SCS Healthy Packed Lunch Policy

Policy Reference: SCS/A/002/25/09/17— *Revised to comply with DHA Regulations (Updated November 2025)*

Reviewed: January 2026 | Next Review: January 2027

1. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidance to parents and guardians who choose to send packed lunches to school.
- Promote healthy eating habits that support children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, concentration, and learning.
- Ensure compliance with DHA school health guidelines and KHDA wellbeing standards.
- Raise awareness of food allergies and associated risks, ensuring a safe school environment for all students.

2. Rationale for Healthy Eating

Evidence-based research indicates that many children's packed lunches contain excessive amounts of saturated fat, salt, and added sugars, while often lacking fruit and vegetables.

Diets high in unhealthy fats, salt, and refined sugars may:

- Reduce concentration and mental alertness
- Contribute to fatigue during the school day
- Increase long-term risks of obesity, dental decay, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease

A **balanced and nutritious lunch** supports:

- Sustained energy levels
- Improved behaviour and attention
- Healthy growth and development

A packed lunch should aim to provide approximately one-third of a child's daily nutritional requirements.

SCS is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles in line with DHA and KHDA expectations for school health promotion and disease prevention.

3. Essential Food Groups for a Healthy Lunch Box

A healthy packed lunch should include a balanced selection from the following food groups:

3.1 Protein

Supports growth and concentration.

- Examples: chicken, egg, tuna, beans, lentils
- Options: sandwiches, wraps, salads, pasta dishes

3.2 Complex Carbohydrates

Provide slow-release energy to sustain learning.

- Examples: whole meal or brown bread, rice, pasta, oats, potatoes, bananas

3.3 Calcium-Rich Foods

Essential for healthy bones and teeth.

- Examples: milk, cheese, yoghurt, laban, smoothies, milk-based drinks

3.4 Fruit and/or Vegetables

Provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

- Examples: apples, pears, grapes (cut), carrots, cucumber, cherry tomatoes

A variety of foods should be encouraged to ensure nutritional balance and prevent boredom.

4. Foods to Limit or Avoid

To support healthy eating and dental health, the following should not be included in packed lunches:

- Sweets and chocolates
- Crisps and fried snacks
- Sweetened cereal or chocolate bars
- Cakes and pastries
- Sugary or fizzy drinks

Water, milk, or unsweetened dairy-based drinks are encouraged.

5. Food Allergies and Safety

SCS operates a strict "No Nuts" policy to protect students with severe allergies.

- Nuts and nut-containing products must not be brought to school.
- Parents must inform the school of any food allergies or medical dietary requirements.
- Children are not permitted to share food under any circumstances.
- The school follows DHA-recommended allergy awareness and emergency response procedures.

6. Guidance and Responsibilities for Parents

Parents and guardians play a vital role in promoting healthy eating by:

- Acting as positive role models for healthy food choices
- Ensuring lunch boxes:
  - Are cleaned thoroughly daily
  - Contain fresh food within use-by or best-before dates
  - Remain cool using ice packs or insulated containers
- Avoiding:
  - Sweets, chocolates, crisps, and sugary drinks
  - Nuts or nut-containing products
- Informing the school of any allergies or dietary needs
- Supporting children to understand and follow the Healthy Packed Lunch Policy
- Encouraging children to take responsibility for their own nutrition
- Supporting school-led healthy eating education initiatives

7. School Commitment

SCS is committed to:

- Promoting healthy eating across the school community
- Supporting DHA and KHDA wellbeing standards
- Providing health education programmes that encourage lifelong healthy habits
- Creating a safe, inclusive environment for all students

8. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if required due to:

- Updates from DHA or KHDA
- Changes in public health guidance
- School health and wellbeing priorities

Prepared by:
Claire Marisa Garnet
Lead Nurse

Reviewed by:
Dr. Nafisa Noor
School Doctor