

# Food and Nutrition Policy

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Version 1.2

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## 1. Overview

This policy outlines MRC-NECC's practices to promote nutritious eating, food safety, and sustainability across the school community. The policy emphasizes collaboration among staff, parents, and catering providers to encourage healthy habits, manage allergies, and uphold hygiene practices in line with ADAFSA, ADPHC, ADG2 and ADEK regulations.

## 2. Purpose

This policy ensures that all food provided or consumed meets Abu Dhabi's health and hygiene standards, supports students' dietary needs, and maintains a safe, nut-free environment.

## 3. Objective

- Promote healthy eating habits and ensure food safety in alignment with Abu Dhabi nutrition guidelines.
- Provide clear information regarding the safe provision, handling, and management of food within the school.
- Encourage sustainable meal practices that support student wellbeing and environmental responsibility.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all students, employees, outsourced catering staff, and the school community. It outlines responsibilities for food safety, nutrition, and adherence to hygiene standards.

## 5. Glossary

MRC-NECC	Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Special Education Operated by The New England Center for Children – Abu Dhabi
ACE	Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia® (ACE®), which follows the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks
IEP	Individualized Educational Plan for each student
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis

## 6 Applicable Laws and Regulations

- Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC). (2025).
- Abu Dhabi Guideline (ADG2): Abu Dhabi Guideline for Unified School Nutrition and Food Safety (ADG 2, 4th ed.).
- 2025 (November) ADEK School Food and Nutrition Policy\_v.1.2

## 7 Responsibilities

### 7.1 Policy Management Responsibilities

MRC-NECC Leadership is responsible for developing, updating, and disseminating this policy in coordination with the school's Health and Safety personnel.

### 7.2 School Administration

- Oversee compliance with applicable food safety and hygiene regulations.
- Ensure catering services provide culturally sensitive, inclusive, and nutritionally balanced food options.
- Ensure food services accommodate students with allergies, intolerances, and special dietary requirements.
- Maintain records of food-related concerns and ensure appropriate follow-up in line with regulatory requirements.

### 7.3 Health and Safety Personnel

- Monitor compliance with food safety and hygiene standards as outlined by ADAFSA and ADPHC.
- Ensure catering providers maintain required licenses and regulatory approvals.
- Conduct inspections and risk assessments related to food preparation, storage, and handling.
- Oversee implementation of nut-free zones and other dietary safety measures.
- Ensure food safety concerns are appropriately addressed and documented.

### 7.4 Catering Service Providers

- Comply with all applicable food safety and nutrition regulations.
- Provide balanced menu options and clear ingredient information.
- Participate in required health and nutrition training.
- Ensure suppliers are properly registered and certified in accordance with Abu Dhabi requirements (SEHHI).

### 7.5 All Employees

- Support the implementation of the school's Food & Nutrition Policy.
- Promote healthy food choices during student supervision.
- Monitor student safety during meals and report food-related concerns to appropriate personnel.
- Participate in relevant food safety and nutrition training.
- Use respectful and wellbeing-focused language when discussing food and body image.
- Model healthy eating behaviors and avoid promoting non compliant food items in the presence of students.

## 7.6 Parents:

- Support healthy eating practices by ensuring food provided from home aligns with school nutrition and safety requirements.
- Collaborate with the Center to support students' individual dietary needs and food development goals.

## 8 Policy Requirements

### 8.1 Healthy Eating Environment

- MRC-NECC fosters a healthy eating environment in alignment with ADEK's Food and Nutrition Policy.
- All food preparation, storage, handling, and transportation comply with applicable Abu Dhabi food safety regulations.
- Catering services meet approved nutritional standards and accommodate students' individual dietary and medical requirements.
- Food containing alcohol, pork, carbonated drinks, or restricted allergens is not permitted on school premises.
- Designated nut-free zones are maintained to safeguard students and staff with allergies.
- Food sharing between students is not permitted in order to protect health, safety, and individualized feeding plans.
- Students with specific dietary needs are supported through individualized planning, while promoting balanced and varied food choices within a safe and supportive environment.
- Students are supervised during mealtimes to ensure safety and appropriate support.
- Food delivery services are not used to provide student meals. Exceptionally, alternative arrangements may be approved in clinically justified cases with parental consent.
- Drinking water is available to students throughout the school day.
- Students have access to a daily meal, except during approved fasting periods.
- Water is the default beverage during meals and school activities, with accommodations provided based on individual needs.
- Hydration is monitored, particularly during outdoor or high activity periods.

### 8.2 Nutritional Education

- MRC-NECC provides age- and developmentally appropriate nutritional education tailored to students' individual learning profiles.
- Nutritional education promotes gradual food exposure and positive engagement with healthy eating habits.
- The school collaborates with families, where appropriate, to support consistency between home and school food practices.

