

Health Eating Policy

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Created by:	Vice Principal	Reviewed by:	Principal
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Vice Principal: Nabil Khalfey			

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1. Rationale

Promoting a healthy lifestyle among students is crucial for their overall well-being and academic success. Our policy encourages nutritious choices and regular physical activity throughout the school day.

- **Encouraging Healthy Choices:** By implementing this policy, we empower students to make informed decisions about their diet, supporting their daily nutritional needs and reinforcing positive eating habits.
- **Facilitating Physical Activity:** Providing access to safe spaces and equipment for physical activity helps promote lifelong fitness habits and reduces sedentary behavior among students.
- **Creating Supportive Environments:** Our policy ensures that nutritious food options are readily available in school facilities, supporting a healthy environment where students can make wholesome choices.
- **Fostering Academic Success:** Research indicates that healthy eating and physical activity contribute to improved cognitive function and academic performance. By prioritizing student health, we aim to support their academic achievement and overall well-being.

2. Purpose of Policy

ISCS Bahrain recognises the vital link between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards. It also acknowledges the role the school can play, as part of the larger community in Bahrain, in promoting family health and sustainability in food and farming practices.

We are committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating. We recognise the importance of providing children with the opportunity to make informed choices about what, when, where, and why they eat. We believe that adults (both staff and parents) should serve as role models and support children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to health, happiness, and overall wellbeing. Since mealtimes represent a social experience for both children and adults and help children learn about healthy eating, we encourage parents and carers to continue emphasising the importance of healthy eating both at home and at school.

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 school 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, Topic and PSHE curriculum.
- 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 cooking.
- Parents can get involved by having their child/ren help with cooking at home a few times a week or preparing snacks and lunch.
- The school runs several healthy eating workshops throughout the school year that parents can attend with their child.

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

- Meat, fish and protein alternatives
- Dairy foods
- Grains, cereals and starchy vegetables
- Fruit and vegetables (These foods can be stored in thermal containers to keep hot or cool bags with ice packs to keep cool. Both options will ensure food is kept fresh for your child to eat within school hours).

4.1 Healthy Snack

Cut up fruit (apple, melon, banana, etc.), avocados, cereal bars, yoghurt (fruit only, no chocolate flavours), chopped vegetables (carrots, cucumber, etc.), sandwich with filling, meat. Cheese, fruit juice, water and milk.

4.2 Unhealthy Snack

Pizza, chicken nuggets, crisps, chips, burgers, sweets, biscuits, cakes, muffins, chocolate, fizzy drinks, chocolate milk, chocolate yoghurt, processed meats/ sausages, and chocolate biscuits.

5. Food Allergies

The Clinic Team regularly updates the student's food allergy excel sheet and keeps each child's medical record. All teachers have access to this via Edunation and SharePoint. Parents are to update the clinic of any changes in their child's medical and dietary needs to ensure we can facilitate their child's safety.

- 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 on Education).
- To protect children with food allergies, we encourage children **not to share or swap food with one another**.
- We are a nuts free school.

6. School Catering Company – Eastern Bakery

School meals are externally sourced from Eastern Bakery, who cater for the school canteen. As one of the leading school catering service providers in Bahrain, their goal is to support your child's success by ensuring that healthy, balanced and tasty meals, including snacks and lunches, are being offered. Some of the measure that Eastern Bakery undertakes to achieve this goal include:

International School Food Standards and Guidelines:

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

Nutrition Expertise:

Eastern Bakery works closely with a pediatric dietitian 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 Canteen Supervisor and Operations Manager and is reported to the Principal of the School. Parents may choose to purchase a meal to be consumed by their online 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.
- Evaluation of 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. Throughout the week, parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables, brown bread, salad, etc.
- **ISCS discourages foods with high percentages of sugar.** This includes fast/ deep fried foods (pizza, burgers, nuggets, chips, fried chicken), processed foods, sweets, crisps, chocolates, deserts, cakes and biscuits. Children learn that these foods can be eaten rarely 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 SLT, and where necessary, the school Nurse. Where needed, a meeting will be held with parents to ensure that lunch boxes are healthy and are in line with the school policy.

- Only Halal meat products are permitted in 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 Days, International Days, Student Enterprise Days and end of term parties are times where 'treat foods' contribute to a sense of celebration.

8. Birthday Celebrations

We understand that birthdays are significant events for every family. **However, please note that distributing gifts, food items, or goodie bags is not allowed at school, and birthday celebrations are not permitted on the premises.** Due to the diverse dietary needs of students, birthday cakes are not allowed in any classroom. If students wish to bring something to share, we suggest fruit kebabs or similar items. However, we encourage parents to consult with their child's class teacher beforehand. Any food brought into school for sharing will be sent home with the child and cannot be consumed in class to ensure the safety of all students with allergies and dietary restrictions.