

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
"Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2025

Environmental Sustainability Policy

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Environmental Sustainability Policy

1 Aims and Values

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we are committed to fostering a love for nature and sustainability in young learners. We have beautiful school grounds, a well-established Forest School and much of the children's learning takes place outdoors. We support our pupils to understand their connection to the environment, be environmentally conscious and develop a sense of responsibility for the planet.

We believe it is important that children understand how their actions impact the environment and that they develop an age-appropriate understanding of environmental sustainability, have an eco-friendly attitude and that, along with staff, work towards ensuring that our school itself is as sustainable as it can be.

Our Sustainability Action Plan outlines steps to reduce our environmental impact, promote eco-friendly practices, and create a more sustainable learning environment for children.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher and Sustainability Lead are responsible for:

- reviewing the Sustainability Policy and communicating this to the school community
- raising awareness of sustainability around school, ensuring curriculum content and nursery activities reflect this and promoting an appropriate school ethos
- ensuring that staff CPD covers sustainability, e.g. including climate change and carbon neutrality
- monitoring and reviewing the school's commitment to, and progress towards, carbon neutrality
- considering environmental impact where any new buildings or capital refurbishments are being considered
- working with premises and school business staff to look at where to invest money to reduce carbon emissions, and improve sustainability and resilience
- identifying funding opportunities for sustainable development and leading bids for such funding, e.g. smart meters, low-carbon boiler replacement (in conjunction with the headteacher)

Sustainability Lead is responsible for:

- identifying appropriate areas of the school grounds to use as an environmental classroom
- encouraging whole-school participation in environmental awareness days and events, e.g. Earth Day, International Day of Forests, No Mow May, Recycling Week
- leading a whole-school sustainability audit to identify current and future opportunities for change

Class Teachers and Room Leaders are responsible for:

- supporting and encouraging the need for environmental sustainability in day to day classroom practice and activities
- ensuring, where possible, that equipment purchased is made from sustainable resources, e.g. biodegradable cups for water rather than plastic
- ensuring their classrooms are using energy sustainably, e.g. ensuring that interactive screens and lights are turned off when not in use
- identifying ways to reduce usage and waste when teaching, e.g. reducing printing
- ensuring that Forest School sessions and outdoor education take place consistently for all children

Administrative Staff are responsible for:

- carrying out sustainable procurement practices by considering usage, waste and supply chains as part of the assessment and validation criteria used when purchasing goods and services
- communicating waste reduction practices in school to encourage sustainable and cost-effective behaviour, e.g. limiting printing, and turning off lights

Maintenance Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school grounds are clean and safe for outdoor learning
- having an awareness of energy and water usage and reporting any waste to the headteacher
- encouraging and supporting staff and pupils to ensure classrooms are using energy sustainably
- monitoring shared spaces, ensuring these are using energy sustainably (in conjunction with the headteacher)
- communicating with disposal companies regarding the disposal of recyclable and non-recyclable waste, enabling school staff to implement a waste disposal procedure which is also followed by pupils
- coordinating waste disposal from the premises and ensuring that all waste is disposed of correctly
- considering, with the Headteacher and Sustainability Lead, the development of the school grounds to develop biodiversity, outdoor learning opportunities and support our progress towards carbon neutrality

Pupils are responsible for:

- applying what they have learned about sustainability at school, at home, with the help of their parents and carers
- walking or cycling to school, when possible
- using energy sustainably, for example, not leaving taps running

- being responsible for keeping their classroom, school and grounds clean and tidy
- using the correct recycling containers and bins so that waste can be recycled or composted

Nursery staff also support children to eat healthy, natural fruit and vegetable snacks and, in conjunction with their parents/carers, try to avoid snacks that are packaged in paper or plastic.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation of sustainable practices throughout the school and acting as strategic leaders
- embedding environmental sustainability into the school's culture, curriculum, and community which includes developing a sustainability strategy, monitoring progress, and holding school leadership accountable for achieving sustainability goals

3 Curriculum and Learning

The DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022) extends to all educational and children's services in England, including early years settings [Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK](#). At Sandy Lane, we support children to learn about the natural world and become eager to do their best to protect it and share this message within their families and local community. We offer a curriculum which enables them to develop an early understanding of the importance of sustainability and the causes and impact of climate change.

