



Abu Dhabi Specification

معايير أبوظبي الفنية



ABU DHABI SPECIFICATIONS

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Third Edition

الطبعة الثالثة

Abu Dhabi Specification for the
Sehhi Healthy

معايير أبوظبي الفنية لبرنامج صحي

Table of Contents

Section	Page
1. Amendment Page.....	2
2. About the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council	3
3. Acknowledgements.....	4
4. Foreword.....	5
5. Working Group.....	5
6. Purpose	5
7. Scope.....	6
8. Terms and definitions.....	6
9. General Requirements	7
10. Specific Requirements.....	8
11. Appendix	13
12. References	14

1. Amendment Page

To ensure that each copy of this Abu Dhabi Specification (ADS) contains a complete record of amendments, the Amendment Page is updated and reissued with details of the revised or added pages. This ADS is a live document which can be amended when necessary. The QCC operates the Food and Agriculture Working Group which has prepared this document and can review stakeholder comments to amend this document and issue an updated version when necessary.

Edition	Year	Pages	Sections Changed	Notes
1	2015	13	-	Document launched
2	2018	15	2	- Changed references from HAAD to DoH
			5	- Definition included for 'added sugars'
			6	- Requirement for food business to have Grade A ADFCA inspection rating
			6.2	- added that Weqaya food cannot use artificial colours
			6.2.1	- Main dish requirements reduced to ≤ 700 kcal/portion and side dish requirements added - Added sugar requirements reduced to ≤ 2 g sugars/100 g of product and total ≤ 9 g of added sugar per portion - Salt requirements reduced to ≤ 2.4 g salt per portion or 960 mg of sodium per portion - Salad buffet requirements removed
			6.2.2	- Separate Weqaya for kids meal requirements added with lower maximum calories per portion (6.2.2.1) and meal component requirements (6.2.2.2)
			6.2.3	- Added requirement for no artificial colours in milk products - Added new requirements for Smoothies
6.2.4	- Added Specifications for Groceries and Supermarket to market and promote foods that fulfil the Weqaya Requirements			
3	2023	1-18	Throughout	- Changed references from Weqaya to Sehhi - Changed references from DoH to ADPHC - Changed references from ADFCA to ADAFSA - Reformatting to the updated QCC ADS Template
		9-17	10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.5	Updated nutritional specifications to align with international standards
		8-9	10.4	Added section for specifications for food items displays at retailers, food business operators and/or in vending machines where the Sehhi logo can be used
		8	9	Added General requirements for food business operators' facility Sehhi inspections, management system review, food products nutritional profile availability and compliance with U.A.E. and Abu Dhabi Food Law
		6-7	8	Updated Terms and Definitions

2. About the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council

The Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC) is an Abu Dhabi government entity established in accordance with Local Law No. (3) of 2009 to raise the quality of Abu Dhabi's exports and products traded locally. The QCC consists of a council of regulators and industry with a mandate to ensure provision of quality infrastructure in line with global standards.

The QCC's functions are divided into six key areas:

- Developing standards and specifications
- Capacity building of metrology systems
- Strengthening testing infrastructure
- Launching conformity schemes
- Protecting consumer interests
- Ensuring fair trade

The QCC's key stakeholders include regulatory authorities, consumers, retailers and wholesalers, industry, conformity assessment bodies (CABs) and importers.

The QCC supports regulators and government organizations through offering quality and conformity facilities, expertise and resources that allow them to implement product safety and compliance requirements and regulations. Additionally, the QCC works towards promoting a culture of quality and protecting the interests of consumers. In doing this, the QCC seeks to promote the Emirate's competitiveness to become one of the world's most attractive regions for investments and human capital, and to support the competitiveness of national industries in world markets.

3. Acknowledgements

The QCC would like to thank the members of the Working Group listed below.

