

The Garden Classroom

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING POLICIES

The Garden Classroom (TGC) engages in practical conservation work and teaching that seeks to protect and enhance the environment. All activities of the organisation are based on the principles of sustainable development; their planning and execution are undertaken with environmental considerations foremost.

TGC will:

- Consider the impacts of its activities on the environment
- Use all resources efficiently
- Adopt cost effective practices that eliminate or minimise negative environmental impacts
- Manage events and organisations in a way that prevents pollution and is protective of the environment
- Review this policy annually

All TGC Board Members, employees and volunteers will be informed of this policy and asked to:

- Ensure activities undertaken are carried out in an environmentally sound manner that limits risks to the environment
- Integrate environmental considerations into their work
- Carry out their work in a cost effective manner consistent with this policy and in compliance with regulatory and legal requirements
- Integrate pollution prevention, resource conservation, waste minimisation and environmental impact considerations into all planning, decision making and work conducted
- Look for opportunities to improve environmental standards
- Report promptly environmental incidents and deficiencies that they observe
- Use non-toxic materials and alter practices to minimise the use of and release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Throughout organisation work everyone should consider the following five areas:

- Regulatory requirements
- Education
- Pollution prevention
- Waste minimisation
- Water conservation
- Energy conservation

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis

PUTTING THE POLICY INTO ACTION

Regulatory requirements

- Comply with Health and Safety regulations
- Comply with insurance stipulations (copy of Zurich Municipal Insurance details retained by Chief Executive and available for referral)

Procurement

- Ensure all food and drink bought for events, such as training days, will be, where possible, local, naturally grown or organic
- Ensure all imported produce, such as coffee, is fairly traded
- Ensure all materials will be sourced locally where possible
- Ensure all materials will be from sustainable sources, i.e. FSC timber, or recycled where possible

Education

- Encourage user groups to behave in a sustainable manner when on site
- Educate users about the concept of biodiversity and their role in preserving/developing it
- Educate users about environmentally responsible horticultural practices
- Educate users about threats to the environment and ways to counter these threats, and in particular how they personally can improve the environment

Pollution prevention

- Use eco-friendly cleaning materials when available
- Not to use chemical fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides other than those permitted by the Soil Association.
- Check all fieldwork equipment returns to the centre and is not left on site
- Clear site of litter and ensure that items of litter are disposed of properly

Waste minimisation

- Re-use stationery where possible (envelopes, paper clips etc.)
- Minimise the use of paper
- Use recycled paper where possible
- Use e-mail where appropriate and minimise printing of e-mails
- Monitor paper and photocopy use to cut down on excessive usage
- Photocopy double sided where possible
- Use council recycling service
- Mend equipment where appropriate rather than purchase new equipment

- Compost all relevant materials on site if possible
- Ensure that brash and cuttings from trees will be used on site as habitat piles, unless diseased.

Water conservation

- Encourage staff and user groups not to waste water
- Turn off all taps not in use
- Report leaks immediately
- Use water butts on site where possible

Energy conservation

- Turn lights off when not in use
- Do not leave electrical equipment on stand-by overnight

This policy was first drafted in April 2010 by Marnie Rose and will be reviewed annually.