

Sustainability and Climate Change Policy



This Sustainability Policy outlines our commitment to promoting environmentally responsible practices across all aspects of our nursery. It serves as a guide for staff, trustees, families, and the wider community in supporting Stepping Stones' efforts to reduce environmental impact and foster lifelong sustainable habits among our children.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children, families, and visitors at Stepping Stones. The centre manager and sustainability lead Laura Grey is responsible for overseeing implementation and regular review.

Our Aims:

- Promote awareness of environmental issues through everyday practice.
- Model sustainable behaviour for young children.
- Reduce waste and use of non-recyclable materials.
- Support biodiversity and connection with nature within the limitations of our outdoor space.
- Reduce the settings environmental footprint.
- Role model sustainable behaviours & attitudes.

Our Actions

To work towards actions for each area set out in the policy.

Review Process:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the setting manager and trustees. Progress will be discussed in staff and committee meetings to adapt actions as needed.

Our vision

At Stepping Stones, we believe that even our youngest learners can begin to develop a love for the world around them. Through small, mindful actions, we aim to protect our environment and develop a culture of sustainability in ways that are meaningful and achievable for our children, families, and staff.

Our core values



Learning Through Play: Sustainability in the Curriculum

We gently weave sustainability into our play-based curriculum, tailored to the needs and understanding of the children.

Children will:

- Explore nature using sensory activities and outdoor play.
- See adults model simple eco-actions (e.g. turning off taps or lights).
- Use colour-coded bins with picture cues to begin understanding recycling.
- Take part in our 'World Week'—learning through music, stories, and sensory play about our shared world.

We aim to build a small collection of second-hand or donated books and toys related to nature and the environment to support this.

Food and Mealtimes

We make simple, manageable changes that help the planet and raise awareness of sustainability in our children, families and staff:

- Use washable cloths instead of paper towels where safe and practical.
- Choose biodegradable wipes where possible and affordable.
- Encourage families to minimise single-use packaging in lunchboxes through gentle reminders and ideas.
- Dispose of food waste in dedicated bins to reduce the use of plastic bags.
- Consider ‘food miles’ when purchasing snacks.

Energy Awareness

While we are limited in making structural changes (such as automated heating and lighting, as our building is rented), we can still make a difference:

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use.
- Use natural light and open blinds during daylight hours.
- Staff are encouraged to unplug unused appliances safely at the end of each day.
- We will focus on obtaining funding to replace our light fixtures which will reduce our energy consumption.

Water conservation

Water is essential—and precious. Here’s how we care for it:

- Support children to wash their hands using minimal water with close adult supervision.
- When water is used for play, and it’s safe to do so, we’ll reuse it in sensory trays or to water any potted plants or small garden areas.
- Incorporating water-wise strategies such as ensuring taps are turned off and leaks are fixed promptly.

Transport and travel

We understand many of our families rely on cars and specialist transport. Still, we can support greener travel by:

- Sharing public transport options (bus routes, walking paths) on our website by June 2026.
- Encouraging staff to car share or walk where practical.
- Shopping local where possible to reduce transportation emissions.

Waste reduction

We aim to reduce the waste we create and recycle what we can:

- Each room will have clearly labelled bins with symbols to sort recycling and general waste.
- We'll reuse scrap paper, cardboard, and natural loose parts for play and craft.
- Try to limit the number of bin bags we use each week.
- Recycle toys and resources when they are no longer required and source 'pre-loved' resources where practical.

Everyday practice

- Use recycled paper in our printer where possible.
- Reduce printing by using digital communication with parents and staff.
- Include sustainability as a regular agenda item in staff and trustee meetings.
- While a 'living roof' is currently beyond our resources, we will focus on enhancing our outdoor areas with low-cost, nature-friendly features like bug hotels and recycled materials.
- Assessing our nursery's environmental impact on a regular basis.
- Purchase only sustainable cleaning products.

Our ongoing commitment

We know that big changes start with small steps. With support from families, staff and our community, we're building everyday habits that show our children how to care for the planet and for each other.

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