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4. Foreword

The Abu Dhabi Specification (ADS) for using the Weqaya Food Program (ADS 13) was first published in 2015 at the request of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi in order to provide clarity of the requirements for meals and prepackaged food items to be considered as healthy. This enabled restaurants, supermarkets, food service outlets and food manufacturers who provide meals or food products which met the requirements of the ADS to use the Weqaya logo to promote their foods as healthy. The ADS was subsequently updated to the second edition in 2018 in line with international best practice for healthy food specifications and in order to differentiate healthy food specifications for children's meals. The second edition also included coverage of additional product categories such as smoothies and added guidance to Groceries and Supermarkets for in-store layouts and marketing of healthy items. This third edition of the ADS once again incorporates updates in the specifications of healthy foods in line with international standards and broadens the categories of food products which can be classified as healthy. The third edition also includes the rebranding of the original Weqaya program under the new name 'Sehhi' operated by the Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC).



5. Working Group

The QCC Working Group for Food and Agriculture was established in April 2014 with a view to reviewing all existing standards and technical regulations related to the subject and the objective of addressing food and agriculture technical standards at the level of Abu Dhabi Emirate that require development or updating. Abu Dhabi Specifications (ADS) will be developed by the working group on subjects that have no existing specifications or local legislation, which can then be proposed to the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) as UAE Standards.

6. Purpose

Healthy food as well as healthy consumption of food can help achieve and maintain good health throughout the life cycle. The importance of healthy eating and its linkage to maintain health and prevent diseases is well established.

The ADPHC encourages and supports the consumption of healthy food during home cooking or eating out at restaurants and cafes. In support of raising awareness about healthy eating and good eating habits, the ADPHC also encourages food business operators and food handlers to promote, prepare and sell healthy meals choices. It does this by allowing restaurants, food manufacturers

and producers, supermarkets, groceries, and food outlets to promote products that fulfill the Abu Dhabi Specifications for use of the Sehhi Food Program as healthier food choice options.

This specification sets out the criteria in support of approving the voluntary labelling of nutritious food and meals with the Sehhi Logo.

7. Scope

This specification applies to meals and food products intended to be voluntarily labelled with the Sehhi Logo.

Food labelled with the Sehhi logo is suitable for any individual and is not intended as diet, therapeutic or allergy-free food but rather as a healthy food choice.

This specification is not a substitute for any other legislation issued in the U.A.E. and the food shall comply with the relevant U.A.E. Federal and Abu Dhabi legislations.

8. Terms and definitions

Term		Definition
8.1.	Sehhi Logo	Sehhi is an Arabic word that means healthy. The logo consists simply of the word in both Arabic and English, emphasizing that simple lifestyle preventive measures can decrease the cases and deaths related to cardiovascular diseases.
8.2.	Food	Any substance, whether processed, semi processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drink, and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of 'food' but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs
8.3.	Meal	Includes three components, the protein part of the meal, the carbohydrate such as pasta, rice and/or vegetables, and the sides, which includes beverages, bread, and fat for bread, salad, salad dressing and fruit
8.4.	Portion	Is the amount of a food an individual chooses to eat at any one time
8.5.	Total Fat	Means total lipids, and includes phospholipids
8.6.	Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs)	Means fatty acids with at least one non- conjugated (namely interrupted by at least one methylene group) carbon-carbon double bond in the Trans configuration
8.7.	Saturates	Means fatty acids without double bond
8.8.	Salt	Means the salt equivalent content calculated using the formula: salt = sodium x 2.5
8.9.	Total Sugar	Means all monosaccharides and disaccharides present in food, but excludes polyols
8.10.	Added sugar	Includes sugars that are added either during the processing or packaging of foods. They include sugars (free, mono- and disaccharides), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices more than what is expected from the same volume of 100 % fruit or vegetable juice of the same type and non-sugar sweeteners, natural or artificial
8.11.	Non-sugar sweeteners	Sugar substitutes are used to sweeten food products. Natural sweeteners are sugar substitutes extracted from natural sources such as honey, stevia leaves, Monk fruit, etc. Artificial sweeteners are synthetic sugar substitutes

