students are not allowed to use microwaves on site.
- Microwaves will not be placed in student-accessible areas.

Lunchbox Compliance

- Staff will conduct daily visual checks on a sample of lunchboxes.
- Parents will receive same-day communication where lunchboxes do not comply.
- For repeated non-compliance, the school may ask the child to put away non-compliant food and/or provide a healthier alternative meal from the canteen if available, with costs charged to parents.
- Confiscated non-compliant foods (where necessary) will be handled in a way that avoids food waste as far as possible.
- Students may not consume confiscated items later in the day on buses or elsewhere on school premises.

Personal Hygiene

WSA will:

- Require handwashing or sanitising before eating.
- Display age-appropriate handwashing posters in toilets, the canteen, and eating areas.
- Support younger children who need help with cleaning their hands and faces after eating.

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education will be embedded within the formal curriculum (e.g., science, PE, PSHE, social studies) and through assemblies, competitions, and practical activities (e.g., cooking demonstrations, gardening).



- Key topics include balanced diets and food groups, reading and understanding food labels, sustainable and environmentally conscious food choices, and critical thinking about advertising and food marketing.

Staff Awareness and Role Modelling

Relevant staff will receive training on:

- Healthy eating messages for children.
- Food safety and hygiene.
- Allergen awareness and emergency response.

All staff must:

- Use positive, non-shaming language about food and bodies.
- Avoid discussing weight or shape in negative terms with or around students.
- Avoid consuming or visibly promoting non-compliant foods in front of students.

Parent Engagement

At the start of each academic year (and upon new admissions), parents will receive:

- The WSA Food and Nutrition Policy.
- The WSA Healthy Lunchbox Guide.
- A summary of ADG2 “Red List” items (see Appendix 1).
- Additional strategies include including the policy in the parent handbook and parent-school agreement, sharing updates or guidance from local health authorities when relevant, and offering parent workshops on healthy lunchboxes, picky eating, and practical healthy swaps.
- All communication will be culturally sensitive, non-judgmental, and supportive.

Complaints, Feedback, and Continuous Improvement

- All food-related complaints (canteen, lunchboxes, events, allergens) will be logged and processed under the school’s complaints procedures.
- WSA will gather regular feedback from students and parents (e.g., menu surveys, food-tasting sessions, School Council suggestions) to improve food services.

Food Services at Winchester

Compliance and Licensing

- All food services on campus must comply with ADG2, ADAFSA regulations, and Federal Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety.
- Only SEHII-approved or formally registered suppliers who commit to obtaining SEHII certification may provide food services.



- Contracts with caterers will explicitly require adherence to ADG2 and local health and safety requirements, with clear consequences for non-compliance.

Monitoring and Reporting

- The school will maintain copies of inspection reports and licences issued by relevant authorities.
- Any non-compliance by food service providers will be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required.

External Food Delivery Services

- Students are not permitted to order food via external delivery services (e.g., Talabat, Careem, Deliveroo) during the school day.
- Staff using such services should do so discreetly and are encouraged to choose healthier options, in line with the role-modelling expectations in this policy.

Special Considerations

Religious, Cultural, and Ethical Needs

WSA will:

- Respect and, where practicable, accommodate religious, cultural, and ethical dietary preferences of students and staff.
- Consult with parents and student representatives to inform menu planning and food-related decisions.

Allergies and Intolerances

WSA will:

- Maintain up-to-date records of students' food allergies and intolerances.
- Share relevant information with staff (teachers, duty staff, canteen, bus nannies) on a need-to-know basis.
- Ensure canteen items are appropriately labelled with allergen information.
- Require parents to immediately inform the school of any new or changed allergies and to supply necessary medication with valid prescriptions.
- Conduct risk assessments for students with severe allergies and implement appropriate risk-reduction measures (e.g., seating plans, cleaning routines, avoidance of specific foods in certain classes).
- Store emergency medication safely and accessibly, in line with the School Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensure staff are familiar with emergency response procedures for allergic reactions.

Special Dietary Requirements

- Parents of students with medical conditions, high-performance sport requirements, or other special dietary needs should provide written requests and medical documentation.
- WSA will work with the caterer and family to provide suitable menu options wherever reasonably possible.



