

# ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Company Operations

ADO Services C.I.C.

ADO River Valley School

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Last Ratification By Management Committee	March 2024
Next Review By Management Committee	December 2025
Latest Update by ADO River Valley	August 2025

## 1 Environment Policy Overview

As a Not-For-Profit Community Interest Company with many of our curricular approaches based around the environment, wildlife and nature, ADO River Valley School is only too aware that a strong and sustainable **Environment Policy** is key to ensuring our responsibilities are met or exceeded to limit our carbon emissions and power consumptions, of which all are carefully monitored to minimise our impact on the environment.

## 2 Introduction

As a company it is our duty to examine and interpret the environment from a variety of perspectives including physical, geographical, biological, sociological, economic and technological day to day operations.

Our staff and students ensure coverage of various important critical factors are educated from within the company to provide a consistent message.

- Ensure staff are fully aware of their environmental responsibilities from the moment they are inducted into the company and via personal development plans and company policy and procedure.
- Education about the environment, to develop a deep knowledge, understanding and skills that students will need to understand and learn about environmental issues.
- To provide education within the environment, giving students first-hand experience of our various local environments.
- Staff are empowered to be proactive at all times to research and advise in all areas of the business to report failures to policy or improvements to existing practices.

## 3 Sustainability

The key to the **Environment Policy** is based around sustainability. No amounts of measures can be implemented longer term, without a sustainable plan that continually improves work processes, operational procedures and focusses on meeting or exceeding targets.

To start, the ability of staff and students to understand their actions and conflicting interests to everyday work and education and the subsequent impact of those actions is important. We encourage both staff and students to think about their environment and how their actions impact upon company and the national and global aims and objectives. To this end we encourage and reinforce environmental education in all aspects of everyday life and the wider community. Sustainability can only be achieved by ensuring these policies are achievable and not just one-off or ad-hoc actions for short term gain.

## 4 Waste

One of the biggest challenges to the business is disposal of waste. It's surprising to realise what a huge amount of waste a business can accumulate in just one week. At ADO River Valley School we have always been an advocate of the reduce, reuse and recycle mantra.

We of course hire our own waste and recycling bins at each centre from a professional waste carrier and are legally bound by a 'Duty of Care' to dispose of our waste and recycling carefully and ethically.

We take this one step further and through an intricate system of composting areas, manage to naturally compost many types of our own waste to reuse back into the land. Poets Corner Centre where our school is based currently has 10 large composting bays in various places, each bay large enough for a capacity of at least 1 tonne of composting material. The bays are filled with different grades of compost each at different stages of the composting process. We use large double bays in which everyday animal waste, animal food and dirty animal enclosure bedding (straw or pellets) is added with green and brown waste from the land and gardens, shredded paper or small pieces of cardboard, leaves and anything else that will degrade naturally to add to the mix. When those bins are full, the contents are moved into another bay to continue their composting process. The action of moving the compost invigorates the oxygen content, which aids the process causing hot temperatures to speed the whole process up. As the bins compost, the contents shrink in size and by the time they reach their final bay, the compost has turned into beautiful rich soil high in nutrients and ready for the extensive land, gardens and growing areas on the site.

In addition, we have probably one of the largest dead hedge sections for any company in the London area. Through our tree surgery, maintenance and pruning we add all cut or broken limbs, branches or twigs to our vast lengths of dead hedging. This also provides live habitats for small mammals, birds and invertebrates. There are also 12 large bug 'hotels' erected on the land in various locations, where smaller tree, shrub or plant materials can be neatly stored, providing habitats for invertebrates.

All our toilet waste is ecologically collected in large barrels and stored for it to naturally breakdown, before being added to early-stage composting bays.

For sanitary waste, we use a small environmentally responsible, local family business called VRSani-Co. The business organise regular collections to our school. When collections are made, the sanitary bins are cleaned and realigned. The family business support the charity Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust. Sanitary bins are situated within all female cubicles.

We continue to add water butts to trap rainwater for use in the gardens and land.

Where possible solar lighting is used in non-critical areas.

## 5 Donations and Reuse

A large amount of our everyday animal care food, furniture, learning equipment and general supplies is sourced from either donations or from free collection services. A lot of our office equipment and furniture is also sourced from donations or reuse of equipment no longer required in other or partner organisations. Where possible a lot of our equipment and furniture is built using our natural supply of wood from the land, collected from tree surgery, felling, coppicing and large pruning.