Term		Definition
8.12.	Lean Meat	Lean means that 100 grams of meat has < 10 g of fat, < 4.5 g of saturated fat, and < 95 mg of cholesterol
8.13.	Medium Fat Cheese	Cheese with a Fat Dry Matter percentage of $\geq 25\%$ and $\leq 45\%$ or total fat content of $\geq 15\text{g}$ and $\leq 27\text{g}$ per 100g
8.14.	Partially Skimmed Cheese	Cheese with a Fat Dry Matter percentage of $\geq 10\%$ and $\leq 25\%$ or total fat content of $\geq 6\text{g}$ and $\leq 15\text{g}$ per 100g
8.15.	Skim Cheese	Cheese with a Fat Dry Matter percentage of $\leq 10\%$ or total fat content of $\leq 6\text{g}$ per 100g

9. General Requirements

- 9.1. The food business operator shall develop, implement, and maintain a Food Safety Management System based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and/or the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles which conforms to the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA) and any other relevant authorities
- 9.2. Food business operators shall develop a healthy eating and nutrition policy and distribute it to staff members. This policy shall include a commitment to promote and encourage consumption of healthy eating by supporting the provision of healthy food items
- 9.3. Food business operators wishing to apply the Sehhi Logo to their products must have achieved a Grade A inspection performance as per the ADAFSA inspection reports in the previous year
- 9.4. Food menu items (meals on regular menus, children's menus and takeout food), food items displayed at retailers, food business operators and/or in vending machines where the Sehhi logo is used and individual food items using the Sehhi logo shall comply with all applicable mandatory U.A.E. and Abu Dhabi food safety regulations, specifications and technical requirements
- 9.5. Entities wishing to apply the Sehhi Logo on their products must seek the competent authority's approval prior to the use of the Sehhi Logo as per additional conformity procedures
- 9.6. The food business operators shall maintain a nutritional profile record of all food items approved by the competent authority as meeting the specifications of this ADS along with making the nutritional information of those food items available upon request
- 9.7. Food labelled with the Sehhi logo must satisfy the applicable specific requirements of this ADS and be prepared in an appropriate and hygienic manner including using better choice ingredients for different age groups and children ages three and above
- 9.8. The food business operator Sehhi coordinator shall conduct regular inspections and internal audits on affiliated food outlets, including Vending Machines, to ensure that the criteria of this document are followed.
- 9.9. The food business operator must conduct a periodic management review on the implementation process of Sehhi Healthy Menus program (at least annually), including the corrective/necessary

actions reserved to effectively implement the Sehhi food program as per the internal audit report.

9.10. The Sehhi Logo cannot be used for food that is deep-fried or food that contains artificial flavours or artificial colours

10. Specific Requirements

Food labelled with the Sehhi Logo shall comply with the following specifications where applicable

10.1. Specifications for meals or takeout food where the Sehhi Logo can be used

- 10.1.1. **Calories:** The Main dish shall contain ≤ 700 kcal per portion and any side dish shall contain ≤ 250 kcal per portion.
- 10.1.2. **Total fat:** ≤ 3 g of fat per 100 g of product excluding natural fat contributed by fish (lean or fatty), lean chicken, lean red meat, eggs, Medium fat*, Partially Skimmed* or Skim cheeses*, avocados, nuts, legumes, and seeds. A dish should contain no more than 19.5 g/label serving size
- 10.1.3. **Saturated fat:** ≤ 1.5 g of saturated fat per 100 g of product excluding natural fat contributed by fish (lean or fatty), lean chicken, lean red meat, eggs, avocados, nuts, legumes, and seeds. A dish should contain no more than 6 g/label serving size
- 10.1.4. **Trans fatty acids (TFAs):** $\leq 1\%$ from naturally occurring TFAs (Maximum 2 g TFAs per 100 g of oils used in food labelled with the Sehhi logo)
- 10.1.5. **Added sugar:** ≤ 5 g sugars per 100 g of product.
- 10.1.6. **Salt:** ≤ 1 g salt per 100 g of product or ≤ 0.4 g of sodium per 100 g of product.
- 10.1.7. **Beneficial nutrients (naturally occurring):** $\geq 10\%$ Daily Value (DV) of at least 1 of 6 nutrients: Iron, Calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, protein or dietary fiber

