

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is everything that we need for our survival and well-being. Everything humans need, either directly or indirectly comes from the natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions by which humans and nature can exist in harmony and continue to provide for present and future generations. Sustainability is important so that we will continue to have, the water, materials and resources to protect human health and our environment. Sustainability is the responsibility of every individual, every day. It is about changing our behaviour and thinking to reduce power and water consumption and helping to control emissions and pollution levels.

What actions can we take at school?

- Strive to be chemical free – schools are home to a large number of chemical substances, from pesticides and harsh cleaning chemicals to contaminated building materials. A huge step in promoting sustainability and improving environmental health at school, is eliminating or reducing these toxic substances by introducing greener cleaning methods.
- Use resources sustainably - Schools spend large amounts of money on heating, cooling and lighting. A simple solution is to turn off things such as air-conditioning and lights when they are not needed. Recycling can significantly reduce the amount of resources that schools consume. The reuse of paper, books and other school supplies saves money and is good for the environment. Having separate bins to recycle paper is essential and food scraps can be used to create compost for gardens. This also reduces the amount of waste created and the cost of waste removal. These simple changes protect the environment and can result in major cost savings for schools.
- Create a Green and Healthy Space - Replacing junk food with fresh, healthy food has been shown to promote learning about sustainability, as well as promoting healthy eating. Creating school gardens can teach valuable lessons about food systems and sustaining the environment.

What actions can we take at home?

- Reduce your energy use - an energy efficient home begins with its occupants. Changing your behaviour inside the home, is the most important first step to reducing energy and water use and therefore your

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cost of living! How you operate your electrical items including your hot water, heating and cooling systems, lighting, appliances, pool pump or spa will have an impact on how much or how little energy you consume.

- Lower water use inside and outside of the home - there are many ways to save water in and around our homes. Taking shorter showers, using more water efficient appliances, choosing low flow shower heads and setting our watering systems to allocated watering days, are just a few of the many ways to save water and money.

- Find ways to reduce, reuse and recycle:

Reduce - To generate less waste by using only products you need and in amounts that you need it – reducing your consumption is key to minimising waste.

Reuse - To re-use a product or item at home, without the need for re-processing or making something new from raw materials.

Recycle - This is simply the process whereby an old, used product is broken down and re-made into a new product. You can do your part by recycling items wherever possible.

What actions can we take in our communities?

Sustainable communities generally strive to minimise waste, reduce consumption and preserve open space. Ideally, they don't use resources faster than they can be replenished, and they don't produce waste faster than it can be absorbed back into the environment.

The basic principles of sustainable communities are:

- Designing neighbourhoods to encourage walking or cycling. Less driving means less fuel consumption and reduced emissions
- Designing buildings to take advantage of the sun's lighting and heating capabilities and install energy-efficient appliances
- Promote green gardening methods and plant native, drought-tolerant plants and trees, organically, without the use of chemicals
- Set aside significant portions of land as open space and natural conservation areas
- Recycle waste products such as rainwater and sewage. Sewage, for example, can be turned into compost that fertilises plants, while captured rainwater can be reused for watering plants



Create a poster promoting sustainability action in your school.

