



Environmental policy

Preamble

St Augustine writes, *"The more you are concerned about the common good rather than your own, the more progress you will know that you have made"* (V, 2). Caring for and about what we hold in common is our vocation. Creation itself is our common good; the Earth, our common home. They are gifts of God to all, including future generations. They are not to be enjoyed by only a few of us, but to be shared, just as God has shared them with us. As a Christian learning community, St Augustine College strives to encourage sustainability in both the learning as well as the physical environment by encouraging a sense of awareness, respect, and shared responsibility to take care of our common home.

The aims of this policy are to:

1. Promote environmental best practice in keeping with the Christian principles of environmental stewardship.
2. Foster a culture of knowledge, respect and care for the environment.
3. Promote study of the environment across the curriculum.
4. Minimize the use of energy, water, fossil fuel and other resources.
5. Minimize the production of, and effectively manage, waste.
6. Incorporate environmental practices in the College physical environment.
7. Participate in local and international initiatives that foster environmental stewardship.
8. Encourage all members of the learning community to commit to implementing the policy.

Education for Sustainable Development in the Curriculum

According to UNESCO¹, Education for Sustainable Development (hereafter referred to as ESD) “empowers learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet.” Therefore, ESD needs to be an integral part of all aspects of the curriculum including curriculum content, learning outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment itself. Linked to this is Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si*² where His Holiness encourages us as Christians to make use of “small gestures of mutual care” that make themselves “felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.” (LS, 231).

The College will strive to promote ESD by:

1. Integrating ESD into the School Development Plan
2. Foster environmental awareness in possible CoPEs for educators and in Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Activities for the wider learning community
3. Use the campuses as opportunities for outdoor learning
4. Provide learning opportunities outside the school premises through for example visits to places like Wasteserv, Ilma, and natural reserves administered by local eNGOs
5. Ensure that projects and activities are carried out ethically and with environmentally-sound practices³
6. Involve learners in developing and implementing environmental-related projects
7. Involve learners in internal audits to improve the College environmental practices.
8. Ensure that educators integrate the teaching of environmental education topics and issues to support the learning outcomes in their subject’s curriculum
9. Encourage ESD as a cross-curricular opportunity for teaching and learning through student initiatives to cut back on wastage and monitor progress, through for instance Mathematics
10. Maximise learning opportunities related to the environment like the celebration of special days, collaboration with local and international organisations, and introduce environment-related career opportunities.
11. Encourage educators, learners and their families to re-use past school resources like stationery, plastic book covers and unused copybooks/paper.

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/education/sustainable-development/need-know>

² https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

³ practices that are ideally avoided but are not exclusive, include the use of balloons, especially their release in the atmosphere, and using food containing palm oil

Management of College Resources

St Augustine College will manage its resources according to the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The College will therefore strive to take a whole-College approach to make environmentally-friendly decisions in its day-to-day running.

Physical environment

The College will

1. manage its grounds in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development
2. manage its resources in a sustainable way
3. identify learning opportunities for students resulting from the management of school grounds.

Infrastructure and Energy

The College will

1. educate its members of the learning community to use water and electricity sensibly in our daily lives, including at College. Learners will be encouraged in various ways to support each other in being cautious in the use of natural resources in their daily lives.
2. use water and energy-saving devices to limit the consumption of water and electricity
3. regularly maintain the infrastructure to ensure sustainable use of natural resources
4. plant indigenous plants where possible to save water consumption
5. limit the use of electricity by emphasizing on the need of switching off
6. invest in renewable sources of energy
7. promote well-ventilated classes and spaces to avoid excessive energy consumption and create a healthy environment
8. avoid unnecessary travel by means of private cars, and encourage the use of car-pooling, public transport and activities closer to the campuses that can be reached on foot, wherever possible
9. increase biodiversity in the Campus grounds, through the planting and maintenance of indigenous vegetation, while creating habitats for insects, birds, bats, etc. through formal lessons as well as informal settings as for example a Gardening Club
10. limit the generation of waste, by limiting printing of papers where possible; reduce the consumption of consumables; encourage the reduction of food waste; Encourage initiatives such as the 3Rs (Reduce, Re-use, Recycle).

11. encourage the reduction and recycling of waste in formal⁴ and informal learning activities on the Campus grounds and outside⁵
12. encourage the use of technology when this can replace the use of natural resources, e.g., the use of an online Communication System instead of printed correspondence
13. strive to purchase sustainable teaching and learning resources like FSC® Paper⁶, reusable goods and resources made of recycled materials

Implementation and monitoring

Members of the learning community, be it educators, learners and guardians will be involved in the development, implementation and review of the College's environmental policy, through the College PTA, Student Council, Ekoskola, amongst others. These groups within the College should recommend actions that could be taken to meet the policy's aims and where possible help to implement them in an action plan. They will also maintain a College progress monitoring (e.g., how much paper was saved in photocopies over previous year or how much consumption on energy/water was saved).

Reaching Out

The College will work on sharing these practices outside of its immediate community to share good practice and to learn from other entities.

Conclusion

The efficient implementation of this document provides a range of benefits to the whole St Augustine community which will lead to improvement in the College's **physical environment** (e.g. reduction in waste and litter), **improved health and safety** (e.g. hygiene), **saving on energy and water bills**, instilling a **sense of commitment** (from all stakeholders) towards the **common good** and enhancing **ownership in the decision-making process** that will have a direct or indirect impact on the environment (e.g. through Ekoskola which also sustains democracy in schools).

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⁴ like for instance encouraging educators to use a paper bank for rough paper in their classroom

⁵ such as avoid the use of one-time use crockery and cutlery and encourage participants to bring their own water bottles, plates, cutlery, etc.

⁶ <https://uk.fsc.org/paper-print>