



NESTS/H-1/124/NESTS-Guidelines/2025-26

Dated: 29.01.2026

The Nodal Officers,
State/UT EMRS Societies,
All States/UTs

Subject: Reiteration of NESTS Guidelines for Mess Management in EMRSs.

Sir/Madam,

Please refer to the NESTS guidelines for mess management in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) issued vide letter No. NESTS/H-1/124/NESTS-Guidelines/2025-26 dated 16.10.2025 (copy enclosed).

2. In this regard, it has been brought to the notice of NESTS that in certain EMRSs, the entire messing arrangement has been outsourced to private vendors for running the school mess, which is not in conformity with the prescribed guidelines.

3. In view of the above, it is hereby reiterated that, as per the NESTS mess guidelines, the messing arrangements in EMRSs shall be managed directly by the respective schools. However, competent personnel required for the operation of the mess may be engaged through outsourcing, strictly in accordance with the said guidelines.

4. Therefore, you are advised to kindly ensure that mess in EMRSs are not outsourced and schools directly manage the school mess. The requisite outsourced personnel in this regard may be engaged as per the NESTS guidelines issued in this regard.

This issues with the approval of the competent authority.

Yours faithfully,

-sd-
(Kumud Kushwaha)
Deputy Commissioner

Copy to:

- (i) The State HR Consultants, NESTS
- (ii) The Principals, All EMRS
- (iii) NESTS' Website

राष्ट्रीय आदिवासी छात्र शिक्षा समिति
(जनजातीय कार्य मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत
एक स्वायत्त संस्थान, भारत सरकार)
भू-तल, गेट नंबर-3ए, जीवन तारा बिल्डिंग,
संसद मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110001
दूर. 011-23340280



National Education Society for Tribal Students
(An Autonomous Organization under
Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)
Ground Floor, Gate No.3 A, Jeevan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001
Telephone No. 011-23340280
वेबसाइट/Website: www.tribal.nic.in
Email: nests-tribal@tribal.gov.in

NESTS/H-1/124/NESTS-Guidelines/2025-26

Dated: 16/10/2025

The Principals,
All EMRSs

Subject: Guidelines for Mess Management in EMRSs.

Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed the *Mess Management Guidelines* for EMRSs for your information, necessary action, and compliance.

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Yours faithfully,

-sd-

(Kumud Kushwaha)
Deputy Commissioner

Copy to:

1. PS to Commissioner, NESTS.
2. The Principal Secretary/Secretary, State Tribal Welfare Departments.
3. The Nodal Officers, State/UT EMRS Societies.
4. NESTS' Website.

Encl.: As above.

Mess Management Guidelines

Eklavya Model Residential Schools, being fully residential co-educational schools, attach paramount importance to the provision of wholesome, nutritious, and hygienically prepared food. Providing quality food to the students constitutes an integral part of the residential experience. As fully residential, EMRSs have the responsibility to provide nutritious, hygienic, and well-balanced meals in a clean and disciplined environment. Proper mess management, not only ensures the health and well-being of students, but also serves as a platform to inculcate values of discipline, table etiquettes, caring & sharing and community living. To maintain uniform standards of hygiene, nutrition, and orderliness, and to ensure economical and smooth functioning of mess arrangements in EMRSs, the following directives are issued for strict compliance:

1. Administration and Supervision of Mess:

Vice Principal is the Mess In-charge of EMRS. If the post of Vice Principal is vacant, Senior Most Teacher of EMRS will be performing the duties as Mess In-charge with the power to monitor all the activities related to the functioning of mess. Messing arrangements shall be managed by the EMRS itself by outsourcing of competent personnel under the supervision of Vice Principal/ Senior Teacher. All the teachers, acting in loco parentis, shall bear the responsibility for quality control and smooth execution of daily operations. Active participation of students may be encouraged to inculcate responsibility and discipline. The voluntary participation of students in activities, particularly in the maintenance of cleanliness, discipline and service, may be solicited as a part of their overall character-building and co-curricular training. The teachers are to be involved in ensuring discipline in the dining hall and verification of quality and quantity of items procured as per the supply order.

