

Sustainability Policy

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Date Written: August 2025

Next Review Due: August 2026

Our Values at Young Friends Kindergarten

At Young Friends, our values underpin everything we do. They guide our provision, our relationships, and our commitment to children and the planet:

- Sustainability in every aspect of our provision
 - Respect for children, families, colleagues and the world around us
 - Child-led learning through meaningful, natural, real-life experiences
 - Authenticity in relationships, resources and communication
 - Compassion for people, animals, and the environment
 - Community that nurtures wellbeing, inclusion and connection
 - Responsibility shared by every member of our team
- These values sit at the heart of this policy.

Our Sustainability Ethos

At Young Friends Kindergarten, sustainability is not a theme or display — it is embedded in how we live, learn and care for one another every single day. From the food we prepare and the materials we use, to how we speak to each other and organise our provision, our aim is to model a lifestyle that respects the earth, its people and the future.

Sustainability underpins everything: the curriculum, our environment, our leadership and the daily habits of the children and staff. We are proud to be a truly sustainable setting, always reflecting and evolving.

Our Sustainable Curriculum

Our curriculum is shaped entirely by our sustainability ethos — it is the lens through which we plan, teach, and respond to children's learning. Rather than being an "add-on", sustainability is embedded into every area of provision, from the materials we choose and the food we prepare, to the projects we run and the way we interact with each other. Children experience first-hand the principles of environmental care, resourcefulness, and respect for living things through meaningful, hands-on experiences. Daily routines, provocations, and spontaneous learning opportunities are all designed to keep children "in flow" while engaging with real-life, sustainable practices such as growing, cooking, repairing, recycling, and caring for animals. This approach ensures that sustainability is not a topic we visit occasionally, but a way of life that underpins and guides the whole curriculum at Young Friends Kindergarten.

The Three Pillars of Sustainability

Everything we do is grounded in the following:

1. Environmental Sustainability

- Caring for the planet through conscious daily actions
- Making thoughtful choices about materials, food, waste and travel
- Connecting children with the natural world as part of their identity

2. Social Sustainability

- Building a culture of fairness, respect, collaboration and belonging
- Rejecting tokenism in favour of real connection and inclusive practice
- Fostering kindness between children, staff and families through example

3. Economic Sustainability

- Teaching children to value what they have, repair and reuse
- Reducing reliance on consumerism and prioritising real experiences
- Making choices that reduce long-term cost and environmental impact

The 7 R's of Sustainability

Our daily actions are shaped by these guiding principles:

1. Rethink – Do I really need this?
2. Refuse – Say no to things that create waste or harm
3. Reduce – Use less — carefully and mindfully
4. Reuse – Find new ways to use what already exists
5. Repair – Fix before replacing — show value in care
6. Recycle – Sort, save, reuse properly
7. Rot – Return to the earth — compost everything possible

How We Support Our Team to Deliver Sustainable, Child-Led Education

Our team are facilitators of thoughtful, responsible learning. They model sustainability not just through what they do, but how they think.

- Staff always have sustainable, child-led activities in mind, ready to offer when children are not in flow
- Staff know in depth and adhere to our sustainable curriculum
- Staff talk to each other and refer to the Eco Warriors Board for inspiration if needed
- “Flow” refers to a child being deeply engaged, emotionally settled, and immersed in meaningful play or learning — with or without adult input
- We support staff in building confidence to facilitate flow, plan engaging experiences, and lead from a place of curiosity and calm
- Staff are guided to participate in all parts of the provision — no “one area” staff. All contribute to gardening, cooking, animal care, building, workshop activities, and more
- Staff who are new to this approach are encouraged to ask questions, reflect and grow. We are a learning team

Social Sustainability and Staff Role Modelling Children

learn how to treat others by what they see.

- Staff greet each other, ask how others are, and show genuine interest
- They introduce new staff to children and team members using friendly, respectful language — “This is my friend...”
- Transitions between rooms are made easier when staff show warmth and unity across the setting
- Staff are expected to contribute to a shared culture of collaboration, trust and mutual care
- These behaviours are part of every role profile and form part of our ongoing reflective supervision

Food and Growing

Food is cooked from scratch on-site using whole, fresh ingredients and harvested produce.

