

Downsview Sustainability Policy

INTENT

In line with Croydon Council's pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, Downsview Primary School is committed to informing and educating its pupils, staff and school community about environmental concerns and the importance of living sustainably.

We recognise our responsibility to ensure that staff, pupils, and the wider community have the necessary skills and knowledge to understand the environmental impact of human activity and to equip our stakeholders with ideas and methods which can help them to live more sustainably.

Our school strives continuing to be a beacon of sustainability across the borough, supporting everyone to make informed and conscientious living choices, underpinned by the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainability ethos acknowledges that our Earth and its habitability determine all terrestrial life and importantly, its continuation, and so must be preserved and cared for.

Sustainable living is a way of thinking about how we organise our lives, work, and education system so that we do not destroy our most precious resource – the planet. It is about finding solutions that improve our quality of life without storing up problems for the future or impacting unfairly on other people's lives.

Through the lens of sustainability, healthy environments, and a regenerative, prudent approach to our planet's resources, are crucial in securing the survival and well-being of humanity and our planet.

At Downsview we act to support a more sustainable environment by:

- Assessing school operations and implementing practises that reduce our carbon footprint.
- Encouraging every pupil and staff member to participate in making Downsview an eco-friendly and sustainable community.
- Developing children's awareness, understanding, and respect for the environments they live in and the role they play in protecting them.
- Fostering in children a love of nature and an understanding of the need to protect Earth's biodiversity.
- Growing pupils' understanding and commitment toward sustainable practices on a personal, national, and global level.
- Communicating the school's eco-values to all staff members and providing training when necessary to ensure consistency and a unified purpose amongst school representatives.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy. This involves ensuring that teaching staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and opportunities to teach pupils about environmental concerns. In extension, growing staff and pupils' understanding of the need to conserve energy and ensuring recycling and waste disposal practices are environmentally sound. When working with external service providers such as the school's catering company and our in-house Site Management Team, actively reflecting on how we can operate in a more sustainable way and pushing for green alternatives wherever possible.

Site Management and School Management

The Site Management and School Management Team plays a vital role in overseeing the level of energy consumption across the school, conducting regular checks, and acting decisively and promptly to reduce consumption wherever possible. Further to this, the Site Manager is responsible for influencing and liaising with a range of stakeholders, e.g., teaching staff, the cleaning team, external visitors, ensuring everyone is aware of the school's policies and able to apply our energy saving and waste disposal procedures to their practices.

Sustainability Team / Eco Team

The Sustainability Team's role is to raise awareness of environmental concerns amongst school staff and pupils, signpost to educational tools and resources, and plan a programme of opportunities across the year (assemblies, talks, activities). Working under the Sustainability Team's wing is the Eco Team made up entirely of enthusiastic pupils who are proactive in developing a commitment towards sustainability across the school via the planning and implementation of green initiatives that everyone can get involved in.

Downsview Staff

We expect all Downsview staff to be positive environmental role models. By encouraging our staff to reflect upon their personal and professional practices, we want them to support our environmental agenda and to make positive changes wherever possible, such as minimising the wasteful use of resources, using water bottles and reusable cups, eliminating single-use plastics, reducing paper usage in printing and photocopying, and choosing sustainable transport options such as public transport, carpooling, walking, or cycling to work.

Downsview has a dedicated Sustainability Team that plays a key role in driving our environmental priorities. The team is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the school's sustainability policy, organising initiatives such as fortnightly Eco Assemblies led by year groups, and overseeing projects like working towards achieving Plastic-Free School status.

As part of our commitment, we provide children with enriching sustainability opportunities, such as visits to recycling plants and workshops like the "Holy Jolly Christmas Workshop." Our next steps include continuing these efforts, aligning with the DfE's Sustainability Action Plan, and joining schemes such as Green Schools. Additionally, we aim to collaborate closely with the Council and other organisations to shape policies, enhance training opportunities for governors, and continue to be a beacon of sustainability within the community.

Pupils

As with our staff, we expect our pupils to act in a way that demonstrates concern for the environment and shows a commitment to sustainable living. Through our integrated environmental education programmes, we seek to inspire our pupils to be reflective and pro-active sustainability champions. In addition, we hope that some of our pupils will pursue careers in the green technologies, becoming innovators and creative problem solvers of the future.

