Sustainability Policy

PURPOSE

- To provide an overarching philosophy that will support Auburn South Primary School (ASPS) to become a more environmentally sustainable school;
- To create awareness of sustainable practices by educating and motivating the whole school community to live more sustainably;
- To instill a sense of ownership and pride within the school community regarding the improvement of our environment.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how ASPS aims to become a more environmentally sustainable school through a number of initiatives led by the Sustainability Working Party, the Student Green Team and the Parent Green Team.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The Sustainability Working Party, that is lead by the Sustainability Coordinator and includes Staff, School Council members, Student Green Team members and Parent Green Team members, will be responsible for:
    - Supporting and expanding the sustainability aspects of the school's Program of Inquiry;
    - Overseeing the Sustainability Victoria's ResourceSmart Schools program;
    - Setting priorities and plans for implementation;
    - Developing and embedding sustainable practices and routines;
    - Embracing new and proven knowledge, skills and technologies; and
    - Looking for opportunities for grants and submitting applications.

- The Student Green Team will be responsible for:
    - Student representation and student voice
    - Promoting sustainability through assembly, newsletters and events;
    - Assisting in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG); and
    - Supporting the Nude Food initiative.

- The Parent Green Team invites parents with environmental enthusiasm and expertise to:
    - Help maintain and improve the school's environmental performance through researching and implementing projects and initiatives that reduce energy, water, waste and improve biodiversity and active travel;
    - Support the school's participation in ResourceSmart Schools program; and
    - Support the School Operations Manager and School Council activities in the pursuit of sustainability initiatives.

INITIATIVES

Curriculum

The school's Program of Inquiry incorporates sustainability aspects in many of the Units of Inquiry (UOI). The school will:

- Continue to enhance the sustainability learning opportunities within the UOIs; and
- Incorporate the ResourceSmart School program's actions within the UOIs, where appropriate.

ResourceSmart Schools Program

The school has participated in the ResourceSmart School program since 2014. The school will:

- Continue to work towards obtaining all 5 stars.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

The school consumes electricity and natural gas for heating, cooling, lighting, technology equipment and catering

equipment. The school has a 50kW solar electricity system (installed in May 2021). The school will:

- **Improve energy efficiency by:**
  - Setting the heating temperature to 18-20 degrees and the cooling temperature to 24-26 degrees and consider installing separate room thermometers to check temperatures;
  - Utilising natural lighting when possible;
  - Switching off lights, air conditioners, heaters and technology equipment when not in use;
  - Balancing opening of doors and windows for fresh air flow with closing of doors and windows to retain heating and cooling;
  - Upgrading to more sustainable options, such as LED lights and more efficient air conditioners;
  - Improving solar shading, natural light provision and buildings' thermal performance; and
  - Optimising electricity and natural gas supply contracts (where possible).

- **Optimise renewable energy use by:**
  - Utilising the onsite solar electricity generation information within the curriculum;
  - Maximising use of solar electricity e.g. charging equipment during lunch time and avoiding early mornings; and
  - Considering solar panels for SAKG.

Water Efficiency and Rainwater

The school uses water for toilet flushing, hand washing, cleaning, cooking, drinking and irrigation. There is rainwater collection and storage for irrigation use. The school will:

- **Improve water efficiency by:**
  - Repairing leaking taps and toilets;
  - Managing irrigation; and
  - Installing water efficient taps and toilets.

- **Optimise rainwater use by:**
  - Maintaining the current systems; and
  - Considering installing additional systems for toilet flushing and irrigation.

Resource Use

- **Reduce resource use by:**
  - Using digital communication and payment systems to minimise printed notices;
  - Using double sided printing where appropriate;
  - Avoiding laminating and cable-tying short life cycle items such as event posters - use the noticeboards instead;
  - Placing unwanted/excess teaching resources in 'Resource Redistribution' for other staff to use;
  - Checking storage areas before ordering new resources and furniture;
  - Donating or recycling unwanted furniture, teaching resources and event leftovers;
  - Maintaining the lost property system; and
  - Continuing the second hand uniform shop.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

The school generates waste from learning activities, food consumption, administration activities, resources, canteen, SAKG, hygiene and events. There is a four bin system in place: onsite composting, mixed recycling, soft plastics recycling and landfill. There are also paper reuse bins and specialised recycling bins for pens, batteries, etc. The school will:

- **Optimise bins by:**
  - Improving bin labels and optimising bin locations (e.g. external compost and soft plastics bins);
  - Conducting regular awareness campaigns to encourage correct bin usage; and
  - Optimising landfill and recycling service contracts.

- **Support Nude Food by:**
  - Encouraging students to bring nude food for snack and lunch (no wrappers); and
  - Providing time to eat in the classroom so that reusable containers can be placed back in school bags.

