



ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL - ABU DHABI

School Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy

(Aligned with ADEK School Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy)

Introduction

In recognition of the profound impact that nutrition and food safety has on the health and well-being of our students, St. Joseph's School is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy. This policy reflects our dedication to creating a supportive environment that prioritizes the promotion of healthy dietary habits and ensures the highest standards of food safety within our school community.

At St. Joseph's School, we understand that healthy eating habits are essential for academic success, physical development, and overall well-being. By establishing clear guidelines and practices for healthy eating and food safety, we aim to empower our students, staff, and stakeholders to make informed decisions about their dietary choices and create a culture of wellness that extends beyond the classroom.

By developing and implementing this policy, St. Joseph's School seeks to cultivate a culture of health consciousness and responsibility, where the principles of healthy eating and food safety are integrated into every aspect of school life. Together, we can create an environment where students can thrive academically, physically, and emotionally, laying the foundation for a lifetime of wellness and success.

Purpose

The aim of St. Joseph's School endeavor to develop and implement a Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy is to prioritize the health, well-being, and safety of our students, staff, and broader school community. This policy seeks to establish comprehensive guidelines and practices that promote healthy dietary habits, ensure food safety standards, and create an environment conducive to optimal nutrition and wellness.

Through the implementation of this policy, our objectives are to:

- Provide clear and actionable guidelines for promoting healthy eating habits and making informed food choices among students, staff, and stakeholders.
- Foster a positive and supportive food environment that encourages the consumption of nutritious foods and discourages the consumption of unhealthy or processed options.
- Promote education and awareness initiatives that empower individuals to make healthier dietary decisions and understand the importance of nutrition in overall well-being.
- Collaborate with stakeholders, including parents, teachers, to implement and sustain effective strategies for promoting healthy eating and food safety practices.

By developing and implementing a Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy, St. Joseph's School aims to cultivate a culture of health consciousness and responsibility, wherein nutritious eating habits are valued and prioritized as essential components of a thriving learning environment.

POLICY

1. School Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy

Policy Requirements: St. Joseph's School has the Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy, in line with the ADEK Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy.

- i. It Sets out the school's commitment to the provision of healthy food choices and the encouragement of healthy and sustainable meal practices, and the steps to be taken in relation to this, including:
 - Express the school's commitment to promoting healthy and sustainable eating practices.
 - Measures to foster an environment conducive to healthy eating.
 - Methods to actively supervise students during snack/mealtimes:
 - a. Ensure that students are consuming acceptable foods (e.g., not bringing allergens that may harm other students, etc.).
 - b. Ensure all students have access to a meal every day (unless fasting).
 - c. To be vigilant about concerning food-related behavior (eating disorders, food-related bullying, etc.).
 - Procedures to improve the sustainability of food consumption practices, in line with the school's sustainability strategy.
- ii. To specify measures to prohibit certain food items (such as alcohol, carbonated drinks, pork, and allergens). School will have the authority to implement additional rigorous measures for communal events, ensuring stricter adherence to healthy eating guidelines and/or sustainable practices.
- iii. Outline the measures to foster the inclusion of minority groups and ensure the safety of students with allergies and food intolerances.
- iv. To be published on the school website and made accessible to staff, students, and parents.

2. Promotion of Healthy Eating

- I. Healthy Food Services: SJS establishes a healthy food culture that promotes a nutritious eating environment with nutrition-rich foods for all members of the school community.
 - Unsafe food items such as those containing allergens (e.g., nuts) are prohibited for personal consumption or distribution on school premises.

- II. Nutrition Education: SJS provides nutrition education to students through both formal curriculum instruction and various engagement strategies, such as competitions and workshops, empowering them to make active and informed choices. School will make sure that the curriculum includes, at minimum, the following topics:
 - Healthy and balanced eating.
 - Interpretation of food labels.
 - Adoption of sustainable meal practices.
- III. Staff Awareness: The school ensures that teachers attend training conducted by the Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (ADPHC) and other relevant entities in relation to healthy eating, to enable them to promote healthy eating when supervising and/or interacting with students.
- IV. Parent Engagement:
 - The school provides parents with guidelines concerning healthy and balanced eating. These guidelines will cover food restrictions, such as allergens like nuts and caffeinated beverages, as mandated by the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC), and "unhealthy" foods that the school advises parents against packing, such as fried food.
 - The school will share with parents any relevant guidelines shared by ADEK, 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.
 - For events where food sharing has been authorized by ADEK, school will communicate to parents that any food brought in shall adhere to the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in Educational Institutions.
 - Any concerns related to food will be communicated to parents on the same day they are noticed.

3. Food Services

- Food Delivery Services: During school hours, students are prohibited from utilizing external food delivery services (e.g., Talabat).

4. Special Considerations

- I. Consideration for Minority Groups: The school will 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.
- II. Consideration for Students with Food Allergies and Intolerances:
 - The school will:

- a. Consider students' allergies and intolerances when planning school activities and meals to ensure the basic food offering suits as many students as possible as it is or with minor modifications.
- b. Notify parents 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.
- f. Appropriately label and store medicines required to manage student allergies.

5. Sustainability

- I. Sustainable Meal Practices: To develop and implement a strategy to improve the sustainability of food choices and promote sustainable meal practices, in line with the ADEK Sustainability Policy.
 - Promotion of sustainable practices amongst staff, students, and parents (e.g., reduction of food waste, recycling, avoidance of single-use containers)

6. Compliance

This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25.

Prestina Rocha

Principal
St. Joseph's School



Date: 31 March 2024

Next review Date: 30 March 2025