Parents

We ask that parents be responsible by adopting and maintaining sustainable habits where possible and in this way setting a positive example to all pupils and the wider school community. Downview will help parents by providing them with information via the school newsletter and special events, offering opportunities such as a weekly household refill shop, workshops, and training, and giving frequent reminders on everyday sustainable practises. At Downview, we encourage walking, scooting, or cycling into school, using refillable water bottles instead of single use plastic, and preparing fresh and healthy foods/snacks for children that are stored in biodegradable or re-usable packaging.

The local community

Through the work of our Sustainability Team, we will collaborate with our local community and other sustainable organisations in the neighbourhood to ensure that we develop meaningful relationships and implement actions that will have a positive impact on the local environment. Wherever possible, we aim to add capacity to existing community initiatives and to share best practice with - and learn from - other schools.

Procedures

ENERGY & WATER

We are committed to reducing our energy and water usage and raising awareness about the importance of conservation by:

- Switching off lights when they are not needed.
- Turning off electrical appliances (computers, projectors, interactive boards) when not in use.
- Running whole-school energy-saving initiatives such as 'Lights-off Fridays' on the first Friday of every month.
- Displaying information across the school to ensure pupils understand the importance of switching off lights and appliances.
- Enlisting pupils to contribute to the design and production of communication materials for the school, e.g., energy-saving reminder and awareness posters.
- Turning off outdoor fountains during winter and insulating hot water pipes to reduce water waste.
- Asking teaching staff to act responsibly within their classrooms and model energy and water conserving practises explicitly.
- Transitioning to energy-saving lightbulbs and introducing motion-sensitive lights in appropriate areas.
- Keeping doors and windows shut in cold weather to retain heat.
- Monitoring the temperature and frequency of heating in the school and adjusting it accordingly.

- Making members of the school community aware of the link between energy use, the climate emergency, and financial costs.
- Auditing the amount of electricity used each term with a view to reduce usage further.
- Monitoring the sustainability of suppliers and adjusting procurement arrangements accordingly.
- Planning to upgrade the school's heating system to a more efficient system with smart meter when the opportunity arises.
- Consider using alternative sources of energy such as solar power.
- Teaching pupils about types of energy and energy conservation, and the impact they have on climate change, enabling pupils to make informed and positive lifestyle choices now and in future.
- Empowering pupils to be active agents by facilitating opportunities for them to speak to others about green energy and have a say in school initiatives and decisions, for example, as members of the KS2 'Eco-Reps Team'.

WASTE & RECYCLING

We are dedicated to reducing the amount of waste we generate, reusing and recycling resources, and maintaining a clean, litter-free school by:

- Only printing documents when it is essential.
- Communicating with parents electronically as much as possible to reduce paper waste.
- Writing and printing on both sides of paper.
- Using paper alternatives for writing when it is appropriate, e.g., whiteboards.
- Making use of used paper for art, design, and other projects.
- Encouraging pupils to share worksheets and care for their books and worksheets to increase their longevity.
- Laminating frequently used documents to protect them from damage and prolong their use whilst striving to laminate sparingly.
- Minimising the use of microplastics such as art and craft glitter.
- Encouraging pupils to use re-usable water bottles.
- Requesting of every member of the school community to dispose of their waste properly.
- Providing recycling bins across the school for paper, plastic, and food waste in addition to accompanying signage to help pupils, staff, and visitors locate bins.
- Composting food waste and ensuring selective organic waste collection and treatment.
- Displaying educational posters about recycling, waste, and litter pollution in key areas throughout the school to raise awareness and provide guidance.
- Educating pupils and staff about key waste and recycling issues through dedicated assemblies, PSHE lessons, staff training opportunities and communications.
- Asking teaching staff to demonstrate correct recycling practices to their pupils and make the 'Three R's' (to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) a key part of their pupils' daily routine and discussions.
- Facilitating regular opportunities for supervised litter picking outings, enabling pupils to partake in the clear-up and preservation of our school grounds and local area.