- **Reduce canteen waste by:**
    - Continuing to reduce the use of single use packaging items including cutlery;
    - Choosing single-use items that are recyclable/compostable within the current bin system;
    - If commercially compostable single-use items are implemented, add another bin type and establish a service contract;
    - Considering changes to the menu to minimise packaging, improve recycling and support local food;
    - Considering use of classroom cutlery and condiments; and
    - Considering a canteen bin zone to minimise rubbish in the schoolyard.

- **Support onsite composting of organic food waste at SAKG by:**
    - Continuing student participation in compost bin emptying and compost use at SAKG; and
    - Providing compost caddies with lids to all areas of the school, that are emptied regularly and washed periodically.

- **Maximise recycling by:**
    - Encouraging use of scrap paper bins for paper than can be reused and for paper needs for learning activities;
    - Maintaining student participation in recycling bin emptying roster;
    - Utilising supermarket delivery service for recycling soft plastics;
    - Considering additional recycling streams; and
    - Investigate textile recycling for unwearable secondhand uniforms.

Incursions, Excursions and Camps and Student and PA Events

- **Run greener incursions, excursions and camps by:**
    - Including sustainability in the risk assessment process e.g.
        - Considering waste avoidance and recycling/composting provisions;
        - Choosing active travel and public transport options;
        - Engaging with incursion providers on reducing consumables and handouts; and
        - Engaging with excursion and camp providers on their sustainability practices.

- **Run greener events by:**
    - Encouraging event organisers to consider sustainability issues at the planning stage;
    - Using the existing reusable catering items;
    - Avoiding non-recyclable/non-reusable packaging, decorating and catering items;
    - Ensuring bins are available and well labelled and
    - For Parent Association (PA) led events, using the Greener Events Checklist.

Green Purchasing

- **Make greener purchasing choices by:**
    - Considering if purchases are really necessary, or if alternatives can be used instead;
    - Auditing supplies and checking with other teams before purchasing, especially for the new year orders;
    - Purchasing 100% recycled, carbon neutral, Australian made paper for printers and photocopiers;
    - Minimising non-recyclable office items such as sticky tape, staples, paper clips, etc;
    - Purchasing equipment and resources that are second-hand, locally made or made from recycled materials; and
    - Choosing greener art supplies.

Biodiversity

- **Increase biodiversity by:**
    - Tree planting including replacement of trees that have been removed;
    - Providing more natural habitat areas – insect hotels, bird garden, bird baths, frog bog, logs and rocks;
    - Expanding the indigenous garden near Tooronga Road playground - including educational signage;
    - Revitalising indigenous ecological remnants in the Flowering Grasslands eco-space on the Burgess St side at the front of the school - a no-mow zone, with careful weeding of invasive species and additional plantings;
    - Establishing a Flowering Grasslands planter in the Kitchen Garden area - to encourage beneficial insects, connect with the indigenous aspect of the area, highlight seasonality of the natural grasslands;
    - Expanding the bush foods garden at the Community Garden near the cottage and to diversify the herbs and plants currently planted;
    - Additional work on the Habitat Garden down by the water tank - a haven for local habitat including the

masked lapwing and chicks; and
    - Building an accessible sensory garden with herbs.

Active Travel

Most students are driven to and from school which increases local traffic, carbon emissions and air pollution and reduces the opportunity for physical activity, independence and road safety experience. The school will:

- **Encourage active travel by:**
    - Participating in programs encouraging active travel (Walk to School and Ride to School);
    - Providing adequate scooter and bike storage; and
    - Engaging with Boroondara Council on active safe travel to include crossing supervisors.

School and Wider Community Engagement

- **Engage with the ASPS and wider community by:**
    - Students and teachers attending and contributing to external environmental events;
    - Inviting parents with expertise to help maintain and improve the school environment;
    - Encouraging community participation in school environmental projects;
    - Engaging the community at the fair, SAKG excess produce sales, parent & community workshops, etc.

- **Raise awareness through:**
    - Actions initiated from UOIs
    - School website;
    - School newsletter 'Sustainability' section;
    - Environmental education publications such as Eigana;
    - Participating in sustainability related newsletters, competitions and opportunities such as the Boroondara Sustainability Leadership Summit;
    - Local newspaper; and
    - CERES Sustainability Hub etc.

FURTHER INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND APPENDICES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following resources:

- The School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) 2020 - 2023 comprising the following documents, along with the Sustainability policy:
    - Education for Sustainability Vision;
    - Green Procurement Policy;
    - Sustainability Action Plan; and
    - Curriculum Review.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle or before, as appropriate. Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed and/or shared with stakeholders (students, staff, parents/carers and school council).

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was ratified by the Principal in March 2022 and is scheduled for review in 2025.