The NEST alternative provision
www.thenest-ed.uk

Environmental Responsibility Policy

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Contents

Policy aims

Central to the NEST ethos is responsibility for and care of the local and global environment. Part of our curriculum is focused on increasing connection with natural environments and a sense of interconnectedness amongst communities and spaces. We intend to demonstrate this commitment through all practices, making sustainable choices where we can as purchasers, employers and educators.

Links to legislation and guidance

This policy has been written in compliance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Climate Change Act 2008
- Paris Agreement 2015
- Glasgow Climate Pact 2021
- DfE's Sustainability and climate change strategy 2022
- Environmental sustainability: a whole school approach, 2024

Associated policies and further reading

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following associated policies and documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Community Contract
- Community Contract - Staff
- Curriculum

Definitions

Green – environmentally-friendly decisions, actions

Sustainability – the practice of working within one's (individual or group) environmental means. Creating a system that can be self-sufficient.

Climate anxiety – common amongst "Gen Z" and "Gen Alpha", anxiety caused by fear and hopelessness from awareness of the climate crisis.

Roles and Responsibilities

Directors

The Directors are responsible for creating a community in which it is second nature to consider the environmental impact of every activity, decision and action. They will:

- Create an environment in which making the greenest decision is easiest.
- Empower all members of the community to make greener decisions where possible.
- Provide education opportunities for staff, volunteers and learners around sustainability and environmental responsibility.
- Make environmentally responsible purchasing decisions wherever possible from the grand to the mundane.
- Make connections with surrounding environmental groups to provide meaningful ongoing environmental purpose.

Sustainability Lead

The Sustainability Lead is responsible for ensuring this policy is enacted at every possible level. They will:

- Implement this policy and support staff to understand and implement it
- Remain abreast of relevant changes to best practice and legislation.
- Consult on environmental decisions, including researching different options in cases of purchasing and suppliers.
- Support the development of sustainability curriculum elements.
- Arrange collaborations with green groups, including visits to natural environments and sources to find safe reusable materials.
- Arrange CPD for staff in collaboration with Training Lead.
- Source reusable materials

See Appendix A for potential Sustainability Resources.

Staff

Staff are a crucial part of the community and culture of the NEST regarding embedding environmental consciousness in day-to-day running. They will:

- Complete relevant training related to annual green themes
- Take all opportunities to embed green practices in their teaching
- Think of environmental impact of new resources when planning (minimising printing, avoiding AI, making printouts reusable)
- Be informed about green stuff and stiff

See Appendix B for Staff Training Tracker for more information.

Learners

Learners are the most central to any environmental practices and successes in both the NEST and wider community. Learners are expected to:

- Engage with planned activities around green practices.
- Take part in ongoing campaigns and promotions.

Caregivers

Caregivers allow learners to further their knowledge by:

- Support of campaigns and promotions through the NEST
- Engage with events and drives by the NEST

Community voice

We value lived experience at the NEST, and we believe that centring the voice of lived experience is a route to better care. The insight of learners, caregivers, staff and collaborators are invaluable in shaping an environment of trust, collaboration and co-ownership. Intentionally prioritising the perspective of learners and caregivers supports educator understanding of learner needs and can empower learners to contribute to meaningful decision making and to take an active role in their learning. Valuing staff and collaborator feedback can facilitate closer co-working and productive communication.

It is essential that learners, many of whom experience climate anxiety, feel capable to input into environmental decisions that ultimately, the consequences of which they will need to be responsible for. This will involve informal conversations, periodic specific feedback sessions, ability to give anonymous feedback at any time and specific environmental awareness weeks for specific causes. We will consult NGA guide to engaging with caregivers.

