

January 2020

Dear Parents

As a childcare social enterprise, we have a duty to tread lightly on the planet as part of our triple bottom-line: economic, social and environmental. We want to do what we can to improve our sustainability including trying hard to reduce our carbon footprint.

To this end, we have started a full review of our carbon emissions and developed the ‘Green LEYF’ approach. This is a system designed to raise awareness of sustainable business practices, processes and activities as well as supporting the children, the staff and parents to become change champions. Once we have tested this within LEYF, we hope to convert it into an accreditation scheme for other nurseries. From our initial research, we have found that while sustainability is a much discussed concept many people don’t really understand what it means to them in the Early Years sector. They are willing to do their bit but don’t know where or how to begin. We also found that sustainability is often limited to recycling which resonated with us.

We have therefore framed our approach around the following seven criteria:

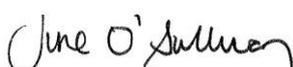
	Criteria	Examples of this
1	Reduce	Decrease consumption of food, materials and resources
2	Reuse	Use materials many times and for different purposes
3	Repair	Fix things rather than discarding them
4	Recycle	Be aware of alternatives to discarding rubbish
5	Respect	Nurturing an understanding of and reverence of nature and natural processes and reducing the extent to which these are violated; showing consideration for nature and each other
6	Reflect	The habit/skill of being thoughtful, asking questions and wondering about experiences
7	Responsibility	Being trusted to take care of something or to do something worthwhile

We have begun the process in LEYF by drafting a plan which will include a full carbon footprint audit. Our second step has been to ban all single-use plastic. This is most dramatically evident in that we no longer use plastic aprons, plastic gloves and plastic shoe covers. Outdoor shoes will need to be removed or there will be slippers available when walking into the baby rooms. Staff will use washable aprons as we did for many years before the habit of plastic aprons took hold. We cannot ban gloves entirely but will severely limit their use to very specific situations, for example, where staff members must change very messy nappies or where there is a risk of cross-infection. When deciding on this course of action, we checked various medical sources and found consistent evidence that washing hands was a much cleaner way of managing infection risk than relying on gloves. We are testing a protective handwash that was made for nurses who wash their hands a lot during the day in some nurseries.

I was, as ever, buoyed by the responses from staff who wanted to take action that would have a positive impact. They recognised that some of our actions, however unconscious, are creating situations which may be damaging to our smallest children’s futures.

I hope that you will partner us with this initiative and support our continuing approach to making the organisation more sustainable at every level of the business.

Best Wishes



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