We acknowledge that embedding climate change and sustainability throughout our curriculum will take time but are committed to working towards this and ensure that our offer is organic and ever-evolving.

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we:

- identify opportunities in the taught curriculum to learn about the natural world
- review our curriculum in an ongoing way with an eye to sustainability
- utilise and develop appropriate areas of the school grounds as an environmental classroom
- participate in environmental awareness days
- offer CPD opportunities and share best practice to support staff to deliver sustainability content
- create opportunities for pupils to engage with local and community initiatives linked to the environment and sustainability
- have an inclusive gardening club to help pupils learn about nature

Through engagement in sustainable practices and learning about the natural world, children develop an appreciation for the planet and a sense of responsibility for its future. With the aim of creating sustainable learning environments, we:

- utilise natural materials such as recycled or reclaimed resources in play areas and classrooms where possible

- promote recycling and upcycling and introduce children to the concept of reducing, reusing, reclaiming and recycling
- provide ongoing, daily opportunities for children to engage with nature and engage in outdoor exploration such as taking part in Forest School sessions, participating in nature walks and gardening
- embrace play-based learning and encourage curiosity and exploration through play, allowing children the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiences and activities related to sustainability

With the aim of integrating sustainable practices into daily routines, we:

- teach about energy conservation, showing children how to turn off lights and appliances when not in use and explaining the reasons why
- promote water preservation and teach children about the importance of using water wisely
- reduce food waste and involve children in snack preparation and cooking/baking activities
- engage in sustainable food practices; the children have a garden to grow their own food, promoting sustainable food consumption

4 Food and Catering

We explain to our children where food comes from and offer them opportunities to grow their own fruit and vegetables in the nursery garden. They are then supported to harvest these and use them during cooking and baking experiences in the classroom and Forest School.

School lunches are provided by a local primary school. In Warrington, the local authority works closely with food suppliers to ensure food is fresh, sustainable and from traceable sources. Over 75% of the dishes produced are prepared daily using fresh, sustainable ingredients which are free from harmful additives. Where possible, meat and meat products are Red Tractor/Farm Assured, fish is MCS certified and only free-range eggs are used. We are aware that eating fresh food that meets nutritional guidelines in schools can lead to better concentration and performance in the classroom, as well as positively influencing eating habits in later life.

The children are offered fresh fruit at snack time and fruit remnants are placed in the food caddy. Once disposed of, this is then broken down naturally and recycled into bio-gas, used to create energy and also produce fertiliser which is used in farming. Any remaining fruit at the end of the week is offered to families to take home.

5 Waste and Recycling

We are aware of the many benefits to our environment of recycling and know that, by recycling consistently, we are helping to create a healthier planet for ourselves and future generations. We actively support the philosophy of: 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. As well as reducing costs, this approach can support markets for ethical goods and services.

Across the nursery, we aim to reduce the amount of waste we produce by:

- writing and printing on both sides of paper wherever possible
- collecting paper in recycling bins in all offices and ensuring this is recycled
- communicating via email as much as possible to reduce paper waste
- communicating with parents and carers via email, Tapestry, School Spider, text messaging and the school's website to reduce paper waste
- composting food waste, both from the classroom and the staff room via the local council disposal procedures
- placing partially used paper in the classroom for mark-making activities or re-using it whenever possible
- only printing documents when this is essential
- ensuring that all waste electrical/office equipment is correctly disposed of via re-use or recycling schemes
- laminating frequently used documents, protecting them from damage and prolonging their use
- requesting that parents provide their child with a reusable water bottles for use in nursery rather than disposable plastic bottles
- recycling and disposable plastic bottles that are brought into school
- ensuring that there are clearly labelled bins located throughout the school for recycling, food waste and general waste
- displaying posters relating to the value and importance of environmental considerations, such as what sort of waste can be recycled and how litter can be detrimental to the environment
- disposing of any paper containing personal or sensitive information in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy
- engaging children in litter picking around the school grounds (ensuring appropriate hygiene measures are in place)
- encouraging children to continue good recycling habits when they are not at school (this is supported via home-learning suggestions shared with parents)
- preserving resources that may be useful in the future and/or reused in the following year when clearing out their classrooms
- encouraging families to make their costumes, wear pyjamas or utilise preloved items for World Book Day and other themed events rather than buying new costumes
- offering pre-loved/donated uniform to families free of charge as an alternative to purchasing new items from school
- considering sustainability when identifying and using suppliers to ensure the sustainable purchasing of products and services
- recycling paper/card, batteries and photocopier/printer ink/cartridges
- sharing information with families which promotes the *reduce, reuse, recycle* principles in the home