Processes

Curriculum and culture

Wherever possible, the holistic curriculum will take opportunities to discuss environmental issues with a range of different lenses (e.g. scientific, social, cultural, historic). The NEST culture embeds green principles through creative reuse practices, planning (to minimise wastage), skills targets and care of shared spaces. There will also be structured, conscious inclusion and highlighting of green issues and attitudes including:

- Litter picks, cultivating garden, creating informational videos/posters for local community, wildlife projects (e.g. bee hotels, animal I-spy, tracking seasonal changes) - promoting ownership of immediate surroundings
- Transparent conversations as part of travel or purchase activities – embedding principles of ethical consumerism where possible
- Creative projects (clothing, sculptural, furniture) using reused items
- Making and selling upcycled products – linking to employment/earning
- Trips to green spaces and wildlife areas – giving opportunities to create/deepen connection to natural spaces

- Planting food and pollinator-friendly plants.

See Appendix C for Curriculum Matrix.

Green targets/themes

Green targets will be set by the SchooliP audit tool (see Appendix D for Target Tracker Exemplar). Themes (e.g. recycling, energy usage) will be set for each term to support these targets. The audit will be reviewed annually and targets amended accordingly. Each year will be set a theme around which targets (informed by SchooliP audit) will be set for the year. These will be reviewed with the audit tool, recorded (Appendix D) and adjusted where necessary annually.

Collaboration

Seek out collaborators on national and local scales on drives, projects and awareness weeks (see Appendix A).

- Promoting community by collaborating with local community groups
- Partnering with local organisations and initiatives (e.g. Nature/Nurture) to design and deliver green projects.

Business practices

Emissions

The Sustainability Lead will ensure the NEST makes informed decisions relating to minimising emissions from:

- Transport
- Processing power (e.g. generative AI)
- Food and other purchasing

Purchasing

We try to consider environmental impact at all levels of purchasing. Ethical consumerism being one of the most accessible forms of green action. This means considering the impact of buying snack brands as well as the overall green profile of large-scale suppliers. We will be guided by the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle (see Disposal) and think about the mileage of various products before purchase (see Emissions). We will use the principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (Appendix E). Food for consumption will be selected on the basis of seasonality (Appendix F) and where possible it will be local and environmentally responsible.

Waste Disposal

In every workspace there will be recycling receptacles as well as waste bins to prevent contamination. Soft plastics, glass and food waste will have a single collection point in Dee Space and learners and staff encouraged to take the time to correctly dispose of all domestic rubbish appropriately. Thorough and clear signage will be attached to each bin to clearly indicate what should go in each. Part of the end-of-day tidy up process includes collecting any rubbish and washing recycling to prevent contamination.

Training

Staff training, learning and development are highly encouraged and facilitated by the NEST. All staff are expected to complete minimum training requirements as outlined in our Staff Training Plan and additional learning and related continued professional development are strongly supported.

All staff receive induction training delivered both internally and externally. Induction training includes the following sustainability elements:

Internally delivered:

- Introduction to this policy and processes
- Introduction to the NEST sustainability ethos
- Green working principles

As part of their induction process, our staff are provided with training on the culture and ethos relating to sustainability values. Daily practice will encourage staff to expand their environmental knowledge. Opportunistic training and access to green experiences. See Staff Training documents (Appendix B) for more information.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually at a minimum. Updated policies will be made available locally and on our website (www.thenest-ed.uk). Ad hoc amendments will be made as new information becomes available and to align with any legislative changes as they arise. Stakeholder feedback, particularly that of learners and caregivers, will be invited and incorporated as much as is practicable. Where quantitative data are available these will be analysed and embedded in policies updates.

Qualitative data

Qualitative analyses conducted using content analysis on:

- Submitted praise/recognition from learners, staff, caregivers, collaborators and the wider community
- Focus groups to identify the perceived benefits and drawbacks and any unexpected impacts.

Quantitative data

Basic statistical analyses conducted on:

- Survey data (e.g. transport, biodiversity, recycling, community opinion)
- Recycling rates and energy usage by term (informed estimates based on data available from premises)
- Suppliers used (RAG rated for green credentials for production, business practices and transport)
- Progress against SchooliP audit tool completed annually
- Number of collaborators on green projects/initiatives
- Initial and exit assessments from environmental CPD including self-rating their knowledge.