- Implementing waste reduction initiatives such as 'Zero Heroes', where pupils are encouraged to eat all their food to minimise food waste and reduce carbon emissions.
- Mobilising the student 'Eco Reps Team' to collect plastic waste from across the school and so support staff members in the disposal of their plastics correctly.
- Collecting the school's unwanted items, for example, books, pencils, and toys, and organising donations to groups in need.

PROCUREMENT

We are committed to operating ethically and sustainably by:

- Purchasing products from suppliers and manufacturers who prioritise reducing carbon emissions and are UK-based, wherever possible.
- Avoiding companies involved in unethical trade practices.
- Sourcing FSC-certified printing paper, supporting responsible forestry. The paper we purchase is 100% recycled.
- Increasing our use of sustainable suppliers for products such as reusable glue sticks, refillable pens, eco-friendly toilet paper, and eco-cleaning products.
- Providing Fairtrade tea and coffee on our premises.
- Partnering with green companies such as Pabulum, our catering provider, which prioritises environmentally friendly practices.

BIODIVERSITY

We aim to increase the biodiversity of our school grounds, expand our outdoor learning provision, and foster a genuine love and respect for nature and wildlife amongst pupils by:

- Planting indigenous trees, shrubs and hedgerows to attract a range of insects, birds, and small mammals.
- Actively applying for grants and using allocated funds to develop diverse natural features such as a sensory garden, nature trail, orchard, and pond for all members of our school to enjoy.
- Designate wild areas where weeds can flourish, providing much needed nectar for pollinators.
- Procuring and endorsing the use of natural materials, whilst avoiding all chemical pesticides.
- Encouraging teaching staff to take their lessons outside, making best use of our playing field, woodland, garden, and sensory areas.
- Investing in our Forest School provision, aimed at growing pupils' resilience, problem-solving and creativity, whilst offering a meaningful, personal connection with the natural environment.
- Organising extracurricular clubs to provide pupils with opportunities for hands-on learning in nature, for example our afterschool gardening club.
- Organise community events to raise awareness about biodiversity issues, promote a love of nature, and provide greater access to green spaces for all, e.g., talks with gardeners and horticulturists for pupils and their families.
- Link our Forest School activities to classroom lessons.

HEALTHY LIVING FOR US AND THE PLANET

We actively encourage all members of our school community to adopt a healthy and ethical lifestyle by:

- Walking, cycling, or scooting to school to reduce carbon emissions while promoting regular exercise.
- Opting for public transport instead of personal vehicles, or, when driving, carpooling to reduce environmental impact.
- Following a balanced diet containing the recommended portions across the five food groups: fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates, proteins, dairy, and oils.
- Bringing nutritious drinks, food, and snacks to school in reusable containers to minimise plastic and paper waste while promoting healthy eating habits.
- Offering pupils opportunities to grow their own fruit and vegetables as part of our garden, vegetable plot, and Forest School activities, fostering a connection to nature and understanding of sustainable food practices.
- Collaborating with our school catering company to reduce meat consumption and provide a wider variety of exciting, nutritious vegetarian options.

Downsview Primary School is firmly committed to creating a sustainable future by integrating environmentally conscious practices into all aspects of school life. Through a whole-school approach, we aim to equip our pupils, staff, and the wider community with the knowledge and skills needed to make sustainable choices that contribute to a healthier, more sustainable planet. This policy guides our actions across key areas such as energy and water conservation, waste management, ethical procurement, and enhancing biodiversity, all underpinned by a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and protecting the natural world.

We believe that sustainability is not just about preserving resources but about fostering a deeper connection with the environment, encouraging lifelong eco-conscious habits, and inspiring future generations to become active caretakers of the Earth. With the support of our dedicated Sustainability and Eco Teams, staff, pupils, and families, we are taking meaningful steps towards sustainability that align with both local and global environmental goals.

As a school, we will continue to assess and improve our environmental impact, ensuring that sustainability is embedded in our curriculum, practices, and everyday life. Through collaboration with local communities, businesses, and organisations, we strive to be a beacon of sustainability, inspiring others to join us in our mission for a greener, more sustainable future for all.