Sustainability

In alignment with the ADEK School Sustainability Policy, WSA will:

- Encourage sustainable meal practices by increasing the availability of plant-based options and locally produced foods where possible, and promoting reusable water bottles and lunch containers.
- Reduce food and packaging waste by encouraging appropriate portion sizes, reviewing surplus food handling (e.g., safe donation where possible), and providing clearly labelled waste, recycling, and food-waste bins.
- Use school-grown produce (e.g., from gardens) only when handled and prepared in line with food safety regulations and with consideration for allergies and cultural preferences.

Food Marketing and Sponsorship

WSA will:

- Promote healthy food choices through displays, menu design, and positive messaging.
- Prohibit the display, sponsorship, sale, or advertisement of non-compliant food and beverage brands anywhere on campus or at school-sponsored events.
- Avoid marketing tactics that encourage over-consumption of unhealthy foods (e.g., prizes linked to non-compliant items).
- Ensure that any external sponsorship for school events aligns with this policy and does not promote unhealthy food or drink.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal / Senior Leadership Team

- Endorse and actively support implementation of this policy.
- Ensure food service contracts and school procedures align with ADEK and ADG2.

Food Service Provider / Canteen Manager

- Provide menus compliant with this policy and ADG2.
- Maintain all necessary licenses, training, and food safety documentation.

School Nurse / Medical Team

- Maintain allergy and medical dietary records.
- Support staff training on allergies and emergency responses.

Teachers and Support Staff

- Model healthy eating behaviours.
- Supervise mealtimes and apply lunchbox and food-sharing rules fairly.

Parents / Guardians

- Follow WSA guidelines for lunchboxes and snacks.
- Inform the school immediately of any allergies or medical conditions.

Students

- Follow healthy eating guidelines.
- Respect peers' dietary needs and allergies.
- Dispose of waste responsibly.



Monitoring, Review, and Compliance

- This policy takes effect from Academic Year 2025/26.
- Implementation will be monitored through internal audits of menus, lunchboxes, and events; records of allergies, incidents, and complaints; and feedback from students, parents, and staff.
- Non-compliance with this policy may result in further action in line with ADEK regulations and penalties and relevant UAE legislation on food safety and child wellbeing.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if ADEK, ADG2, ADAFSA or relevant regulations are updated.



Appendix 1 – Summary of ADG2 “Red List” Categories

The Red List includes food and drink items that must not be provided to or consumed by students in school because they are high in sugar, salt, unhealthy fats, or contain banned ingredients.

At Winchester, this includes (but is not limited to):

- *Deep-fried and high-fat foods*
 - French fries, fried chicken, samosas, spring rolls, fried snacks, heavily breaded and fried items.
- *High-sugar sweets and desserts*
 - Candy, large chocolate bars (especially milk chocolate), donuts, cream-filled pastries, large cookies, ice cream, slushies, sugary jellies and puddings.
- *Sugary drinks*
 - Fizzy/soft drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, sweetened iced teas/coffees, high-sugar juices and fruit drinks.
- *Caffeinated drinks*
 - Coffee-based drinks, regular tea, iced coffee/tea and any other caffeinated beverages for students.
- *Processed meats and high-fat animal products*
 - Hotdogs, sausages, salami, mortadella, bacon, high-fat burgers, high-fat meat cuts and heavily processed cheese spreads.
- *Very salty snacks and sauces*
 - Salty crisps, high-salt crackers, instant noodles, high-sodium pickles, very salty sauces and dressings.
- *Products with banned additives*
 - Items containing artificial colourings, sweeteners, or flavour enhancers that are not permitted under UAE regulations.
- *Allergen-risk items (Winchester-specific exclusions)*
 - Nuts and nut products (including nut butters),
 - Soybeans and soy-based products where labelled as high-risk allergens,
 - Sesame and sesame products (including tahini and sesame-topped products).
- *Non-halal items*
 - Pork and pork products,
 - Any product containing alcohol, even in small quantities.

Parents are requested to ensure that none of the above items are sent to school in lunchboxes or snacks. The canteen and any approved external food providers must also fully comply with these exclusions.