Appendices

Appendix A – Sustainability Resources

- National Education Nature Park (DfE) – children and young people lead in mapping, monitoring and enhancing their spaces for nature.
- SchooliP audit tool (NAEE &NGA) – free online tool for leaders to develop climate action plans.
- Choice Voting – Process to set up and launch your online elections, eliminating paper and ink waste.
- Energy Sparks – Free online energy analysis tool and energy education to help schools reduce their carbon footprint and teach pupils energy saving and sustainability life skills.
- Living Streets – UK charity encouraging everyday walking, including children walking or wheeling to school.
- The One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC: Learn) – Free, interactive e-courses on climate change based on official UN content.
- Let's Go Zero – national campaign uniting teachers, pupils, parents and their schools with support on setting zero carbon targets and developing roadmaps for delivery.
- UK Schools Sustainability Network (UKSSN) – regional networks of school staff and students from the UK. They focus on youth social action and sustainability education.
- Climate Ambassadors (UoR & STEM Learning) – scheme to improve climate education of young people and guide schools to Net Zero.
- Explore Urban Nature (Natural History Museum) – encourages students to track and monitor nature closest to home, become local experts, observe and collect new data, and take action.

Appendix B – Staff Training Tracker

Appendix C – Curriculum Matrix

Life	Live independently – recycling, seasonality of food, travel confidence
Community	Litter pick, growing food, selling upcycled goods, running repair shop
Self-care	Being in green spaces, gardening, longevity and health of planet
Creative	Upcycling, working with found materials
Learning	Green house gases, surveys of the state of the local environment

Appendix D – Target Tracker Exemplar

Year	Theme	Target	Date	Review	Notes: progress, how measured
1	Recycling	Improve recycling rates			Get recycling rate data from PT. End of day weigh waste? Keep record – compare over time
		Teach staff about recycling			Jack? Research task to create perfect recycling
		Run awareness for community?			

Appendix E – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Protocol

Reduce

- Do we need to do this activity or buy this item at all?
- Is there a way to do it without purchasing?
- Working practices - with thorough planning to minimise wastage

Reuse

- Art inspired by found, repurposed items
- Try to respond to materials rather than buy new
- Drives to bring certain items from home to use.

Recycle

- Recycle everything including things that are not collected - when and how will these be disposed of
- Log all waste to ensure as much as possible recycled

Appendix F – Seasonal fruits and vegetables (abridged)

Fruits	
Rhubarb (forced)	Jan - March
Rhubarb (maincrop)	April – July
Strawberry	May - July
Cherry	June - July
Blackcurrant Gooseberry Greengage Redcurrant	June - August
Apricot	June - September
Raspberry	June - October
Blackberry Blueberry Nectarine	July - September

Peach	
Damson Elderberry Fig	August - September
Plum	August - October
Melon	September
Apple Pear Melon	September - October
Quince	October

Vegetables	
Mushrooms Spinach Cauliflower	All year round
Turnip	March - December
Asparagus	April – June
Spring onion Watercress	April - October
Lettuce	April - November
Garlic	May - July
Mangetout Pea	May - September
Green pointed cabbage	May - October
Carrot	May - November
New potato	June - August
Broad bean Onion	June - September
Broccoli Courgettes and summer squash Cucumber Green beans Runner bean Tomato	July – October
Pak choi	July - November
Beetroot Red cabbage	July - December
White cabbage	July - January
Green savoy cabbage	July - March
Chili peppers Pepper (capsicum) Potato (maincrop) Sweetcorn	August - October
Lamb's lettuce	August - November
Celery	August - December
Leeks	August - March
Aubergine	September - October

Sweet potato	
Swede	September – December
Parsnips	September – February
Brussel sprouts	September – March
Pumpkin and winter squash	October – November
Spring greens	October – March
Purple sprouting broccoli	October – April
Celeriac	December – March