6 Energy and Water

Increased energy use poses a number of significant risks; these are primarily environmental and economic risks. Increased reliance on fossil fuels contributes to climate change, air pollution, and water pollution, whilst also impacting food production and overall economic stability. In response to this, energy and water conservation are two essential areas that we are working hard to tackle. We aim to be as eco-efficient as we can be and to reduce the amount of energy and water that we use by taking the following steps:

- switching off lights and appliances when they're not in use
- displaying information around the school to help staff, parents and pupils understand the importance of switching off appliances and saving energy
- utilising draft excluders to retain warm air and reduce energy consumption for heating
- auditing the amount of energy used each term
- turning off taps when not in use and ensuring that leaking taps are repaired promptly
- auditing water usage every term
- collecting rainwater in water butts and using this to water plants
- using LED bulbs and lighting that is motion activated
- keeping outside doors closed when the weather is cold
- talking to children about being eco-friendly in an age-appropriate manner and encouraging them to carry out simple duties
- monitoring the environmental sustainability of suppliers and adjusting procurement arrangements accordingly
- making all members of the school's community aware of the link between energy use and financial costs

7 Transport and Travel

The rising number of vehicles on the roads leads to congestion, increased road accidents and pollution such as carbon monoxide; this is of real concern near to schools. The use of cars to transport children to and from schools also decreases pupils' independent mobility, reduces the amount of daily exercise they have and also reduces opportunities to develop children's awareness of road safety. Choosing public transport, cycling, walking, or electric vehicles can significantly reduce carbon emissions compared to driving. At Sandy Lane, we actively promote and encourage the following:

- parents/carers and staff walking to school where possible rather than driving
- the benefits of daily exercise
- teachers and staff members car sharing whenever possible, e.g. when travelling to external training days or to and from work

In addition, we:

- offer suitable and safe storage for staff and pupils to store bicycles
- recognise that there are risks involved when individuals choose to walk or cycle to school and, in response to this, share information with children and families regarding road safety
- share informative material, such as posters and leaflets, regarding the impact of carbon emissions produced by personal vehicles and public transport on the environment, which we display on the nursery notice board
- support *International Walk to School Month* which takes place in October and encourage families to observe their local environment and the creatures within it whilst walking to nursery

8 Building and Grounds

At Sandy Lane, we promote the ongoing development of natural spaces and the implementation of sustainable practices within our school grounds. With the aim of achieving site sustainability, we:

- ensure that there are enough rubbish bins available to reduce the likelihood of waste being dropped
- have a maintenance officer who litter-picks as needed on a regular basis
- plan to set up a weather monitoring station to help children explore the weather and climate on our school site
- incorporate Forest School and outdoor education in to our school curriculum
- identify and protect existing natural habitats on the school site, and use them as an opportunity to teach children about the natural world
- utilise the school grounds as a stimulating and enjoyable environmental classroom; we have large planters where we grow vegetables, extensive gardens and a greenhouse
- we enable our children to have first-hand experience of 'soil to plate'
- make and develop new areas of biodiversity on the school site, e.g. increasing plant diversity on grassed areas
- ensure that safe and minimal pesticides and herbicides are used by grounds/garden maintenance staff
- welcome wildlife in to our outdoor space by having nest-boxes, bird baths and bug hotels as well as planters, as a way of encouraging a range of insects, particularly bees, to feed and flourish

We strive to be as sustainable as we can be and we want to support children to learn about the natural world and sustainable living, e.g. through growing food and biodiversity conservation. Moving forward, as appropriate, we will ensure that we consider sustainable design principles, sustainable technologies, the purchase of sustainable interior furnishings and sustainable environmental management when developing the school buildings and grounds.