

Health and safety

3.10 Sustainability and Climate Change policy

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

Sustainability is an essential and integral part of our daily routines at St Joseph's Pre-school. We wish to instil an understanding and awareness of the importance of sustainable practices, reducing our carbon footprint and impact on the planet. Our commitment to sustainability aligns with the government's goals to become a net zero nation.

'Through their learned and lived experiences from early years to further and higher education; we will provide opportunities to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the importance of nature, sustainability and the causes and impact of climate change and to translate this knowledge into positive action and solutions.'

Department for Education's (DfE) policy paper "[Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems](#)", 2023

A key element of the DfE's strategy is that all education settings, including the early years sector, should have a named Sustainability Lead and a climate action plan in place by December 2025. St Joseph's Pre-school can confirm that their Sustainability Lead is **Natalie Clark** and that a climate action plan (CAP) is in place. The CAP is a "live" document and will be updated throughout a pre-school year to reflect current practices and achievements in this area.

In addition, St Joseph's Pre-school ensure that it follows, as far as it is able begin housed in a rented building¹ the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) guidance "[Simpler Recycling: workplace recycling in England](#)", which came into effect on 31 March 2025.

Our Values and Ethos

Our goal is to ensure that our setting and its practices, both inside and out, support sustainability, in line with government expectations regarding sustainability and climate change.

We do our best to reflect these values and our ethos regarding sustainability in everything we do. This includes our consumption of food, energy, and water, as well as how we travel and waste reduction/disposal.

We will endeavour to adhere to the following 4 "R's":

- **R**educe: limit our use of items such as
 - *consumables*: paper products (printer paper, paper cups, straws etc), printing double sided by default and maintaining records digitally;
 - *energy*: turning off electrical items when not needed and switching off lights;
 - *water*: ensuring all taps are turned off and not overfill kettles; and
 - limit the use of single-use items that are disposed of in landfills.
- **R**euse: use items more than once using them for other purposes, eg

¹ The Leigh Building is rented from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

- food pots (yoghurt pots) to mix paint;
- packaging and resources;
- stationary, envelopes and files;
- electrical equipment that is still fit for purpose;
- office furniture.
- **Repair:** where possible and practicable we will repair items such as toys, or equipment/structures within the outside area (eg. repaint or refurbish).
- **Recycle:** for example
 - paper and card; glass; metal; plastics; food waste; and
 - offering pre-loved uniform items to parents/carers (for a small fee);
 We provide facilities for the above items to be recycled in line with DEFRA's 2025 guidance. Printer cartridges are returned to our suppliers for recycling and black bin/residual waste is presented separately for collection.

Working with the Little Way Catholic Educational Trust's Sustainability Project Lead, we have investigated the setting's carbon footprint using the Count Your Carbon website. The results from this have been incorporated into the setting's Carbon Reduction Plan and also into its Climate Action Plan.

Our Curriculum

Providing our children with an early years curriculum that teaches them the importance of sustainability and how to live a more sustainable lifestyle is integral to the ethos and values of our setting. Within our curriculum, we will give our children the following opportunities to extend their understanding and appreciation of sustainability:

- planting/growing vegetables and fruit;
- planting/growing edible flowers;
- planting/growing wild flowers to encourage wildlife into the Pre-school outside area;
- introduce insect and bee houses and monitor who takes up residence.

Food Management

To ensure that we meet sustainability expectations relating to the management of food within activities and mealtimes, the following actions will be taken:

- leftover food items at snack and lunch time will be put into the food waste recycle bin;
- any plastic containers, eg. yoghurt pots, will be rinsed and put in the appropriate recycling receptacle if they are not being kept for alternative use;
- paper items, eg. fruit juice cartons, will be put in the appropriate recycling receptacle;
- leftover items from cooking activities will be put into the food waste recycle bin;
- homemade playdough – if not sullied with colour (eg. paint) or decorating items – will be put into the food waste recycle bin.

