

The Education for Sustainability Charter & Pledge



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Signed on 19 February 2014



THE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

VISION

Our vision is for our School to facilitate value-based education where relationships between people, and between people and the natural world, are central to preparing students to participate in and contribute to a flourishing, equitable and sustainable society in meaningful and empowering ways.

MISSION

To apply and implement the Education for Sustainability (EFS) Vision and the five key principles for EFS in our School system and culture by:

- Providing values-based quality education that is transformative and future-oriented, where the academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual development of the learner is central and facilitated through positive and empowering relationships with members of the School community.
- Adopting a systems thinking and holistic approach to teaching, learning and human development in our thinking, relationships, and actions.
- Providing a healthy and engaging learning environment, indoors and outdoors, with multi-disciplinary learning opportunities and activities for students, teachers, staff, and the wider school community (i.e. the local community in which the school is situated) for fostering ecological literacy development and shared stewardship for our collective future.
- Measuring and where necessary reducing the ecological footprint of our School in such ways that invite engagement with the larger school community and implement the EFS Principle 4 (below), for 'place-based education'.
- Supporting our School to become a Learning Community where engagement and participation from all members of the School community are valued and welcomed, and partnership and collaboration for EFS is practiced.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY (EFS) PRINCIPLES¹

1. **All education is education for sustainability**– The primary reason for education is to guide people to live sustainably on the planet. Education for sustainability is based on the thinking that all education needs to prepare people how to contribute to a flourishing, equitable and sustainable society.
2. **Systems Thinking & Holistic Approach**– Sustainability issues are complex and can only be understood and addressed by using a systemic and holistic approach. Through Systems Thinking we learn to recognize system behavior, hidden connections, interdependence, and networks of

¹These principles are based on David Orr's foundations for ecological literacy (Orr, D. 1993. *Ecological Literacy – Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 90-92).

relationships. Holistic education values the interconnectedness between academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

3. ***Experiential Learning in and from Nature***– Nature provides the teachings of the eco-system principles that sustain all life on our planet. Learning in and from Nature grounds these insights in direct personal experience in a way that opens our minds and hearts to the wonders of Nature, and respect for its intelligence and design.
4. ***Education in Dialogue with Place***– By contextualizing learning in dialogue with a place, we learn to develop relationships of care and stewardship for the places in which we live, learn and work. Place-based education grounds us to get in touch with the reality of what is happening around and between us. Through this we start to see and realize our role and response to the sustainability issues that we are part of. This further promotes development and employment of local ecological solutions to these issues (where possible) and in a way that stimulates creative innovative thinking and entrepreneurship.
5. ***Schools as Learning Communities***– The EFS programme supports schools to become learning communities and communities of practice for sustainability. In this way learning for sustainability takes place at every level of the school system and the EFS principles become embedded within the school system and culture.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGE

1. THE SCHOOL CULTURE

We pledge to create a school culture that facilitates, empowers, and inspires Education for Sustainability to prepare for and contribute to transformative change for the co-creation of a flourishing, equitable and sustainable society. We base our relationships and actions on the following key values: respect, care, dialogue, sharing, exploring, and learning together.

The actions for co-creating this school culture are, among others:

- Dialogues for sharing, listening, visioning, conflict prevention and resolution.
- Activities, time and space to pause, reflect, balance, and replenish our mind, body and soul.
- Citizenship and leadership classes for all the different age groups.
- Better awareness of different and equally valuable learning styles and facilitation of learning for these different styles.
- Team building exercises to further develop and strengthen a positive school community, including the active participation of students, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, and school management.
- Demonstrate and promote respect for our environment by rewarding / promoting sustainability behaviours and deterring wasteful behaviours, also using healthy activities and challenges as positive drivers.

- Implementation of existing regulations that indicate that the following substances and behaviours are not allowed at School and in School activities: smoking, alcohol, drugs, violence, bullying, causing harm to self and others.
- More interactions between our schools for sharing of lessons learned and best practices. This will increase the scope and outreach of the school community.