2. Guidance from School Level Committee (SLC)

The Chairman of the School Level Committee (SLC) may also be associated to ensure providing quality food and guidance be sought in this direction. Cooperation, guidance and authority may be invoked for ensuring integrity, accountability, and transparent functioning.

3. Expenditure and Financial Provisions

As per circular no NESTS/Finance/EMRS Societies finance/160/2021-22- Part (1) dated 15.07.2025 as revised recurring cost guidelines issued by NESTS dated 01.05.2025, the mess expenditure has been revised to Rs.25,279/- per student per year (for 10 months), i.e. Rs.2,528/- per student per month for 10 operational months in a year. As and when the budget is revised by NESTS, revised rate would be applicable from the date of implementation.

With regard to payment to personnel, it is intimated that as per the approval of Department of Expenditure, one post of Cook and two Posts of Mess Helper are sanctioned for each EMRS. Hence, the personnel who are engaged against the sanctioned posts may be paid out of the head of salary. Other personnel beyond the sanctioned posts are to be paid out of the budget allocated for the mess. In addition, for miscellaneous mess expenditure incurred on areas like fuel for cooking, items for cleaning/ washing shall be met from the budget of mess expenditure. Required cooking utensils, gas burners, gas cylinders and other necessary equipment shall be procured from capital expenditure funds of schools.

Procurement of items such as vegetables, milk, cooking oil, pulses, rice, wheat, and other food articles must be done only through tender process duly following the GFR rules. Supply of milk from Government sources needs to be explored.

The following financial provisions must be strictly adhered to:

- i. The prescribed purchase procedures of the institution must be followed at all times.
- ii. No member of the school staff and their relatives, including the Principal, shall be personally involved in the supply or sale of food articles to the school mess.
- iii. Any deviation or special local arrangement shall be undertaken only with prior approval of the State EMRS Society / Regional Offices.
- iv. Transparency, fairness, and accountability must be ensured in all mess-related procurements to uphold institutional integrity.

4. Manpower management

For managing the mess, the following manpower is allowed.

Overall mess in-charge	: Vice Principal / Senior Teacher
Store in-charge	: JSA
Supervision	: Catering Assistant
Food preparation and maintenance of kitchen, dining hall and surroundings	: Cook, Two Mess Helpers (through outsourcing)

In addition to the above sanctioned posts, additional manpower is allowed through outsourcing in the ratio of **1:50** students or part thereof.

Duties of Cook, Mess helpers and additional manpower:

- Maintenance of hygienic condition in dining hall, kitchen and surroundings of kitchen and dining hall.
- Cleaning the dining hall after every meal.
- Cleaning of utensils.
- Cleaning of ration items (provision) and vegetables properly before use.
- No student or staff is to be permitted to carry food items (raw and cooked) out of the mess.
- No special food is to be prepared for anyone other than the items in the menu.

5. Mess Menu*:

Mess menu is to be decided by the Mess Committee every month based on the expenditure incurred in the previous month and budget allocated, considering the local cuisine of the area of EMRS. Non-vegetarian dishes may be provided and included in the weekly menu itself subject to the local customs of the area of EMRS.

The menu items listed below are only for illustration. However, Mess Committee involving staff and students will decide the menu within the budget, as per the local requirement, need and by looking into their customs.

Breakfast: Eggs, bread with butter, milk / tea, potato paranthas with tea, bread pakoras, puris with potato curry, Idly, Dosa, Kichadi, Pulihora or any other regionally suitable dish.

Lunch: Chapatis/ Rotis / millet rotis, rice, pulses, salad / papad, khichri, dishes with seasonal vegetable, curd, seasonal fruit, non-vegetarian items as per local culture, sweet / kheer or other regionally suitable items.

Evening tea: Tea with snacks (like biscuits, boiled grams, fried beaten rice and puffed rice, etc) or other regionally suitable items.

Dinner: Chapatis, rice, pulses, khichri dishes with seasonal vegetable, salad or papad, non-vegetarian items as per local culture (frequency as decided by the Mess Committee), sweet / kheer, milk etc., or other regionally suitable items.