- Staff receive training to support students in developing positive and safe relationships with food, taking into account individual dietary needs and preferences.
- Nutrition and hydration awareness materials are displayed in relevant school areas to promote healthy lifestyle choices.
- Where appropriate, elements of sustainable meal practices are incorporated into the ACE® curriculum and students' IEPs through functional and hands on learning activities.

### 8.3 Sustainable Meal Practices

- MRC-NECC promotes environmentally sustainable meal practices in alignment with the school's Sustainability Policy.
- The school encourages responsible food consumption and waste reduction among staff, parents, and students, where appropriate.
- Sustainability initiatives may include promoting plant-based or lower carbon-footprint options, supporting locally sourced products where feasible, reducing food waste, and minimizing single-use packaging.

## 9 Food Safety

### 9.1 Compliance and Hygiene

- All food preparation, storage, and handling comply with the Abu Dhabi Guidelines for Food in Educational Institutions, Federal Law No. (10) of 2015 on Food Safety, and applicable ADEK requirements.
- The school maintains appropriate food safety records and oversees compliance with approved hygiene and food handling standards.

### 9.2 Microwave use by students is restricted.

- For the purpose of teaching independent life skills, selected students may use a microwave with clinical and parental approval. Student microwave use is always under supervision by a trained staff member and microwaves are placed in designated kitchens.

### 9.3 Special Considerations

- The school maintains up-to-date records of students' allergies and food sensitivities and ensures relevant staff are informed as necessary.
- Allergy information is securely maintained and accessible to authorized personnel to support emergency response.
- Food provided by the school is clearly labelled to identify allergenic ingredients.
- When planning school meals and activities, the school seeks to ensure that food options are suitable for the majority of students while accommodating individual needs where required.

- Procedures for managing allergic reactions are in place, including maintaining appropriate emergency medication and providing staff training on recognition and response.

## 10 Parent and Community Engagement

- Parents are provided with guidance on preparing healthy meals in accordance with the Abu Dhabi Guidelines for Food in Educational Institutions.
- Parents may provide food from home, provided it complies with the school's nutritional and food safety requirements.
- The school shares relevant health and nutrition guidance issued by appropriate Abu Dhabi authorities, as applicable (ADG2, ADEK, ADPHC, QCC, ADAFSA, SEHHI).
- Ongoing communication with parents is maintained regarding food-related matters, including timely notification where health or safety concerns arise.
- For ADEK approved school events involving food, parents are informed that all food must comply with applicable Abu Dhabi food safety and nutrition guidelines.
- Food provided during school wide events is clearly labelled for allergen awareness.
- The school respects religious, cultural, and ethical dietary preferences and considers these, where appropriate, in food planning and labelling.
- Student feedback on food services is gathered through developmentally appropriate methods.

## 11 Reinforcement-Based Programming

- MRC-NECC applies evidence-based behavioral strategies, including principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), to support skill development and positive learning outcomes.
- Positive reinforcement is used to teach adaptive, functional, and socially meaningful skills in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Where clinically appropriate and based on individualized assessment, edible items may be included within a structured reinforcement plan in small amounts and under professional oversight.
- The use of edible reinforcement is carefully monitored and gradually reduced, with emphasis placed on transitioning students toward social, activity-based, and intrinsic forms of motivation.
- Reinforcement practices are implemented ethically and in alignment with professional standards to ensure student well-being.

## 12 Food Marketing

- While students do not purchase meals on campus, MRC-NECC remains mindful of the potential influence of intentional or unintentional food marketing.
- School communications, displays, activities, and staff practices promote healthy eating messages and avoid encouraging less nutritious food choices.
- In alignment with Abu Dhabi nutrition guidelines, the school supports positive food-related messaging and ensures promotional practices related to food comply with applicable regulatory requirements.

### Promotion

- The school promotes healthy and safe eating practices through appropriate visual messaging and responsible food-related communication.

### Prohibition

- The display, sale, or advertisement of non-compliant food or related brands is not permitted on school premises or during school-sponsored events.
- This applies to events involving food, including celebrations, sports days, fundraisers, and classroom activities.
- Staff are expected to avoid unintentional promotion of non compliant food items in the presence of students.
- Marketing practices that may influence unhealthy food choices, including sponsorships, promotional incentives, or branded materials, are not permitted.

### Exceptional Educational Use

- In limited and developmentally appropriate circumstances, non compliant food items may be used for specific educational or skill development purposes, subject to parental consent and professional oversight.

## 13 Policy Compliance & Review

- Adherence to this policy is mandatory.
- Non-Compliance with this policy shall be may result in corrective action in accordance with ADEK regulations and applicable UAE laws.
- The policy will be reviewed and updated annually or as necessary within shorter intervals to ensure continued compliance with UAE regulations.

## 14 Final Approval

This policy is approved by the Management and is effective as of **03 February 2026**.

**End of Policy**