

Innsworth Preschool Environmental Sustainability Policy

Last Updated: 1st January 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Overview: At Innsworth Preschool, we are committed to reducing our environmental impact and helping children develop a lifelong understanding and respect for the natural world.

1.2 Commitment: Sustainability is not a standalone activity; it is embedded into our daily routines, curriculum, and ethos. This policy outlines how we meet this responsibility in line with all statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy distinguishes between our mandatory legal duties and our voluntary strategic goals. We comply with the following legislation:

- The Environmental Protection Act 1990: Specifically, Section 34 (Duty of Care) regarding the safe management and disposal of waste.
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011: Ensuring correct waste transfer documentation and use of registered carriers.
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Supporting our duties on health and safety, risk assessment, and maintaining a safe environment, alongside the educational programme for 'Understanding the World'.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Our duty to ensure a safe working environment.
- The Equality Act 2010: We avoid making non-safety-critical sustainability choices a condition of attendance. Where an item is required for health, safety, or hygiene, this is managed under the relevant policy and risk assessment.

2.2 Strategic Context: We also align our practice voluntarily with relevant principles from the **DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022–2030)**, adopting best practice for education and operations where appropriate for our setting.

3. Operational Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

3.1 Building and Resource Use: Our preschool building prioritises natural materials. We use energy-efficient LED lighting throughout the setting to reduce electricity consumption and our environmental footprint.

3.2 Staff Operational Responsibility (Energy vs. Ventilation): Sustainability contributes to the financial viability of the setting, which protects resources for the children. All staff have a responsibility to actively conserve energy (e.g. turning off lights in unused rooms).

- **Ventilation Balance:** While staff should ensure doors and windows are closed to retain heat where possible, this must never compromise **statutory ventilation requirements**.
- **Priority:** Fresh air flow to mitigate respiratory and gastrointestinal infections always takes precedence over heat retention, as detailed in our **Illness and Infection Control Policy**.

3.3 Cleaning and Consumables: We avoid unnecessary printing, limit the use of disposable products, and source long-lasting or recycled materials wherever possible.

- **Standard Cleaning:** Appropriate cleaning products selected for effectiveness and suitability are used for daily cleaning across the setting.
- **COSHH Compliance:** All cleaning products are risk-assessed and managed in strict accordance with our COSHH Policy.
- **Infection Control Override:** In the event of an outbreak (e.g. Norovirus), or where specific infection control risks are identified, staff will switch immediately to **hospital-grade cleaning agents** (such as chlorine-based disinfectants) as required by UKHSA guidance, regardless of environmental impact. Safety comes first.

4. Waste Reduction and Hygiene

4.1 General Waste: We recycle paper, cardboard, plastics, and packaging, and involve the children in sorting materials to teach them the importance of this process.

4.2 Nappy and Hygiene Waste (Partnership Approach): We recognise that hygiene waste constitutes a significant waste stream.

- **Choice:** We actively encourage families to choose biodegradable or eco-friendly wipes and nappies where their budget allows.
- **Disposal:** All hygiene waste is collected and disposed of by **registered carriers**. We maintain waste transfer records as required by our duty of care.
- **Reusable Nappies (Infection Control Protocol):** We support the use of reusable nappies. However, to prevent cross-contamination and maintain hygiene standards, **soiled reusable nappies are never rinsed on-site**. They are bagged immediately in the parent-provided wet bag and sealed for collection.

4.3 Food Waste: Suitable food waste (primarily raw fruit and vegetable scraps from snack times) is composted on-site.

- **Hygiene Control:** Composting facilities are located away from food preparation areas. To reduce odour, pests, and hygiene risks, cooked food or animal by-products are excluded in line with our site hygiene risk assessment.
- **Educational Value:** The resulting compost is used to enrich the soil in our growing planters.

5. Sustainability in the Curriculum

5.1 Understanding the World: Our commitment to sustainability is a fundamental part of our educational programme.

- **Farm School:** Through our dedicated growing areas and Farm School, children learn about growth, decay, and seasonal change.
- **Respect for Habitats:** Activities are risk-assessed to ensure children respect wildlife and habitats and to prevent disturbance to wildlife zones.

5.2 Community and Planet: We use stories and group projects to teach children about caring for their environment. By involving them in sorting recycling and composting, we teach them that their actions have an impact.

5.3 Modelling: Staff consistently model sustainable practices, such as conserving water or using recycled materials for art (junk modelling).

6. Family and Community Involvement

6.1 Partnership: We believe families are vital partners. We encourage families to support our ethos by using reusable containers and returning borrowed items promptly.

6.2 Donations and "Junk Modelling" Safety: We welcome contributions of recycled materials (e.g. cardboard boxes, tubes) for our creative stations. However, to maintain health and safety standards:

- **Condition:** All donated materials must be **clean, dry, and safe** (free from food residue, sharp edges, or chemical traces).
- **Fire Load:** Donations must be handed to staff and processed promptly. They must never be piled in corridors or escape routes where they could increase the building's fire load, in strict adherence to our Fire Safety Policy.
- **Refusal:** We reserve the right to refuse dirty or unsafe items, as we do not have the facilities to wash or dispose of bulk household waste.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 Leadership: The designated **Sustainability Lead** for Innsworth Preschool is the Business Manager. They are responsible for overseeing environmental systems and maintaining the setting's **Climate Action Plan (CAP)**.

- **Status:** The CAP is an internal working document used to guide our improvements and is not a contractual commitment. It is updated as actions are completed.

7.2 Review: This policy is reviewed at least every two years, or earlier following any significant operational change or changes in government guidance.