**Local Millets and local cuisines must be included in daily menu. In addition, other items as per the availability / need may also be provided by taking decision in the Mess Committee Meeting.*

Any other items as desired by the students may be included.

6. **Period of functioning of Mess:** School mess should remain closed during breaks and vacations. EMRS Mess will function only when the students are available in the school. As per the guidelines of NESTS, entitled staff members only are allowed to dine along with the students.

7. Mess committee:

For effective Mess Management. each EMRS shall constitute a Mess Committee comprising of following members.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Principal | : Chairperson |
| 2. Vice-Principal/ Senior Most Teacher | : Member Secretary |
| 3. One PGT-cum-House Master (on rotation) | : Member |
| 4. One TGT-cum-House Master (on rotation)
(at least one female teacher) | : Member |
| 5. Staff-Nurse (Female) | : Member |
| 6. School Captain | : Member |
| 7. School Vice-Captain
(One out of Sl. No. 6 and 7 shall be a girl) | : Member |
| 8. At least 2 House Captains
(1 each from boys & girls) | : Member |
| 9. Catering Assistant | : Member |
| 10. Cook | : Member |

The meeting of the Mess Committee shall be held at least once in a month. The functions and duties of the Mess Committee are as follows:

- a. To plan and finalize Menu and to suggest changes in the current menu within the existing financial provision.
 - b. To supervise quality and quantity of items purchased for the School Mess by a Sub-committee of Mess.
 - c. To supervise the preparation (cooking) of food in the Mess.
 - d. To Suggest ways and means for purchase of fresh provisions, reduction in wastage of food, maintenance of proper discipline in dining hall and maintenance of cleanliness in dining hall and surrounding areas.
 - e. To suggest and implement an effective serving system in the dining hall.
8. A prayer may be recited before the food is served in the mess. All efforts should be made to see that students learn and imbibe proper etiquettes.
9. Principals are supposed to provide all required physical facilities like furniture, water, electricity, utensils, cooking materials etc. They are also advised to see that all the other related arrangements are made for proper functioning of the mess.
10. **Monitoring Mess Management:**

To monitor the mess management, **District level committee** may periodically inspect the school at least once in a quarter and will issue the necessary directions and guidelines on the basis of observation:

Composition of District Level Committee

District Collector/Additional District Magistrate	: Chairman
District Civil Supplies Officer	: Member
District Medical and Health Officer / CMO	: Member
District Education Officer / CEO	: Member
Principal of Nearby JNV/ KVS / EMRS	: Member
Principal of the concerned EMRSs	: Member

The responsibilities entrusted to the above committees are as follows: -

- a. Periodically visit the School and examine the regular menu including the nutritious value of the food served.
- b. Oversee the planning, execution and effective functioning of the Mess.
- c. Undertake surprise check to ensure supply of quality of ration items like rice, flour, pulses, oil, milk, vegetables, etc.
- d. Supervise the procedure and protocol followed in the dining hall by the students.
- e. Inspect the hygienic conditions in and around the kitchen and dining hall.
- f. Check the quality of food by dining with the students.
- g. Have interaction with the students about the quality and quantity of food served.
- h. Suggest guidelines for the improvement of quality and quantity of food within the allocated budget. Look into other related issues to ensure qualitative, quantitative and nutritious food.

11. Role of Staff of EMRS

(a) Role of Principal

The overall functioning of **mess management** in EMRS is to be controlled and supervised by the Principal. Principal shall invariably involve Vice Principal/ Senior PGT teacher of the School in discharging his/her responsibilities by assigning specific responsibility(ies) to him/her. Principal should ensure that nutritious and hygienic food is provided to children within the budgetary provisions. The responsibilities of the Principal would include.

- To ensure that monthly expenditure of Mess remains within the budget provision.
- To visit mess store regularly to personally inspect ration and to ascertain the quality of the procured food items including fresh vegetables and fruits.
- To observe the quality of food being served to the students in the Mess by dining with the children in the dining hall itself.
- To ensure that adequate and suitable furniture is provided in the dining hall.
- To ensure that dry ration/provisions are stored at least to last for 15 days.

