**Policy Statement**

At Monkey Puzzle, we are committed to embedding sustainability into our daily practice, routines, curriculum and wider nursery culture. We recognise that as early years educators, we have a responsibility to teach children the importance of caring for the environment and to model sustainable behaviours. By making small, mindful changes and working in partnership with families and our community, we aim to make a meaningful impact for current and future generations.

**Aims and Objectives**

* To create a more sustainable early years setting by reducing waste, conserving energy, and using environmentally friendly resources.
* To involve children, families, staff, and the wider community in making sustainable choices.
* To support children in developing an appreciation and respect for the natural world.
* To work in partnership with families and the local community to promote shared responsibility for sustainability.

**Our Approach to Sustainability Environmentally Friendly Resources**

* We do not use microplastics or non-biodegradable glitter, and we are working toward phasing out all polystyrene and other non-biodegradable materials in arts, crafts, and daily provision.
* Wherever possible, we use natural, recyclable, or reusable materials such as cardboard, fabric, wooden toys, and found natural objects like pinecones or leaves.
* We support loose parts play with repurposed materials (e.g. bottle tops, corks, buttons, wooden offcuts) donated by families or local businesses.
* Where plastic items are still in use, we aim to reuse them responsibly and for as long as possible, before recycling or replacing with sustainable alternatives.

**Reducing Waste**

* We minimise the use of single-use plastics and encourage the use of reusable containers for art supplies and storage.
* Paper is reused where possible before recycling; children are encouraged to use both sides for mark-making and drawing.
* Food waste is reduced through careful portion control and composting where facilities allow.

**Responsibility for checking**

Once the food is prepared the chef must sign off the daily dietary form. Then the manager, deputy manager or appointed senior member of the team will check the food and sign it off as ‘supervisor’. Next a suitably trained member of staff within the room must check the food and sign off for the final time. This is to further enhance the steps of the procedure.

Once a child with an allergy has been served their food, they must continue to be supervised throughout the mealtime by a suitably qualified member of staff.

**Waste and Energy Conservation**

* Where auto cut off taps are not in place in the settings, children are encouraged to turn off taps after handwashing and help save water during water play.
* Where available, we use rainwater collected in water butts for outdoor play and gardening.
* Staff ensure that lights, heaters, and electronic devices are turned off when not in use.

**Gardening and Outdoor Learning**

* We involve children in planting and growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs that can be used in the nursery kitchen.
* Children learn about composting and the lifecycle of plants through hands-on experiences.
* We promote biodiversity by creating bug hotels, bird feeders, and wildflower areas.
* We encourage our families to take part in growing activities at home.

**Echo-Friendly Cleaning and Hygiene**

* Where possible, we use eco-friendly cleaning products and encourage reusable cloths rather than disposable wipes or paper towels.
* Nappy changing areas are supplied with biodegradable nappy bags and wipes and reusable cloths where practical.

**Supporting the Local Community**

* We partner with local food banks, charities, and community gardens to donate unused items or resources.
* We welcome **donations of materials** from parents and local businesses (e.g. cardboard tubes, packaging, fabric scraps).
* We promote initiatives such as clothing and toy swaps, encouraging families to reuse and recycle children’s items rather than dispose of them

**Involving Families in Sustainability**

* We believe that sustainability is a shared responsibility and encourage families to get involved by:
* Using **reusable containers** for packed lunches and snacks (if they have opted out of the consumable charge).
* Donating unwanted household items (jars, tins, fabric, etc.) for nursery use.
* Walking or biking to nursery where possible to reduce emissions.
* Supporting home gardening with children and sharing photos or stories with the setting.
* Participating in possible **“Green Projects”** such as home growing or **recycling challenges** throughout the year.
* Share their own eco-initiatives and home activities to inspire others in the nursery community.

**Teaching Children About Sustainability**

Children learn about sustainability in a way that is engaging, age-appropriate, and hands-on. Through stories, play, and real experiences, children are supported to:

* Respect nature and care for living things.
* Understand where food comes from and the importance of reducing food waste.
* Explore the concepts of reuse, recycling, and conscious choices.
* Recognise pollution and waste, and how small actions can create big changes for the planet.
* Explore the impact of pollution and how small changes can help protect the planet.

**Monitoring and Review**

The management team and the designated sustainability coordinator (where applicable) will:

* Regularly monitor and review sustainability practices and update staff.
* Celebrate achievements and share progress with parents and the wider community.
* Involve children in setting sustainable goals for the nursery (e.g. reduce plastic, plant more, recycle better).
* Ensure that all rooms have a recycling bin in place and children are encouraged to use it.