SANDCASTLES POLICY

*Business Policies, Procedures & Practices*

SUSTAINABLE & ETHICAL BUSINESS

***Sustainability education*** *(ES),* ***Education for Sustainability*** *(EfS), and* ***Education for Sustainable Development*** *(ESD) are interchangeable terms describing the practice of teaching for* [*sustainability*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability)*. ESD is the term most used internationally level and by the United Nations.*[*[1]*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_for_Sustainable_Development#cite_note-0)[*Agenda 21*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda_21) *was the first international document that identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted areas of action for education.*

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| **Social Stability** | **Economic Stability** | **Environmental Stability** |
| **Community & charity support / investment** – during previous years we have supported our local community by hosting a charity face-painting stall at ‘Bare Festival’, a Children in Need Children’s cake, elf run raising money for St John’s hospice, operation Christmas child gift boxes and collections for our local food bank. We staffed St Christopher’s playgroup for two terms when it was faced with closure and are proud to see it continuing into it’s 3rd decade. We visit elderly residents in local care homes and also chat to our neighbours from our garden. Sandcastles also sponsors any staff taking part in fundraising activities. Throughout the year we offer children and families opportunities to relate to and consider others. We cross promote clubs and services which our families recommend or deliver – baby massage / dancing etc. We also promote local free family events using our Facebook and tapestry network. We invite families to join us and introduce the children to any hobby / special skills / career they have which our children might find interesting. Along with our policy of not charging NCS fees to families in receipt of 2 year funding nor EYPP we also sponsor two ‘Sandcastles Scholarship’ placements each year enabling children from families who do not qualify for EYPP support to attend Sandcastles without incurring NCS charges. | | **Travel policy CO2 targets** – We enable families to leave their cars at home by ensuring our session times are staggered from local schools making it possible to walk between nursery and their choice of four local schools. We avoid congestion with staggered starts and our newly refurbished 7 space drop off loop. We house folded prams dry in our garage. |
| **Consider supplier ethics and practices –** where economical we buy ethically produced, local, fair trade products and services – coffee, milk & building work. We buy Bare village butchers sausages, Stephenson’s organic milk and Susan’s pies lasagne & pies. We visit the Kendal scrap store to find resources and maximise our drive to reuse and recycle. We are in the process of refurbishing our building using environmentally responsible materials – permeable tarmac, LED lighting, encapsulating stained glass windows. We continue to work towards becoming paperless with a think before you print attitude. |
| **Food security** – we involve children in menu planning, snack making and putting deliveries away. We introduce children to where food comes from looking at our apple tree and the crops we grow (or try to grow) each year. We use seeds from recognisable foods to help children understand that seeds come from plants not packets. During beach school sessions we taste shrimps and mussels, fish & samphire. | **Energy efficiency** – our building is well insulated. New energy efficient boiler installed and relocated (2011) to reduce heat wastage. Children and staff are encouraged to think before turning on lights and heating. Curtains were removed from playrooms to reduce need for artificial lighting. LED lighting is being installed as rooms are refurbished. | |
| **Care of resources -** Our daily ethos encourages children and families to “look after Sandcastles and everything around here”. We help children to understand that resources are precious and talk about broken items to make them aware of our wait for replacements – e.g. when our computer hard drive broke (playdough in disk drive – not actually malicious) we made an ‘out of order’ sign and talked lots about what activities we were missing whilst waiting for the engineer & subsequent replacement. | |
| **Motivation – Vision**  **Day to Day Ethical Business**  The Early Years environment offers a fabulous opportunity to support, guide, influence and witness the future. We work in this sector because we are value children and their families. Those same children and their families make up our local community. We are highly trusted by our community and recognise the potential (at times pressure) associated with our position. Our team all live locally. We eagerly listen out for progress reports and achievements of previous Sandcastles children.  Maintaining a balance between financial sustainability and our conscience can be challenging, if Sandcastles falters we forfeit the ability to support our community.  ***Congruence****: Making sure all marketing activities are in alignment with our purpose and values.*  ***Cooperation (with families and children in meeting their needs):*** *Finding ways to establish and maintain on-going relationships.*  ***Co-creation (synergy with…):*** *Co-creating with our families (using ideas that we generate together) or with other associates.*  ***Communication:*** *This is where trust is fostered. It’s about communicating in as close a way with our families, community, associates or colleagues as we can. This needs to be balanced, appropriate and focused, a mix of, face to face interactions, telephone conversations, email, newsletters, and website contact. Inviting a 2-way exchange, wherever possible*. | **Water efficiency** – we have a water meter and monitor use regularly, we collect rain water in 2 water butts to supply outdoor water play and talk with children about the water cycle. Our toilets are fitted with low volume flushes & our adult toilet reuses hand wash water to fill the cistern and flush the loo. We maintain our taps to avoid drips. | |
| We work to balance **business sustainability** with **affordability** by offering a range of attendance options. Local price surveys August 2016 & 2018 found Sandcastles delivering the most cost effective rate per hour locally. We also offer a range of attendance plans for families claiming the government funded hours – ranging from term time only to 51 weeks spread. Being a small family owned setting we are able to respond quickly to changes in demand and national policy, tailoring our fees and services to meet the needs of local families. We do not lay off staff in autumn to respond to reduced demand nor offer any zero hours contracts.    *Our ethical staff management aspirations can be challenging for our business to deliver e.g. staff deployment over the year however I feel treating our staff with respect and providing career security is a fundamental obligation as an employer. Our staff turnover is very low delivering efficiency savings and a high level of experience within our small team.* | **Recycling of materials -** All materials suitable for recycling are sorted and recycled across site. We invite families to supply us with junk modelling materials so **reusing items before recycling**. Garden waste is composted where possible. |
| **Biodiversity** –Our mature gardens and Beach School site support a wide range of flaura and fauna – we avoid artificial pesticides in the management of our gardens and at Beach School we follow the ‘leave no trace’ ethic of forest schooling. During winter & spring we feed birds (over 14 bird species visit our garden). We have a bug hotel & an established compost heap which provides a habitat for invertebrates (providing the children with lots of specimens to inspect and a food supply to our birds). To attract butterflies, ladybirds and other flying insects we have early flowering bulbs, buddleia, cherry trees, scented roses, jasmine.  **Eco Literacy –** our team of practitioners fully embrace our love of nature and whilst we are not expert ornithologists nor entomologists we share of excitement and interest in the natural world with children every day. We both plan activities to introduce children to natural wonders and take spontaneous opportunities as they arise. |
| **Local commissioning** - where possible we support our local community by using local suppliers – e.g. Stephenson’s Farm Milk, Hodges plumbers etc |

**Areas for the future:**

* Partnership with Eden Project Learning
* Investigate solar panel efficiency & value.
* Further reducing our none recyclable waste
* Continue to host ‘Toilet training workshops’ to reduce number of nappys going into landfill. Is a move to washable nappys possible?
* Milk – return to washable bottles
* Hold Sustainability in mind when commissioning building / refurb / contractors etc
* Consider ways of further influencing families and local community choices.
* Bike & pram parking?
* Continue to invest in long life (10 year) spotlights.
* Evaluate if we can increase opportunity to teach growing skills – field to fork
* Deployment of staff year round – match to autumn low demand

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