We will encourage the children to help us in this respect, as we want to make an impact by introducing these practices and modelling sustainable practices to the children.

Energy

To reduce our environmental impact, St Joseph's Pre-school aims to, where possible, monitor and limit our energy consumption (electricity and oil). We ensure that all children and staff are informed of the importance of adopting sustainable practices regarding energy consumption. The following actions have been implemented to demonstrate our commitment to this goal:

- radiator temperatures will be reduced in warm/hot weather;
- keeping windows closed in colder temperatures – reporting faults with catches immediately to the School Business Manager (SBM);

- applying solar film on windows and doors to reduce UV, heat loss etc;
- introduce a traffic light system which identifies what electrical items and devices need to be turned off when not in use and not left on standby.

Water

We understand that water is a valuable natural resource and that using it wisely and sparingly is essential. To reduce our water consumption within the setting and in our outdoor provision, the following actions have been implemented to demonstrate our commitment to this goal:

- washing up will be done when there is sufficient items to justify the use of hot water;
- monitor the children washing their hands in the toilet area, ensuring that taps are not left running for too long.

Transport and Travel

We will endeavour to promote sustainable practices relating to transport and travel, eg car sharing. However, as St Joseph's Pre-school is set in a rural location, we acknowledge that our efforts and those of our parents/carers are in this respect are constrained. Particularly as the availability of public transport to and from the Pre-school at the relevant operating times of the setting, is limited.

Waste reduction/disposal

We are committed to reducing the amount of waste we produce as a setting and to disposing of it as much as possible in an eco-friendly way to avoid unnecessarily sending waste to landfills. To ensure that we can limit the amount of waste generated in our setting, we aim to instil proactive sustainability practices in our children and staff to ensure that, wherever possible, materials are recycled and repurposed in line with the 4 "R's".

The following actions have been implemented to demonstrate our commitment to this goal:

- staff will consider carefully the need to print out a document and limit the number of prints requested;
- staff will consider carefully the need to photocopy a document – could it be scanned or photographed and sent instead via email?
- paper used by the children, eg. for painting, if not wanted will be put in the paper recycling receptacle;
- water from washing up will be used to water raised beds when necessary.

Other actions within our setting

To demonstrate our continued commitment to improving St Joseph's Pre-school's sustainable practices, the following additional actions will/have also be taken:

- invoices to parents/carers sent out using email (via QuickBooks);
- policies and procedures available in pdf format via the Pre-school's section of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's website;
- children's learning journeys recorded via Tapestry rather than in paper format;
- promotion of pre-loved uniform sales to existing and new parents/carers.

Our setting will be used to promote the benefits of living sustainably. Instilling such procedures into our daily routines will enable our values and ethos to be put into practice and help us meet our goals, ensuring that our consumption is reduced for the benefit of all. We hope that staff, children, and their families will also join us in our commitment to protecting our planet.

Legal Framework

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

Further guidance

- DfE's policy paper "[Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems](#)", 2023
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs guidance "[Simpler Recycling: workplace recycling in England](#)"
- National Education Nature Parks (<https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/>). The setting is registered and involves the children in mapping the biodiversity on our site.
- Count Your Carbon (<https://calculator.countyourcarbon.org/>)
- Eco-Schools: Early years (<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/early-years/>)
- Let's go Zero 2030 (<https://www.letsgozero.org>)

Associated documents

- St Joseph's Pre-school's Climate Action Plan
- St Joseph's Pre-school's Carbon Reduction Plan
- St Joseph's Pre-school's Carbon Footprint Report

Associated Policies & Procedures

- 4.5.1 Curriculum Planning

| Version Number | Author | Purpose of change | Date |
|----------------|---------|---|--|
| 1.0 | K Coupe | New policy using information from Pre-school's Carbon Footprint Report, Carbon Reduction Plan, Climate Action Plan and PATA's "Climate & Sustainability Policy" | 12 Dec 2025 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers) |