

Healthy Eating Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed

Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

The school environment should actively promote and support healthy lifestyle choices by encouraging all students to make nutritious food choices and engage in regular physical activity throughout the school day. To facilitate this, the school will ensure access to healthy food options, opportunities for physical activity, and the provision of safe spaces, appropriate facilities, and suitable equipment that support both healthy eating and active living.

2. Purpose of policy

GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS) recognises the vital connection between a healthy diet and a student's capacity to learn effectively, concentrate, and achieve their full academic potential. As part of the broader UAE community, we also acknowledge the school's role in promoting family health, sustainable food choices, and responsible food production practices.

We are committed to fostering and developing positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating among our students. GFS values the importance of empowering children to make informed choices about what, when, where, and why they eat. We believe that adults including staff and parents serve as important role models and should support students in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to lifelong health, happiness, and overall wellbeing.

Recognising that mealtimes are also social learning opportunities, we encourage parents or guardians to reinforce the importance of healthy eating habits at home, just as we do within the school environment. Together, we aim to create a consistent message that supports and sustains healthy choices for all students.

3. 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 students 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 carers 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 students e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

4. Curriculum

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 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, Food Technology and PHSE curriculum and shared in weekly newsletters in EYFS.
- All students have the opportunity to learn about safe food preparation and to learn about where food has come from. Students 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 Organic Garden.
- Parents can get involved by having their child/ren help with cooking at home a few times a week or preparing snack and lunch.
- The school runs several healthy eating workshops throughout the school year that parents are able to attend with their child.

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

- Poultry, meat 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).

Healthy snack options: Cut up fruit (apple, melon, banana, etc.), avocados, cereal bars, yogurt (fruit only, no chocolate flavours), chopped vegetables (carrots, cucumber, etc.), sandwich with bread and filling, meat, cheese, fruit juice, water, milk.

Unhealthy snack options: Pizza, chicken nuggets, crisps, chips, burgers, sweets, biscuits, cakes, muffins, chocolate, fizzy drinks, chocolate milk, chocolate yoghurt and cream biscuits.

5. Food Allergies

The Clinic Team regularly updates the student's food allergy excel sheet and keep each child's medical record. Class teachers/ form tutors, XLT, Head of years, Trip leaders and Key stage leaders of such students have access to this via the shared MS excel sheet to keep the privacy and confidentiality. Parents are to update the clinic of any changes in their child's medical and dietary needs to ensure their child's safety at school campus:

- Students 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, other celebration days etc.
- Class Teachers are aware of the emergency procedures in place for their individual students with food allergies (as mentioned above).
- 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.
- We are a nuts free school.

6. Slices



School meals are externally sourced via Slices who cater for the school canteen and parent café. As one of the leading school catering services providers, Slices goal is to support your children's success by ensuring that healthy, balanced and tasty meals, including snacks and lunches, are being offered. Some of the measures that Slices undertakes to achieve this goal include:

School Food Standards and Guidelines:

Slices has adopted and committed itself to school food standards that go beyond the local guidelines through benchmarking all items produced by Slices with successful models implemented in the US, UK, Finland, Sweden and the World Health Organisation. All the menu offered by Slices are Dubai Municipality approved.

Nutrition expertise:

Slices work closely with a paediatric dietician to ensure its standards meet the highest possible standards to support children's health and reduce the risk for lifestyle related diseases. Recipes have been adjusted and improved, and nutrition evaluations have been done for snacks and main meals at lunch. It works closely to create a bespoke menu and service that are tailored to the school's culture and specific needs. 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.

7. Management of expectation of Healthy Eating

- The school promotes and supports the eating of healthy food in parent provided lunch boxes and via the externally provided school packed lunch (Slices)
- Evaluates parent and child views on the types of foods that are offered via surveys and feedback.
- All students are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day. This must be clearly marked with the child's name. Water re-fillers are located throughout the school for additional access to drinking water.
- Students' 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.
- GFS discourages foods with high percentages of sugars and fats. 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 students' lunchboxes, including portion sizes is monitored by the class teacher. Any concerns will be shared with the Head of Year, and, where necessary, the school nurse and Senior Leadership Team. Where needed, a meeting will be held with the parents to ensure that lunch boxes are healthy and meet school policy.
- Only Halal meat products are permitted in the school and we have a strict 'no nuts' policy for students and staff.
- Students 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.

8. Birthday Celebrations

We understand that birthdays of your children are very important events in every family. However, distributing gifts, food items or goodie bags is not allowed in the school. Birthday celebrations are not permitted in secondary years. We do not allow birthday cakes in any class in school due to dietary needs of students across the school. If students wish to bring in something to share we suggest fruit kebabs or similar, but encourage



parents to check with their 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.

Signed
School Doctor

Date ...22 August 2025...

Signed
Manager School Operations

Date 22 August 2025...

Signed
Executive Principal/CEO/GEMS Executive Vice President- Education

Date 22 August 2025...

Next policy review date:
February 2026