* Refer to 8.13-8.15

10.2. Guidance for preparation of Sehhi meals for children

- 10.2.1. Sehhi adult meals shall be offered in smaller portions for children where applicable, ≤ 600 kcal per portion for the main dish and ≤ 200 kcal per portion for any side dish
- 10.2.2. Sehhi for kids should not contain any form of non-sugar sweetener whether natural or artificial
- 10.2.3. It is permitted to use current marketing techniques directed at children in relation to Sehhi meals as healthier options, e.g. use of a toy, appealing packaging, and attractive "Sehhi for kids" menu
- 10.2.4. A Sehhi main dish for children should have at least 2 of the following as the main components in the meal, a side dish should have at least 1 of the following components:
 - a) Whole grains from bread, pasta, rice, couscous, quinoa, barley, buckwheat or oats

- b) Lean protein from chicken, fish (lean or fatty fish), red meat, eggs, lentils or beans
- c) Low fat dairy with ≤ 2 % fat per 100 g product from milk, yoghurt, laban, kefir or cottage cheese
- d) Fruits serving of 75 g or more (whole fruit, not juice)
- e) Vegetables serving of 75 g or more

10.2.5. Further guidance on nutritional standards suitable for children can be found in the Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in the Educational Institutions (ADG 2, link included in Section 12 References)

10.3. Specifications for food item displays at retailers, food business operators and/or in vending machines where the Sehhi logo can be used

10.3.1. Coffee and tea beverages (per serving):

- a) Up to 450 calories
- b) Use of only skimmed, 1%, low fat milk/creamer or dairy alternatives
- c) Up to 11 g of added sugar
- d) Up to 10g of fat
- e) Up to 7 g of saturated fats
- f) Up to 300 mg of sodium

10.3.2. Other allowable beverages (per package)

- a) Plain or sparkling water of any size
- b) Unflavoured milk up to 240 ml
- c) Fat free or low-fat milk, laban drink, yoghurt drink and milk substitutes such as soy milk or almond milk with no additives or flavours up to 240 ml
- d) 100% unsweetened fruit juice diluted with plain water or sparkling water up to 240 ml
- e) Low-calorie beverages e.g. smoothies made with low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice with a maximum of 60 calories up to 240 ml
- f) Calorie-free beverages including soft drinks with natural sweeteners with a maximum of 10 calories up to 240 ml and a maximum of 25 calories for 241-600 mL

10.3.3. Snacks (Per Package) For example: unflavoured popcorn (low fat), 100% whole grain cereal bars (e.g. granola bars), crackers, rice cakes, soy crisps, pretzels, puffed snacks, baked chips, unsalted nuts or seeds, dark chocolates (50% cocoa solids or above), fruits and vegetables without added fat, sugar, or salt, fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt, cheese or cottage cheese

- a) Up to 250 calories
- b) Up to 35% total carbohydrates from sugar by weight including naturally occurring and added sugar
- c) Up to 350 mg sodium
- d) Up to 35% total calories from total fat
- e) Up to 10% total calories from saturated fat

