Sustainability Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, we are committed to promoting environmental sustainability and helping children develop care and respect for the world around them.

We recognise that even small changes in everyday practice can help reduce waste, conserve resources and encourage positive habits.

Through our curriculum, routines and everyday experiences, we aim to help children develop an age-appropriate understanding of the natural world and how we can help to care for it.

We encourage children, staff and families to participate in sustainable practices wherever reasonably possible.

Sustainability Lead

The Wendy House Sustainability Lead is:

Wendy Cross – Manager

The Sustainability Lead supports the setting to consider sustainability within its practice, curriculum and future planning.

Sustainability is a shared responsibility, and all staff are encouraged to contribute ideas and model environmentally responsible behaviour.

Climate Action Planning

The Wendy House maintains a **Climate Action Plan** to support the development of our sustainability practice.

The plan enables us to:

- identify priorities;
- consider realistic improvements;
- review existing practice;
- involve children, staff and families;
- consider climate and environmental risks; and
- monitor progress over time.

Our approach will be proportionate to the size, nature and circumstances of our setting.

Our Aims

We aim to:

- reduce unnecessary waste;
- reuse and recycle wherever reasonably possible;
- encourage responsible use of water and energy;
- make thoughtful choices when purchasing resources;
- reduce unnecessary single-use items;
- support children's understanding of the natural world;
- provide opportunities for children to care for plants, wildlife and their environment;
- involve children in simple sustainable practices;
- work positively with families and our local community; and
- regularly consider how our environmental impact could be reduced.

Reducing Waste

We aim to minimise unnecessary waste wherever practicable.

This may include:

- recycling appropriate materials;
- reusing paper and craft materials where safe and suitable;
- using recyclable materials for junk modelling;
- reducing unnecessary printing;
- reusing resources;
- avoiding unnecessary single-use plastics;
- repairing resources where appropriate rather than immediately replacing them; and
- considering whether items can be reused or donated before disposal.

Children will be encouraged to participate in simple recycling and reuse activities in ways appropriate to their age.

Food and Food Waste

We aim to reduce unnecessary food waste.

Children are encouraged to develop independence around food and to take appropriate amounts where they are serving themselves.

Staff will support children positively around food without pressuring children to eat.

Our learning opportunities may help children understand:

- where food comes from;
- how plants grow;

- seasonal foods;
- reducing food waste; and
- why food and natural resources should be valued.

Families are encouraged, where practical, to use reusable lunch boxes, containers and drink bottles.

Energy

Where this is within our control, staff will aim to reduce unnecessary energy use.

This includes:

- switching off lights when they are not required;
- turning off electrical equipment when it is not in use;
- making appropriate use of natural light; and
- avoiding unnecessary use of electrical equipment.

As The Wendy House operates from **shared community premises**, some aspects of energy use and building management are outside our direct control.

Where appropriate, we will work cooperatively with those responsible for the premises regarding environmental matters.

Water

Children will be supported to understand that water is an important resource.

Age-appropriate practices may include encouraging children to:

- turn taps off after use;
- avoid unnecessarily leaving water running;
- use appropriate amounts of water during activities; and
- understand that plants, animals and people need water.

Water-saving practices will always be balanced with appropriate hygiene and infection-control requirements.

Resources and Equipment

When purchasing or replacing resources, we will consider factors such as:

- quality;
- durability;
- safety;
- value for money;
- potential for long-term use;
- whether an existing resource could be reused; and

- environmental impact where reasonably practicable.

Natural, recycled and reusable materials may be incorporated into children's play and learning where they are safe and appropriate.

We may accept donations of suitable toys, books and equipment where these meet our safety, hygiene and quality requirements.

We recognise that sustainability does **not** mean automatically replacing existing plastic resources with new alternatives. Safe and usable resources should normally continue to be used for their appropriate lifespan.

Pack-Away Preschool

As The Wendy House is a **pack-away preschool**, sustainability considerations form part of how we store, select and manage our equipment.

Where possible, we aim to:

- choose durable resources that withstand regular packing and unpacking;
- store resources carefully to extend their useful life;
- avoid unnecessary duplication;
- repair suitable resources;
- reuse storage equipment; and
- dispose of damaged or unusable resources responsibly where facilities allow.

Curriculum and Learning

Sustainability will be introduced naturally through children's everyday experiences rather than as a formal lesson.

Children may learn about the environment through:

- outdoor play;
- gardening and growing;
- observing plants and wildlife;
- exploring seasonal changes;
- caring for living things;
- recycling;
- junk modelling;
- stories and songs;
- cooking;
- conversations about food;
- nature-based activities; and

- caring for their preschool environment.

Children will be encouraged to ask questions, explore and develop curiosity about the world around them.

Outdoor Learning and Nature

Outdoor experiences provide valuable opportunities for children to develop a relationship with the natural world.

Children may be encouraged to:

- observe insects and wildlife;
- grow plants;
- explore leaves, sticks, stones and other natural materials;
- notice weather and seasonal changes;
- care for plants;
- respect living things; and
- help look after outdoor spaces.

Activities will be appropriate to children's age and development and managed safely.

This policy should be read alongside our **Outdoor Play Policy**.

Children's Involvement

Children will be encouraged to participate in sustainability in simple and meaningful ways.

For example, children may:

- help sort recyclable materials;
- turn off taps;
- help care for plants;
- reuse craft materials;
- help tidy and look after resources;
- participate in growing activities; and
- talk about how we can care for animals and the environment.

We aim to help children understand that their actions can make a positive difference without causing unnecessary worry or anxiety about environmental issues.

Working With Families

Families are encouraged to support our sustainability approach where practical.

This may include:

- using named reusable water bottles;

- using reusable lunch boxes and containers;
- reducing unnecessary disposable packaging;
- donating appropriate reusable resources;
- supporting recycling initiatives; and
- discussing nature and caring for the environment at home.

We recognise that families have different circumstances and sustainability choices will be encouraged positively rather than judged.

Working With the Community

Where appropriate, we will consider opportunities to engage with our local community through activities such as:

- recycling initiatives;
- gardening projects;
- environmental activities;
- community projects; and
- sharing or reusing appropriate resources.

As we operate from shared premises, we will work respectfully with the organisations responsible for the building and surrounding environment.

Staff Role Modelling

Staff play an important role in demonstrating positive habits.

Staff will model sustainable behaviours where appropriate, such as:

- recycling;
- reducing waste;
- caring for resources;
- turning off unnecessary lights or equipment;
- avoiding unnecessary water waste; and
- showing respect for plants, animals and the environment.

Staff will encourage children through positive example rather than expecting young children to understand complex environmental issues.

Health, Safety and Safeguarding

Sustainability will never take priority over children's health, safety or safeguarding.

For example:

- resources must be safe and suitable before being reused;
- hygiene and infection-control requirements must be maintained;

- food-safety requirements must be followed;
- damaged equipment will not be retained simply to avoid waste; and
- children's individual medical, SEND and dietary needs will continue to be met.

Monitoring and Review

The Sustainability Lead and Manager will monitor our approach and consider opportunities for improvement.

Our **Climate Action Plan** will be reviewed and developed as appropriate.

Children, staff and families may be involved in identifying ideas and improvements.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where relevant guidance, our Climate Action Plan, premises arrangements or the needs of the setting change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027