- We use a Thermomix for preparing meals with minimal waste

- All our oat milk is made in-house, fortified with vitamins
 - Children are involved in preparing snacks, making oat milk, and cooking
 - Children use food they have grown to prepare real meals
 - We teach about food origins, food waste, nutrition and seasonality through everyday conversations and jobs
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Kitchen Garden

Our kitchen garden is part of our daily curriculum and holds deep value in all areas of learning.

- Children plant, label, harvest, wash, prepare and taste food they grow
 - We use moon gardening and tide tracking to guide planting
 - Children learn about soil health, pollinators, and food systems
 - The kitchen garden is visited daily either by children and team or gardener and linked directly to cooking
 - Produce is used in meals and snacks, and children understand the full cycle from seed to table
 - Garden care teaches patience, collaboration, and environmental responsibility
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Woodland Workshop (Repair Area)

Our Woodland Workshop/repair area are vital parts of our sustainable model. These spaces build life skills, confidence and purpose.

- Children use real tools (with supervision) to sand, build, repair and upcycle
 - This is where books, toys and furniture are fixed with care
 - Staff and children upcycle materials into toys, birdhouses, signs and resources and more
 - Furniture is sanded and repurposed with the children rather than replaced
 - Projects often take days or weeks — teaching persistence and value
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Caring for Animals

We live alongside giant rabbits and labradors who are part of our community.

- Children help to feed, clean, brush and make toys for the animals
 - We model respect — no poking, petting, or crowding
 - Animals are not brought in from outside for “show” — we do not believe in animals as displays
 - The children sit with animals quietly, observe, and care for them as they so each other
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Waste and Resource Use

- No glitter, balloons, cling film or milk bottles are used
 - No worksheets or structured small world toys — we prioritise open-ended, natural materials
 - Shells and other natural items are left in the wild to protect habitats
 - All snacks and food waste are composted
 - Recycling systems are in place in every room and outside
 - Children are taught to repair items instead of throwing them away
 - The setting supports donation of clothes and items, and will be launching a Swap Shop based on family interest
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Toileting and Nappies

- We use only washable cloth nappies, provided and laundered in-house
- Families do not supply disposables — we do not have an offensive waste bin

- This is explained during admissions and forms part of our sustainability commitment
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Everyday Sustainable Practices

Children and staff participate in these tasks as part of normal life:

- Saving water
 - Using washable nappies
 - Using our sustainable curriculum
 - Making snacks and puddings for each other
 - De-weeding the front garden
 - Clearing debris from flower beds
 - Filling bird feeders and insect baths
 - Listening to and identifying bird songs
 - Using caddies at snack time
 - Sweeping steps
 - Clearing up after ourselves
 - Singing nature and sustainable songs
 - Labelling trees – talking about their properties and value to biodiversity
 - Making paper, candles, soap and oat milk
 - Visiting the kitchen plot and charity shops
 - Making natural gifts for people or animals
 - Sorting and folding washing
 - Helping with compost barrels
 - Creating seasonal displays with natural materials
 - Using the projector for immersive learning experiences
 - Talking about the moon, the clouds, the tide and what's growing
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Planning and Extension

- Staff plan sustainable projects every day based on children's interests and the environment
 - Activities are flexible, seasonal and evolve over time
 - We do not rely on printed resources or themed packs
 - Real-life activities and relationships are prioritised over structured "topics"
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Constant Evolution

We do not consider ourselves "finished" in our sustainability journey.

- We reflect regularly on our practices
 - We welcome feedback from staff and families
 - We are introducing a Swap Shop and continue to build partnerships with local repair and reuse services
 - Sustainability audits are ongoing and form part of supervision
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Linked Policies

- Equalities and Diversity
- Food, Nutrition and Healthy Eating
- Washable Cloth Nappies
- Health and Safety

- Risk Assessments
 - Supervision and Appraisal
 - Parent Partnership
 - Images Policy • Outdoor Trip
 - Intimate Care • Staff Conduct
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☒ **Authorisation** 

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