2. THE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We pledge to implement the EFS Vision, Mission through the following proposed activities:

- Using School Clubs for implementing the EFS Charter by applying a System Thinking and Holistic Approach for creating linkages, interconnections and synergy between the various activities of the clubs.
- Educational outings and Eco-activities for awareness raising and practical application of Ecological Literacy – adjusted for different age groups.
- Yearly Eco-Retreats – such as camping, and hiking in nature, among others.
- Create / cultivate the School garden for growing vegetables, medicinal herbs / plants and for use of school compost.
- Use the vegetables from the school garden in cooking classes and for supporting students from poorer communities.
- Alternatively, to encourage social-entrepreneurship by selling the vegetables from the garden and using this money as seed-funding for the school Eco-Agent Projects.

3. THE PHYSICAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

We pledge to create a school environment that is conducive for Education for Sustainability by:

- Providing green spaces both inside and outside the School building for learning about and from Nature.
- Creating / sustaining a healthy School environment.
- Provision of space within the School premises for the Eco-Club.

4. TO MEASURE AND REDUCE THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF THE SCHOOL

We pledge to measure and reduce (where applicable) the Ecological Footprint (EF) of our School as an ongoing activity. We recognise that this is necessary for knowing what to change, where to improve, what to sustain, and for modelling good behaviours for Sustainability. This also ground the learning in

dialogue with a place and fosters implementation of System Thinking and engagement of the School as a Learning Community. .

The following actions have been proposed to reduce (where applicable) the EF of the School:

- Apply the 4Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose resources to minimize waste and enhance resource productivity.
- Sorting Waste – Educate the entire School Community how to sort and separate plastics, papers, cans, and organic waste. Then select what can be reused and repurposed, as well as can be recycled.
- Reduce electricity consumption by switching off lights, fans, and computers that are not in use.
- Roof gardening to reduce the need for fans and to provide thermal comfort in classrooms.
- Reduce water consumption through water efficiency mechanisms in school toilets / bathrooms.
- Carry out rainwater harvesting for non-potable water uses like gardening, car-washing and cleaning purposes.
- Sensitise student and staff to use eco-friendly transport vehicles (e.g. bicycles...) and to adopt car-pooling amongst teachers and non-teaching staff.

5. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY – ENGAGE, COMMUNICATE, EMPOWER

Education for Sustainability requires support and engagement of the whole school community -i.e. all the relevant stakeholders - for School to become a Learning Community.

We pledge to undertake the following actions to achieve this:

- Establish Eco-clubs for students at school, with involvement of parents and caretakers.
- Eco-Agents share the EFS School Charter and Pledge with other students, and their family / community.
- Support the Eco-Agents to create engagement for others to join and support this initiative, this can be done by creating fun and engaging awareness campaigns – drama, arts, music, movies, documentaries, eco-games, and eco-challenges / competitions, among others.
- Sensitise students through better use of social-media tools for raising awareness and generating engagement.
- Maintain good communication and exchange with parents, caretakers and other relevant stakeholders about these initiatives.



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGE

BEC Management

As members of BEC Management, we pledge to uphold and implement the EFS Charter – the Vision, Mission and proposed actions - for the BEC Schooling System, and in particular where this relates to the three selected BEC EFS Pilot Schools.

..... (Director)

.....(Date)

School Management

As members of the School Management of, we pledge to uphold and implement the EFS Charter – the Vision, Mission and proposed actions.

..... (Manager)

.....(Date).

..... (Rector)

.....(Date)

Teachers

As the Teachers of, we pledge to uphold and implement the EFS Charter – the Vision, Mission and proposed actions.

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.....(Date)

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.....(Date)

Students

As the Students of, we pledge to uphold and implement the EFS Charter – the Vision, Mission and proposed actions.

..... (Student Council)

.....(Date)

..... (Eco-Club)

.....(Date)