- To keep a proper watch over the cleanliness of not only of the mess and dining-hall but also of the personnel involved in the cooking and distribution of the food.
- To approve the weekly menu.
- To approve the procurement of rations and fresh provision for the mess as per prescribed norms.
- To assign duties to various staff members for efficient functioning of the dining system in the EMRSs.

(b) Vice Principal/ Senior Teacher

The Vice Principal/ Senior Teacher is the mess in-charge and will be responsible for the management of Mess in EMRSs. All the powers related to management, funding and day to day matters will vest with the Vice Principal/ Senior Teacher. **In those EMRSs where the Vice Principal post is lying vacant**, the Senior Teacher will function as in-charge of the mess activities.

For performing the above duties effectively, the Vice-Principal will maintain the following records.

- Mess Menu.
- Daily consumption register, which is prepared by Catering Assistant, is to be checked by the Vice Principal. Monthly expenditure statement is to be checked and submitted to the Principal.
- Will be the Member Secretary of the School Mess Committee and will call monthly meetings of the committee and maintain its records. Catering Assistant will assist him / her.
- Instructing concerned staff for timely arrangement of materials for mess as per menu.
- Regular observation of mess activities and suggestion given to Catering Assistant and Mess staff for maintaining quality of food, cleanliness in mess & dining hall, to ensure discipline among students during all meals, to check wastage of any food item and availability of purified drinking water.
- Verification of record of special diet for sick students as recommended by the Staff Nurse (Female).
- Verification of maintenance of hygienic condition in toilets & bathrooms attached to mess with the help of concerned staff.
- Assist the Principal in required purchases for the School, including School Mess and other related activities.
- Verification of mess stock register

(c) **Duties of Catering Assistant**

The Catering Assistant is the controller of Mess and Dining Hall in EMRS and is responsible for providing well-cooked and nutritious food to the children within the stipulated budget. His / her duties shall include the following: -

- To manage the Mess, Dining Hall and surrounding areas of the EMRS under strict hygienic conditions.
- To prepare the list of items required for the preparation of food well in advance in consultation with Cook and submit the same to the Store In-charge, who will issue the items to Cook in the presence of Catering the Assistant.
- To ensure discipline and cleanliness of the Mess staff and also to ensure their monthly medical check-up by the school doctor.
- To ensure that Mess staff are neatly dressed. Wearing of Apron by all mess staff should be ensured. Kitchen staff must wear head-gear while meals are being cooked and served to children.
- To prepare and submit requisitions of provisions for Mess to the Principal/competent authority / store in-charge.
- To assist in the procurement of provisions as per laid down purchase procedure.
- To inspect all the **food items** purchased for consumption in the Mess along with Store in-charge.
- To prepare weekly menu as per the decision taken by the Mess Committee meeting considering local conditions / customs /tastes /cuisine/ availability, as per the direction of State EMRS Society / NESTS and submit the same to Principal for approval.
- To provide special diet (as recommended by Nurse/Medical Officer) to sick children.
- To look after maintenance of Mess, Dining Hall, utensils, cutlery, crockery, etc.
- To train and guide Mess staff working under him/her and supervise their functioning.
- To assign duties to Mess staff with the approval of the Vice-Principal / Principal and supervise their working.
- To ensure that there is no wastage of food in the Mess. Not to allow any unauthorised person to enter and/or to dine in the Mess/Dining Hall.

- To supervise cooking and to inspect the arrangement before they are served.
- To receive and issue provisions to cook as per the menu and the number of dining members.
- To ensure timely cooking and serving of food in the mess.
- Being a trained person, he/she should arrange a demonstration of table manners/ serving of food etc. to all the children (where staff is also present) at least once in six months.
- To ensure that foodstuff (cooked/raw) is not taken away from Mess/Dining Hall.
- To prepare the Daily Consumption Report (DCR), monthly report and submit to Vice Principal.
- To carry out all other duties assigned by the Principal.