## 6 Plastics

One of the biggest challenges of striving towards strong environmental standards is to limit and replace the amount of plastics used within the company. The school has been very active in sourcing alternatives to plastic bottles and equipment used in everyday operations. Although many plastics can be successfully re-cycled, there are many that are the 'wrong type' of plastic and can not be recycled and end up in landfill. The school policy has been simplified, rather than understanding about the many types of plastic, we simply have reduced any type of plastic in favour of more natural alternatives, driven by our staff, who research and suggest these alternatives. Additionally we ask all staff and students to not bring glass containers or jars to school.

## 7 The Office

The ADO River Valley School office spaces utilise the modern technologies and energy saving devices to keep control on our carbon footprint output. Where possible lighting and heating is completely automated and environmentally controlled. Lighting will be low voltage LED bulbs and heating and cooling will be thermostatically controlled ensuring efficient use of the equipment whilst keeping to office health and safety policy.

Older and less efficient IT and office equipment is gradually being replaced, within budget, by more energy efficient devices and white goods.

All paper is sourced from FSC recycled paper suppliers.

Toilet rolls are brought in large boxes, avoiding single use plastic wrapping.

All cleaning products in the office are purchased in bulk and then added to reusable sprays for example. Wipes for example are biodegradable.

Plastic based hand cleaning solutions are often replaced with naturally scented made bars of soap.

## 8 Heating

Across all of our areas where heating is required, we ensure that pre-set timers are installed to help reduce usage. Our staff read our policies annually, and when they do this they are adhering to our procedures which include not touching the timers to increase or reduce the heat.

If staff members are feeling that the heat is needing to be adjusted, they must raise this to their line manager who will have the necessary conversations surrounding this. If staff adjusted heaters without management permission, they could be subject to a disciplinary. We are a team which focuses on outdoor learning, and with this in mind our staff and students should always be equipped with the appropriate clothing to ensure they stay as comfortable as possible whilst at work.

Our staff are invited to join our uniform loan agreement specifically for thermal waterproof trousers whereby the school will purchase these, and staff can pay a fee back each month which can be automatically deducted from the payroll system with a uniform agreement slip. Staff are permitted to ask line managers about this if they are interested.

The school will also purchase blankets and other useful materials to support staff when they are sitting mobile and therefore may feel the cold more.

Animal heating is managed by senior leadership and disseminated down to the animal care team throughout the year.

## 9 Preferred Suppliers

All our preferred suppliers are like minded organisations with their own robust environmental policies, aims and objectives. Many of our products and services we procure and been specifically sourced from organisations we have vetted prior to engaging in trade.

## 10 Review

All ADO River Valley policies and procedures follow ITIL guidelines to ensure version control, change control and release management of any documents. As a matter of policy, documents can be updated at any time to reflect changes to ADO River Valley procedures, legal changes, JCQ directives or any other reason to ensure the policies and procedures are accurate and correct. This involves consultation with stakeholders, the ADO River Valley Governance Committee and approval from the directors. All policies and procedures are reviewed at the very least on an annual basis. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, text systems and through our website within the ADO River Valley Library is part of our Release Management.

## 11 References

Internal ADO References include:

### **ADO Health & Safety Policy**

All these documents can be found in the ADO Library at:

*[Policies and Procedures \(adorivervalley.co.uk\)](https://www.adorivervalley.co.uk)*

Useful External References include:

### **Government Environment Bill 2020**

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement>*

### **Brexit's Implications For Environment Policy**

*<https://ukandeu.ac.uk/long-read/brexit-implications-for-environmental-policy/>*

## 11Contact

This document was produced by the ADO River Valley Operations team (Kylanja Ltd). This version supersedes any previous versions and will be reviewed annually.

All correspondence with regard to this policy, or any other operational policy and procedure should be directed to the ADO River Valley by e-mailing [education@adorivervalley.co.uk](mailto:education@adorivervalley.co.uk) or calling 0208 855 6778, requesting to speak to the School Business Manager or in writing c/o School Business Manager, ADO River Valley School, 126 Upper Wickham Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 3DP.