- f) Up to 1 g of trans fat
 - g) Snack packages of nuts, seeds, cheese, fruits/vegetables, and combinations of these items (example, a fruit and nut mix) are exempt from 10.4.3 requirements except for calorie and sodium requirements, if they do not contain added sugar, fat, or salt
- 10.3.4. Healthy snacks exempt from Sehhi nutritional specification requirements
- 10.3.4.1. Excluded from all nutritional specification requirements:
- a) Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients
 - b) Canned fruits packed in 100% juice or concentrated light syrup with no added ingredients except water
 - c) Canned vegetables with no added salt/low sodium and no added fat
- 10.3.4.2. Excluding the total fat and the saturated fat requirements but must meet all other requirements
- a) Low-fat cheese including partially skimmed mozzarella
 - b) Seed or seed butter
 - c) Apple with low fat cheese
 - d) Unsweetened celery and raisins
 - e) Whole eggs without added fat
 - f) Lean seafood such as tuna canned in water
- 10.3.4.3. Excluding sugar requirements but must meet all other requirements
- a) Dried fruits without added sugars such as dried cranberries, cranberries, blueberries, dates, figs, prunes can be added
- 10.3.4.4. Excluding the total fat, saturated fat and sugar requirements but must meet all other requirements
- a) Mixture of dried fruits without added sugars or fats
- 10.3.5. Acceptable sweeteners: Sweeteners as listed in the UAE technical regulation UAE.S 192:2019 Additives Permitted for Use in Food Stuffs. Some examples of acceptable sweeteners are saccharin and its salts, aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose and thaumatin
- 10.3.6. Items that do not fulfill the Sehhi nutritional specification requirements but can still be sold in retail item displays and/or in vending machines using the Sehhi logo:
- a) Isotonic sports drinks
 - b) Dark chocolate with flavor
 - c) Flavored water
 - d) Iced tea and coffee
 - e) Yogurt with natural flavors
 - f) Energy/protein bars
 - g) Breath mints and chewing gum (sugar free)
 - h) Pretzels, oat cookies, and crackers
 - i) Baked products, pastries, and croissants with controlled proportion size as listed in the Appendix

j) Full fat dairy drinks and cheeses

10.3.7. Items that should not be sold in retail item displays and/or in vending machines using the Sehhi logo

- a) Soft drinks except those with natural sweeteners, sports drinks, except the isotonic sport drinks varieties mentioned previously, and energy drinks
- b) Chocolates, except dark chocolate, all kinds of sugar candy such as lollipops and jelly
- c) Fried chips, all fried foods
- d) Items to which Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) compound has been added
- e) Processed meats such as sausages, mortadella, etc.

10.4. Specifications for individual food items where the Sehhi logo can be used

- 10.4.1. Milk, dairy alternatives, or other dairy products intended for drinking: no artificial flavoring, artificial colours or added sugar, ≤ 52 kcal per 100mL of product.
- 10.4.2. Yogurt, laban or other fermented dairy products: no artificial flavoring or sweeteners, ≤ 1.5 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.1 g sodium per 100 g of product and ≤ 4 g per 100 g added sugar
- 10.4.3. Cheeses (other than fresh cheeses): ≤ 27 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.6 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1.5 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.4. Fresh cheese and labnah: ≤ 5 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.5 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1.2 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.5. Flour: 100 % wholegrain, ≥ 5 g fiber per 100 g of product
- 10.4.6. Bread: ≥ 25 % wholegrain, ≥ 5 g dietary fiber per 100 g of product, ≤ 7 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 1 % from naturally occurring TFAs, ≤ 5 g of added sugars per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.4 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.7. Pasta/noodles (dry weight): ≥ 50 % wholegrain, ≥ 5 g dietary fiber per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.4 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.8. Rice (dry weight): 100 % wholegrain, ≥ 3 g fiber per 100 g of product
- 10.4.9. Breakfast cereals: ≥ 50 % wholegrain, ≥ 5 g dietary fiber per 100 g of product, ≤ 7 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 1 % from naturally occurring TFAs, ≤ 13 g of added sugars per 100 grams of product, ≤ 0.4 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.10. Popcorn/crackers/crisp bread/biscuits: ≥ 25 % wholegrain, ≥ 5 g dietary fiber per 100 g of product, ≤ 7 g fat per 100 g of product, ≤ 1 % from naturally occurring TFAs, ≤ 5 g total sugars per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.4 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 1 g salt per 100 g of product)
- 10.4.11. Meat or poultry: Fresh/frozen or minced meat, poultry: ≤ 10 g fat per 100 g of product, no added salt, sugar, or preservatives

