

# 7.0 Environmental Awareness in Our Early Years Setting

It's becoming increasingly important for us all to be more environmentally aware as most experts agree that we are approaching a climate crisis. It's more vital than ever then, for us to teach children about sustainability from an early age.

There are two key aims we consider when planning environmental awareness activities in our setting: -

1. Embedding good practice into nursery life
2. Keeping the message simple and positive

## Good Environmental Practice

From an educational point of view, one of the key purposes of an environmental policy is to embed good practice into daily pre-school life so that we can model this for the children. Direct, consistent exposure to sustainable concepts in this way will help to build environmental understanding from a very early age.

The kinds of issues that we address in our environmental policy include the following:

**Energy** – we consider where our energy comes from.

(Actions - is our supplier 'green'? If not, could we switch? Could we install some solar panels?), how much energy we use, and in what ways we could be more energy efficient (e.g., switching off lights, running washes at lower temperatures).

**Water** – think about how we can reduce water use in our setting but also how this can be communicated to everyone, including the children (e.g., we have automatic taps that turn off)

**Recycling** – evaluate our setting's recycling system and make sure that we are recycling (or reusing) everything that we possibly can, and in the most effective way. We ensure everyone understands the system and involve the children (e.g., the children have a recycling system for their waste at lunch time).

**Buying** – make a list of all our regular supplies and assess what packaging it comes in.

Can we do anything to reduce the packaging, e.g., buy from a different source, or get refills? When sourcing new toys, we make sure that we buy good quality ones that will last; consider buying second hand where appropriate. Make your own craft supplies where possible and we source items from charity shops and books from supermarket second hand stalls.

**Food** – we try to incorporate local, seasonal produce into our setting wherever possible. We collect food from the Fair Share scheme from Tesco and Aldi and distribute this to our families and use it in our snack menus. We also grow our own food and use it in our snack menus.

**Transport** – how do our staff travel to the nursery – can we make reduce journeys, can staff walk or cycle.

Can we make it easier for parents to walk/cycle to the pre-school instead of driving?

Other areas we are working on are: -

**Our Environment – BioDiversity, Global Citizenship, Healthy Living – our planet and ourselves – Litter – Marine life – Sustainable transport to pre-school.**

### **Simple and Positive Message**

Concepts such as climate change and sustainability can be tricky to explain to young children, so we need to keep things as simple as possible.

We use positive messages such as these:

- Everything we do has an effect on our environment
- Humans should respect and care for the world we live in
- We don't have limitless resources, so we need to reduce, reuse, recycle
- We can all take small steps that together make a difference

In order to engage the children in environmental awareness education – and keep them engaged – it's also important for us to make sure that teaching opportunities are fun for them to participate in. We tap into the kinds of activities that they are naturally drawn to (e.g., sorting, experimenting, exploring, getting messy), as well as their inherent, developing interest in the world around them.

We also research topics and themes and have built this policy into our curriculum. We look for books and resources and campaigns and opportunities for teaching.

**We have signed up to the Eco Schools Green Flag scheme which will support us to continue to develop our Environmental policy and give us a clear action plan on how we can do more to support sustainability in our setting.**

- [Seven Step Overview](#)
- [Step 1 Eco-Committee](#)
- [Step 2 Environmental Review](#)
- [Step 3 Action Plan](#)
- [Step 4 Curriculum Links](#)
- [Step 5 Informing and Involving](#)
- [Step 6 Monitoring and Evaluation](#)
- [Step 7 Eco-Code](#)

This policy has an annual review period and, as such, will be reviewed and signed off at a management committee meeting of Cullompton Pre-School each year, as shown below.

Adopted on:	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	By	Committee Members at committee meeting
Previously reviewed on:		By	
Previously reviewed on:		By	
Previously reviewed on:			

Reviewed by Staff on:	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 (AJ/MW)
Date of next review:	January 2023
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee:	J Madge
Name of Signatory (printed):	Jack Madge
Role of Signatory (e.g., Chairperson)	Chairperson