(d) Store In-charge / JSA

At the time of taking delivery of material purchased, **he / she should ensure** that the material received are counted, measured or weighed, as the case may be. Quality of the items supplied by the Vendor is to be accepted only after the verification by the Committee, to be constituted by the Principal by involving all the teachers on rotation basis. He should also ensure that the quantities received are correct and quality is good as per the supply order and specification of the item stated in the tender document / bid.

- Maintain all stores including the mess.
- To prepare indent for all stores.
- Will issue items as per the demand from Catering Assistant / Cook instead of handing over the store key.
- Maintenance of Mess Account of the EMRS.

(e) Duties of House Masters/Teachers

The success of dining system depends on the interest and control exercised by the House Masters and other teachers of the School. Keeping the objective in view, the following responsibilities are assigned to all House Masters/Teachers.

- All House Masters and teachers shall remain present in the dining hall and take their meals with their Houses as per seats assigned to them.
- They shall dine with the children and not after the children have left the dining hall. They should keep an eye on the

children who are sitting with them on the same table to ensure that all children are present and are taking meals.

- Absentees (students other than those who are on leave and tour) are invariably to be enquired and to be traced.
- Efforts should be made to teach table manners (etiquettes) to the children.
- Children should not be allowed to get up from their seats in case duty children are assigned to replenish the food served on the tables.
- They should ensure that proper discipline is maintained by children during meals.
- House Masters, being head of the House System, should ensure that all the children of his / her House are being looked after by those who are on serving duty.

(f) Staff Nurse (Female)

- Staff Nurse (Female) shall be the ex-officio member of the Mess Committee of the EMRS.
- The Staff Nurse (Female) will be on duty in the mess and all meals shall be tested by her before they are served to the children.
- In respect of sick students, Staff Nurse will recommend special food on need basis.
- It will be ensured by the Staff Nurse that proper hygienic conditions are maintained in the kitchen, dining-hall and surrounding mess areas.

12. Precautions regarding Mess Arrangement in EMRSs.

In order to ensure effective functioning of mess in EMRS following DO's and Don'ts must be followed:

Do's

1. It should be ensured that potable clean water is provided to children for drinking purpose. Wherever water is being stored, it should be kept in clean and closed container.
2. Periodical inspections of the water should be carried out by the State Sanitary Department.
3. All cooking utensils must always be kept clean. They should be washed with clean water.
4. All fruits and vegetable items should be washed with clean water before use.

5. Cooked food should always be kept covered.
6. Kitchen and dining hall area should be kept free from flies. Necessary arrangement should be ensured.
7. Milk should be boiled before being used in the Mess.
8. Periodical medical check-up is to be arranged in respect of personnel working in the mess. Their cleanliness must be ensured.
9. Use of apron and head cover must be made compulsory while preparing and serving food.

Don'ts

1. Under no circumstances leftover food of previous meal should be served to children.
2. Drinking water should not be stored in uncovered vessels.
3. Rotten fruits and vegetables should not be either procured or used.
4. Un cleaned utensils should not be used at all.
5. Cooked food should not be touched with unclean hands
6. Food should not be cooked too early.
7. Cooked food should not be left uncovered.

13. Prime Duties and responsibilities (in brief)

Principal	: Overall coordinator
Vice Principal	: Mess In-charge
Staff Nurse (Female)	: Quality checking and recommending special food for sick students
House Master/Teacher/Warden	: Supervising the students in dining hall and ensuring that all students dine without wasting food in a disciplined manner.
Cook	: Will raise the demand of items on the basis of number of students for preparing food
Catering Assistant	: Verify the list and arrange to issue items by the Store In-charge.
JSA	: Store in-charge
Mess Staff	: Maintenance of cleanliness in and around the kitchen & dining hall.

