

Sustainability Policy

PURPOSE

At Kerrimuir Primary School (KPS), we value and respect our local environment and recognise the importance of fostering environmental stewardship and sustainable practices within our local community. We are committed to empowering students and the broader community to embrace sustainability both at school and in their homes. We aim to instill an eco-conscious culture throughout our school community, aligning with our School Environmental Management Plan (2023-2027), which is supported by ResourceSmart Schools.

Our focus areas include promoting sustainable practices in waste management, water, and energy usage, as well as enhancing our school grounds to support biodiversity. We integrate principles of sustainable development into all aspects of education to foster respect for others, future generations, and our planet's resources.

Through education, we seek to challenge our community to adopt new behaviours that will secure a sustainable future, addressing global challenges related to environmental integrity, economic viability, and social justice. Education is recognised as a fundamental tool in this endeavour, encouraging positive changes in behaviour for the benefit of current and future generations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff and students within our school community. The various committees in conjunction with the Principal will be responsible for keeping records and reporting on the outcomes and progress of each program.

We will encourage community participation in environmental projects undertaken at KPS and invite parents with expertise to help maintain and improve our school environment with sustainable practices. We will also promote sustainable living by educating the school community through our students.

POLICY

Sustainability is a cross-curricular priority that must be embedded into daily learning activities for students. Principles of sustainability are explicitly taught through integrated studies units across year levels from prep to grade 6. Additional activities include a Gardening Club, student leadership roles, and staff and student working parties.

Staff at KPS will follow the guidelines derived from the School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP), which outlines our commitment to sustainability. The SEMP highlights achievements to date and sets out a plan for what we aim to achieve in the future. The SEMP is a document developed as part of ResourceSmart Schools, which we became a part of in 2008. ResourceSmart Schools is an initiative by the Victorian Government that assists our school in embedding sustainability in everything we do. Our school will take action to minimise waste, save energy and water, promote biodiversity, and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Water - To control and monitor water consumption within the school so that we reduce our impact on the natural environment. To do this we will continue to use drought-tolerant and local indigenous plants in our gardens, and install watering systems and rain sensors for irrigated areas. We will continue conducting water and water infrastructure auditing, as well as collecting rainwater for reuse.

Energy – To control energy consumption within the school so that we reduce our impact on the natural environment. To do this we will purchase energy-efficient appliances, and educate our community about strategies to reduce our carbon footprint, for example, ‘dressing for the weather’. We will organise energy-efficient initiatives via staff and student action teams.

Waste - To use an integrated waste management system within the school so that we reduce our impact on the natural environment. We will achieve this by adopting a more sustainable approach to buying environmentally friendly materials and reducing our overall printing capacity by creating digital platforms. We will educate our community about reducing, reusing and recycling products and wrappings, and composting, through various whole-school initiatives.

Biodiversity - We will adopt more sustainable practices that focus on increasing biodiversity across the school. To achieve this, we will increase teacher knowledge and capacity via professional development, and create a student action team and lunchtime garden club that will plant indigenous plants to encourage native birds and pollinators and conduct biodiversity audits to monitor habitat quality.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Water

- Encourage water saving at home via newsletter items and student action team presentations at assemblies
- Encourage staff, students and parents to commit to adopting water saving initiatives at school and home
- Work to increase the amount of non- toxic cleaning products used
- Student action team to organise more water-related initiatives

Energy

- Swap to more energy-efficient appliances
- ‘Dress for the weather’ reminders to discourage excessive heater use and ensure heater/air con temperatures at the recommended temperature (class monitors to check temperatures)
- Train, and encourage, staff and students about sustainable behaviours (for example shutting doors, lights off, heaters off/down, computers off at the end of the day.
- Continue to apply for grants applicable to upgrading lighting to LED or appliances to 5 star and above
- Train staff to read the inverter for the solar panels and allocate staff to check heating and cooling temperatures on thermostats
- Encourage community to be less reliant on cars for travel to school
- Professional learning for staff on zero net carbon plan
- Student action team organise more energy related initiatives

Waste

- Purchase suitable bins for use in classrooms to streamline waste collection
- Use less paper – all printers set to double-sided printing
- End of year - staff encouraged to re-use, donate or recycle left-over supplies
- Environmentally friendly cleaning products purchased
- Recycled toilet paper purchased
- Student action team to organise and report on waste-related initiatives such as waste-free events and waste-collection schemes
- Work with canteen and students to implement waste management strategies and decrease litter around the school from canteen purchases
- Comply with Victorian regulations banning the sale, provision or supply of single-use plastic items
- Ensure balloons taken outdoors are well secured while in use and deflated and disposed of appropriately when the activity is completed

Biodiversity

- Create and monitor animal habitats such as nesting boxes and bird baths
- Monitor Habitat Quality Assessment Score annually
- Students contribute newsletter articles containing biodiversity updates
- Increase parent participation in Working Bees
- Increase network of community contacts for advice, shared projects and sponsorship
- Create strong links with local environmental groups such as BirdLife Australia, Greenlink Nursery, Whitehorse Gardens for Wildlife, and Friends of Bushy Creek
- Distribute leadership roles amongst staff and students
- Student action team to present biodiversity updates at assembly

Green Purchasing

- To develop a 'green purchasing' program, where economically viable. This could include environmentally friendly products such as stationary, toilet paper, tissues and cleaning products.
- To purchase 100% recycled paper for printers and photocopiers.
- To increase the use of furniture and equipment made from second-hand or recycled materials, where economically feasible
- To encourage the purchase of second-hand uniforms

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2023
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	