- 10.4.12. Fish: Fresh/frozen or minced fish, no added salt or sugar or preservatives
- 10.4.13. Vegetables, root vegetables, and legumes; the products can be fresh, processed, or frozen: ≤ 3 g added fat per 100 g of product, added fat cannot contain more than 10 % saturates, ≤ 1 g added sugars per 100 g of product, ≤ 0.2 g sodium per 100 g of product (≤ 0.5 g salt per 100 g of product). 'Heavy Syrup' is not permitted for canned fruits and vegetables, including potatoes and sweet potatoes
- 10.4.14. Vegetable juice: 100 % vegetable juice, no added natural or artificial sweeteners or salt
- 10.4.15. Fruits fresh, dried, or frozen: no added natural or artificial sweeteners or salt
- 10.4.16. Nuts and peanuts: ≤ 10 g saturated fat per 100 g of product, no added sweeteners, salt, or artificial flavours.
- 10.4.17. Macadamia nuts: 0.14 g sodium per label serving
- 10.4.18. Smoothies: 200 calories per 240 ml with an upper limit of 300 total calories. For larger sizes, low fat, or skimmed dairy only, no added salt, ≤ 2 g added sugar per 100 ml (1/2 teaspoon). Must contain at least one serving of whole fruit or vegetable (not including any added juice or puree concentrate). Caffeine and other stimulant additives are not permitted. Caffeine occurring naturally in other ingredients (e.g., green tea) is permitted

11. Appendix

BAKERY ITEM	MAXIMUM PORTION SIZE (g)	BAKERY ITEM	MAXIMUM PORTION SIZE (g)
Biscuits, muesli bars, pikelets	≤ 40	Manakeesh and pastry rolls such as sausage rolls	≤ 100
Slices such as pound cakes and savory/sweet breads, friands	≤ 80	Sponge puddings or crumbles	≤ 120
Muffins, mini loaves	≤ 100	Fruit jelly (portion size excludes fruit) and liquid based desserts such as muhallabiya, rice pudding etc.	≤ 120
Scones, cakes, or ice cream	≤ 120	Tray bakes such as cookies, brownies, blondies etc., doughnuts	≤ 60
Small pastries such as tarts, fatayer, chicken fatayer, cheese fatayer etc. and Arabic sweets such as baklawa, kunafa	≤ 70	Savoury crackers, bread sticks (served with fruit, vegetables, or dairy foods), portion size excludes fruit.	≤ 30 2-3 crackers
Pies and quiches	≤ 180	Croissants	≤ 67

12. References

- 12.1. Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 of the European parliament and of the council of 20 December 2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods
- 12.2. US Food and Drug Administration (January 2013), Guidance for Industry: A Food Labeling Guide (Appendix A: Definitions of Nutrient Content Claims)
- 12.3. World Health Organization (January 2013). Policy statement and recommended actions to lower national salt intake and death rates from high blood pressure and stroke in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.
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- 12.5. The Norwegian Keyhole Scheme 2014
- 12.6. Health Care Reform February 2011. Restaurant Chains Begin Listing Calories of Menu Items; Vol 7, Num 9
- 12.7. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) February 2010. The Impact of Food Away from Home on Adult Diet Quality.
- 12.8. The Sweden Food Agency Keyhole concept documents (access date December 2022)
- 12.9. US Food and Drug Administration, Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label (access date December 2022)
- 12.10. Heart-Check Recipe Certification Program Nutrition Requirements by the American Heart Association (access date December 2022)
- 12.11. Heart-Check Food Certification Program Nutritional Requirements by the American Heart Association (access date December 2022)
- 12.12. Catalina Marketing Institute, 2010. St. Petersburg, FL. Helping Shoppers Overcome the Barriers to Choosing Healthful Foods
- 12.13. Abu Dhabi Guideline for Food Canteens in the Educational Institutions ADG/2 (2022)