ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

The Department for Education (DfE) strategy stated 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 Stepping Stones these pillars inform our activities in terms of:

Decarbonisation: Our activities to reduce plastic use Our activities to reduce utility usage Encouraging sustainable transport to and from the provision	**Biodiversity:** Fostering children's empathy with nature through exploration Engaging with flora and fauna in Forest school and raised beds in the garden, outings to local community spaces
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

Stepping Stones actively promotes environmental sustainability.

Our eco-sustainability lead who is the Climate Champion for our setting is: Millie Watson & Hannah Campbell.

Changing perspectives – at Stepping Stones 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 Stepping Stones 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 Stepping Stones we support children to learn about sustainability - to respect and care for both the living and non-living environment.

Children have the opportunity at Stepping Stones to learn about and understand sustainability and environmental issues. They will observe adults modelling 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 in lunch boxes, sharing 'Green tips' with parents on tapestry and notice boards to bridge sustainable habits between nursery and home.
- Only use plastic free baby wipes.
- 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/ loose parts.

Cutting down on waste by reducing, reusing and recycling:

- Introduce recycling bins - following the local recycling scheme guidance.
- Using some recycling for Junk modelling with children.
- Reduce the amount of paper printing- using Tapestry and Showcase computer systems for parent communication, invoicing and learning journeys.
- Ensure printer and toner cartridges are recycled.
- Recycle any electronic equipment – where possible using an environmentally friendly disposal scheme.
- We offer donated second-hand uniform to new families with no charge to parents.
- Encourage families to donate pre-loved clothes, books and toys to charity shops, refugee support groups or take part in our swap shop that is held annually.
- 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, water trays not filled to the top.

- Recycle water from water play by using it to water plants and from our Water butt in the garden.
- Ensure that lights are switched off when not in the room or not switched on in well-lit rooms.
- Use energy saving wash cycles when using the washing machine.
- Minimise the use of tumble driers by hanging washing on clothes horses or outside to dry.
- Using Eco friendly cleaning products where possible (add in?)

Minimising food waste:

- We have signed up to a supermarket food share scheme for families- regularly delivery bread, fruit and vegetables that families can help themselves to.
- 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.
- Food waste is part of our recycling scheme.

Caring for the world we live in:

- We help children to explore nature through art and play, this is embedded into our curriculum, celebrating Earth Day, weekly Forest school sessions, life cycles, growing plants and recycling activities.
- 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 through Forest school sessions.
- Use natural resources
- 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.

Staff training:

- Staff will complete the sustainability and climate change training on the setting training portal The Learning tree.
- The settings sustainability lead will ensure all updates are fed back to the staff team and any action required are carried out.
- Induction: New team members are introduced to our daily eco-routines (such as waste sorting and energy management) during their induction period.

Aspirations for the Future

- Look at procuring food locally (fruit, vegetable, meat and bread)
- Registers online
- Children grow fruit/veg for use
- A better sustainable way to wipes children faces.