REPTON
AL BARSHA

Healthy Lunch Box Guidelines for Parents

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
Document title	Healthy Lunch Box Guidelines for Parents	**Reference**	RAB-MED-017
Owner	School Nurse	**Approved by**	Principal, on behalf of SLT
Date reviewed	August 2026	**Next review**	August 2027
Status	Guidance — parent-facing	**Applies to**	All parents providing packed lunches, and their children
Related documents	Healthy Eating Policy; Food Allergy Policy; Health Examination and Screening Policy		
Regulatory framework	Dubai Health Authority standards for clinics in educational and academic settings; KHDA regulations; Dubai Municipality food safety requirements		

Aims

- To provide guidance for parents who wish to provide packed lunches for their child, and to highlight the importance of healthy eating and the benefits this can bring.
- To create an awareness of food allergies and the associated risks when children bring packed lunches into school.

Healthy Eating

Research from the Food Standards Agency suggests that the content of a child's lunchbox is not always as healthy as it should be: nine out of ten lunch boxes contain too much saturated fat, salt and sugar, and five out of ten fail to include fruit.

A diet high in fat, salt and refined carbohydrates diminishes mental alertness. A child eating these types of food is likely to be tired by the end of the day. A diet high in saturated fat and salt may form the foundations for heart disease and high blood pressure later in life, and may also lead to obesity.

Lunchboxes are sometimes the preferred option for children, and they have the potential to provide a nutritious and tasty meal. A healthy lunch box should help to improve a child's attention, behaviour and learning throughout the day, and should aim to provide one third of the child's daily nutrients.

The Essential Food Groups

The key to a healthy lunch box is to include a balance of appropriate foods from the four main food groups.

- **Protein:** the lunchbox should contain a source of protein to keep the child alert. This may be a sandwich filling of chicken, egg or tuna; chicken salad or tuna pasta salad may be an alternative.
- **Complex carbohydrates:** the lunchbox should contain complex carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread, pasta, rice or banana, for slow-release energy. This helps to sustain the child's energy levels and assists in maintaining concentration.
- **Calcium:** the lunchbox should contain a source of calcium for growth and healthy bones and teeth. Cheese, milk, yogurt, fromage frais, yogurt drinks, smoothies and milk shakes are excellent sources of calcium.
- **Fruit and vegetables:** a well-balanced lunch box should include a portion of fruit or vegetables. Young children often find prepared cucumber, carrot sticks or chopped apple or pear appetising.

REPTON
AL BARSHA

A lunchbox should include a wide variety of foods. This will help to provide an appropriate range of nutrients and will prevent the child becoming bored.

Foods to Avoid

Foods high in fat and sugar should be limited. This may help stop your child becoming overweight and assist in the prevention of tooth decay. Sweets, chocolate, crisps, sweetened cereal bars and fizzy drinks should not be included in a healthy lunch box.

Allergies

In keeping with the Repton Al Barsha **no nuts policy**, nuts or foods containing nuts should not be included in the lunch box. It is also for this reason that we discourage children from sharing food.

Guidance for Parents

Parents may promote good health and healthy eating by acting as a positive role model. Please do the best for your child by:

- recognising the value of promoting healthy eating and the important role and effect this plays in your child's health and development;
- not including sweets, chocolates, crisps or fizzy drinks within the lunch box;
- not including nuts or foodstuffs containing nuts within the lunch box;
- notifying and providing the school with information regarding any food allergies your child may have;
- ensuring that lunch boxes are washed thoroughly every day to maintain a safe, hygienic container;
- checking that all food used is within the 'best before' or 'use by' date;
- ensuring that lunches remain cool by including ice packs or an equivalent cooling system in the container;
- helping children to take responsibility for their own nutrition by being aware of the healthy lunch box guidelines;
- encouraging your children to act as positive role models for other children in respect of healthy eating;
- encouraging children to help promote the Repton Al Barsha healthy packed lunch guidelines;
- encouraging all children at Repton Al Barsha to participate in a healthy eating educational programme.

Approval and Review

Stage	Role	Name and signature	Date
Prepared by	School Nurse	_____	_____
Reviewed by	School Doctor	_____	_____
Approved by	Principal	_____	_____

This policy is reviewed annually. The review dates recorded in the document control box above are the authoritative record.