14. Entry of Children in Dining Hall

The entry of children in the dining hall for all the three major meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) should be properly regulated by Duty Teacher, House Masters and School Captain/House Captains. In this regard, following guidelines are communicated for compliance:

- Duty Teacher, House Masters, School Captain and House Captains should be present in the dining hall before children are permitted to enter.
- Children should be allowed to enter from both ends of the dining hall, house wise / gender wise as per the capacity of dining hall. Their entry is permitted by School Captain/ School Vice-Captain under the supervision of Duty Teacher.
- Meals are normally over within 20 to 25 minutes
- Schools Captain should give a command so that all the children get up simultaneously for a short prayer before having food.
- House Captains should ensure that their House leave dining hall in an orderly manner. In case a few children have not finished their meals, they may be permitted to sit and finish meals before leaving.

15. Serving of Food (Pre-Service System if facilities are available)

In the pre-service system, children on duty keep serving bowls (Dongas) full of various food-items on the table before children enter the dining hall. Other children enter with their Plates/Thalies, keep their Thalies on the tables where seats have been assigned to them, stand by and wait for the prayer to be over. After prayer is over, they sit and then collect food from serving bowl one by one. Children, who are serving, keep on replenishing the food on the tables assigned to them.

The cleanliness of serving bowls shall be the responsibility of the mess staff.

Following guidelines should be strictly followed while meals are being served.

- Children from each House may be assigned serving-duty on rotation. They may eat as soon as serving duty is over.
- Other children should not be allowed to get up and move around in the dining hall.

- House Masters/teachers may ensure proper discipline in their House while meals are being served and ensure that food is not wasted.
- Food prepared for the students only should be served in the mess to the Guests.

16. General Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the teaching staff of EMRSs to create proper and appropriate traditions in the dining halls.

- All the children should be in proper school uniform when they enter dining hall for breakfast on working days. They should not be allowed to enter dining hall in bathroom slipper/chappals during breakfast.
- All children must have lunch in school uniform on all the working days. This condition can be relaxed on Sundays/holidays but chappals/bathroom slippers should not be permitted.
- During dinner also proper dress code should be ensured.
- Staff should set a model to the students in the Dining Hall.
- Large-size doormats should be kept outside the main door of dining hall in order to reduce the dust and dirt entering the dining hall.
- Dining Hall doors and windows must have additional wire-gauge door/shutters to keep the flies and flying insects out.
- All efforts have to be made by all concerned that dining hall and surrounding areas remain neat and clean at all the times.
- Leftover food, if any, should be collected in a large bin/drum and disposed off scientifically.
- It is highly advisable to install a siren or a suitable bell to ensure that punctuality is observed strictly.
- No food should be taken out of the dining hall under any circumstances except for sick students.
- No outside food should be permitted in the dining hall.
- Children are not permitted to dine in a common plate/thali.
- Wherever meals are served in two shifts, Catering Asstt. must ensure that dining hall is properly and quickly cleaned by mess staff/helpers before second batch is let-in. It should be ensured by the Catering Asstt. that the second batch is served hot food under clean and hygienic conditions.
- Entire staff of the mess should be medically examined by the School Part-time doctor every month.

- Cooked food should be tasted by Nurse before it is served to children

17. Outsourcing the mess

Outsourcing the mess is the last option to manage providing good quality food to the students of EMRS. This option is to be followed only if EMRS is not in a position to arrange its own arrangement for food as per the points mentioned above. In such cases, the following points are to be strictly followed: -

- Standard menu is to be prepared.
- Condition of Checking / examination of all the items including ration / fresh vegetables before using for cooking is to be incorporated.
- Quality and quantity of the food items are to be defined.
- Number of students who will be dining is to be finalized on the basis of students' strength.
- A standard tender document incorporating all the terms and conditions including manpower deployment, timings of serving food, quality and quantity of items, menu finalized including non-vegetarian items as per the decision etc. is to be developed.
- The Vendor has to be finalized in a transparent manner by following GFR provision of GoI norms.
- EMD & SD are to be collected as per norms.
- Quality checking and hygienic condition of kitchen and dining area are to be done by Staff Nurse (Female) and other administrative checking are to be done by Mess In charge.
- A clause of termination of the outsourcing in respect of poor performance by the vendor is to be incorporated without fail.
