



Sustainability

POLICY

Rationale:

At Merri Creek Primary our school works together to understand and improve sustainability in day-to-day operations, curriculum and community. We reduce our impact on the Earth in order to produce a clean, safe and healthy environment and preserve resources for future generations.

Aims:

- To develop an environmentally conscious culture at Merri Creek Primary and in its community.
- To minimise landfill **waste** and increase the percentage of material that is reused, recycled and composted.
- To reduce the amount of purchased **energy** through the use of solar panels, as well as smarter practices and greater efficiency appliances.
- To increase the **biodiversity** and habitat quality of the school grounds by planting indigenous species and increasing the habitat area for local wildlife.
- To minimise the consumption of mains **water** through the improvement of plumbing systems and water conservation programs.
- To continue '**green purchasing**' procedures to reduce environmental impacts and educate our community on making environmentally friendly choices for life.

Implementation:

- Our school will engage in **daily sustainable practices** that incorporate environmentally-friendly behaviours by utilising systems ie. Recycle bins, half flush toilets, composting, reusing paper, active travel to school.
- Our school will lead the **community** by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.
- Teachers will use AusVELS* to develop programs and integrate environmental education into the broad curriculum.
- Our school will implement a hands-on approach to education for sustainability through the curriculum at each year level and whole school events. Student learning will focus on taking action within the school and wider community.
- Access specialist knowledge in the community including City West Water, CERES, City of Yarra, Friends of Merri Creek, Merri Creek Management Committee and the Werribee Water Treatment Plant.
- Actively participate in community projects, such as: lobbying to remove pollutants from the local wetland, flora regeneration around the Merri Creek, rubbish free environments etc. and the sharing of information with the wider community in a variety of methods.
- Our school will support an active sustainability coordination team that involves School Council, staff, students, parents and other members of our school and local community.
- Maintain adequate bike sheds and racks to support and promote active travel to school.

WASTE

- Include the whole school community in the process of developing a 'Waste Wise' school through the principles of Rethink/Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

- Minimise landfill waste and maximise recycling and composting (e.g. rubbish free lunches, recycling bins, compost buckets and worm farms).
- Maintain litter-free school grounds.
- Promote compartmentalised lunch boxes to all students and to encourage all waste and uneaten food be taken home, however where food scraps are left at school compost bins and worm farms will be available rather than putting the food into land fill.
- Promote sustainable practices and provide information on school initiatives to parents at Foundation orientation and on the school website.
- Incorporate strategies to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost in everyday activities and whole school events
- Include waste minimisation and litter reduction in relevant areas of the school curriculum.
- Purchase recycled and reusable products and other products that help reduce waste where possible.
- Encourage students to bring a reusable water bottle to school.
- Site bins for landfill, recycling and soft plastic in shared areas within the school and in playground spaces for student use.
- Locate paper recycling bins in every classroom, staffroom and administration office.
- Yarra Council collects our recycling bin fortnightly.
- Project RED** soft plastic collection when required.
- Lost clothing collected for recycling each term (Diabetes Australia)
- General waste bin (smaller size) and paper recycling bin emptied weekly.

ENERGY

- Include the whole school community in the process of developing an 'Energy Efficient' school.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Choose the most appropriate energy saving methods available.
- Maintain sustainable transport program and practises.
- Increase the use and efficiency of carbon neutral energy sources, including maintenance of existing solar panels – 16 KW system.

BIODIVERSITY

- Encourage an appreciation of the natural environment through learning experiences e.g. curriculum, excursions and school camps.
- Enhance and maintain our vegetable boxes and raised garden beds and connected learning program.
- Continue to increase biodiversity in the school yard in order to support indigenous plants and animals.
- Maintain and increase rainwater gardens.
- Make planting choices based on plants that are indigenous to the local area and Merri Creek.
- Continue participation in programs delivered by Merri Creek Management Committee including Biodiversity and Waterwatch.

WATER

- Actively promote the appreciation of water as a precious natural resource.
- Involve the whole school community in the planning of water conservation and storm water quality initiatives.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Choose the most effective means of conserving water.
- Collect and use grey water for garden beds.
- Purchase WELS 4.5 star rated appliances when replacing items.
- Water tanks from main school roof - reticulation to the elm trees and taps for manual watering

GREEN PURCHASING

- Purchase environmentally-friendly paper for printers and photocopiers.

- Use more environmentally friendly products in classrooms, administration area and for all activities run by the school (such as school fete, Outside School Hours Care program and when organising incursions/excursions).
- Encourage teachers to consider purchasing from a nominated 'Eco Catalogue' when ordering classroom supplies.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- Encourage the use of active travel and public transport options for students and staff through participation in active travel programs and promotions such as Bicycle Network's Ride2School and VicHealth's Walk to School Month

Targets:

	Current Performance 2014	Target Performance 2015	Target Performance 2016	Target % Reduction
Electricity kWh/m ² /annum				
Gas kWh/m ² /annum				
Water m ³ /pupil/annum				
Waste m ³ /pupil/annum				
				Target % Increase
Active Travel active travellers pupils/surveyed pop/annum	73%	80% <small>Highest rate of active travel achieved since data recording started 2007 = 77%</small>	88%	10%

School Population: 2010 – 308, 2012 – 328, 2014 – 377, 2015 – 400 students

Forecasts are for an enrolment of 420 students.

The 2 water tanks have a combined 10,000 litre capacity and irrigate the 12 or so elms trees in the playground. Trees are irrigated by mains water when tanks are empty.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of Merri Creek Primary's 4 year review cycle (2019).
- The Annual Program Budget review will provide recommendations, which may be used to affect policy change in future.
- Staff and community feedback will be sought to review the policy.
- The School Council and Sustainability Program Coordinators will review whether the school is reaching its environment targets, as outlined in 'Goals', on a yearly basis.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

July 2015

*Australian Victorian Essential Learning Standards

**Red Group Soft Plastic Recycling <<http://redgroup.net.au>>