

11 Environmental sustainability policy

Environmental sustainability policy was adopted by **Castle Hill Pre-School** on **4th December 2025**

The Department for Education (DfE) strategy states that: *'By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan'*. The 4 key pillars that represent aspects of addressing climate change to foster a sustainable future are:

- Decarbonisation
- Biodiversity
- Climate education and green careers goals
- Resilience and adaptation

For Castle Hill Pre-School these pillars inform our activities in terms of:

Decarbonisation:

Our activities to reduce plastic use include encouraging reusable bottles, lunchboxes, plates etc. Toys are mainly wooden and none are single use only.

Our activities to reduce utility usage include RELO (Room Empty Lights Out) and electrics are turned off when the premises are not in use. The thermostat is set to only come on at a certain temperature.

Encouraging sustainable transport to and from the provision includes car sharing and encouraging walking.

Biodiversity:

Fostering children's empathy with nature through exploration. We have a field attached to the pre-school and take the children on nature walks through there and the local woods. We encourage children to be kind to and explore nature, using natural materials such as sticks, leaves and flowers in play.

Engaging with flora and fauna in the setting and outings to local community spaces. We teach the children about bugs and insects and have pre-school pets.

We recycle left over food for the birds and local wildlife.

Climate education:

Sharing books, stories and songs with the children on nature and the environment

Weaving environment and climate topics into the EYFS areas of learning

Encouraging parents to engage with sustainability topics at home

Resilience and adaption: Reviewing all aspects of our setting's environment to assess what sustainability and climate adaptations can be made

Actively considering the risk of extreme weather events on our children, families and provision

Aim

Castle Hill Pre-School actively promotes environmental sustainability.

Our eco-sustainability lead who is the Climate Champion for our setting is: Shanthini Nanthakumar.

Changing perspectives – at *Castle Hill Pre-School* we will:

- Educate ourselves, our children and our families on what sustainability means and how to respect our planet.
- Weave sustainability into our daily lives and decisions – ask ourselves could this be done in a more sustainable way.
- Display our sustainability policy and educate and inform others on the steps that we are taking.

Objectives

At **Castle Hill Pre-School** we are committed to protecting our planet for the next generations to the best of our ability by:

- Reducing the use of plastics – in particular single use plastics (SUPs) in our everyday lives.
- Cutting down on waste by reducing, reusing and recycling (the 3Rs).
- Minimising food waste.
- Caring for the world we live in.
- Changing perspectives and developing understanding in ourselves, our families and our children.

At **Castle Hill Pre-School** we support children to learn about sustainability - to respect and care for both the living and non-living environment.

Children have the opportunity at **Castle Hill Pre-School** to learn about and understand sustainability and environmental issues. They will observe adults' model sustainable practices, learn about the world around them and how to protect it. Together we will support the children to develop positive attitudes and values about sustainable practices.

Our curriculum encourages children to explore ideas and practices that promote environmental sustainability and to understand the interdependence between people and the environment.

Examples of ways that we will embed sustainability into daily life and our curriculum include:

Reducing the use of plastics:

- Reducing the use of plastic bottles and bags as much as possible by finding alternatives and encouraging families / staff to use reusable lunch and drinks containers in lunch boxes.
- Buy milk in large bottles not individual cartons.
- Source alternatives to craft materials – recycle materials and encourage parents to bring in recycling materials for art and creative activities.
- Look for resources that are not just plastic representations when real alternatives are available.
- We support children to experience the natural environment through natural materials.

Cutting down on waste by reducing, reusing and recycling:

- Introduce recycling bins - following the local recycling scheme guidance.
- Take steps to reduce the junk mail sent to the setting.
- Reduce the amount of paper printing.
- Recycle any electronic equipment – where possible using an environmentally friendly disposal scheme.
- If the setting has a 'uniform' for children, recycle to new families.
- Encourage families to donate pre-loved clothes, books and toys to charity shops, refugee support groups or to the setting.
- When purchasing new resources, we look for natural rather than plastic.
- Use natural resources such as water with care – ensure taps are turned off and any leaks fixed.
- Recycle water from water play by using it to water plants.
- Use energy saving wash cycles when using the washing machine.
- Minimise the use of tumble driers by hanging washing on clothes horses.

Minimising food waste:

- Made links and have a box so that donations for the local food bank can be collected.
- Plan snacks and meals carefully to reduce food waste for example using foods that are in season and being aware of portion sizes.
- Redistribute leftover food to local wildlife.

Caring for the world we live in:

- We help children to explore nature through art and play.

- Educate children not to drop litter.
- Care for the setting environment indoors and out.
- Discover the importance of wildlife to the environment and eco system.
- Use natural resources.
- We shop locally where possible.
- We encourage families to walk, cycle, scoot to our setting.
- We go on nature walks and learn about plants we see in our local area.

References

The Department for Education's Sustainability and climate change strategy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems>

Further guidance

To support you, the Alliance has developed the '**Supporting effective environmental sustainability in early years settings toolkit**'

