

Environmental policy and actions

Introduction

Country Cousins employs around 40 people annually and can host over 1200 students in one year of English Language education. For this reason, we are aware that many of our actions and services can have environmental impacts which encourage our organisation to be as eco-friendly as possible. The school prides itself in utilising eco-efficient facilities, raising awareness about protecting the environment, and supporting local sustainability groups.

Environmental awareness and sustainability have been at the heart of Country Cousins since the new owners took over in 2006. We have devised this policy to involve our school community in actions that deliver environmental benefits and embed the issue in the minds of students and their families. We ensure the school is participating in environmental awareness as much as possible. Country Cousins will comply with all relevant environmental legislation.

Aims

Our overall aim is to pursue a coherent, consistent and achievable policy on sustainability issues throughout the school. In doing so, we aim to educate students, staff, host families and parents about the importance of good sustainability practices to the benefit of the planet and each of us. Our commitment includes making a continuous effort to prevent pollution and minimize the impact of our present and future activities on the environment.

Implementation

The objectives for the Company under this policy are to:

1. Reduce the carbon footprint of the business.
2. Reduce energy consumption.
3. Adopt as many green initiatives as possible.
4. Minimise the production of all types of waste, especially paper. Encourage reuse, recycling and the disposal of other waste that cannot be avoided, in a responsible manner.
5. Bicclescombe Park is a place where the students spend their free time, Jose attends meeting about the nature preservation and sustainability there. This way, we are all able to enjoy a clean and cared-for environment.
6. Country Cousins has been awarded green quality marks and is accredited by [Green Standards Schools](#), and is an active founding member of [English UK Green ELT](#).

To accomplish this, the company has:

1. Installed solar panels to reduce our carbon footprint by only using a clean, green source of energy.
2. Made all learning resources online, as our students use interactive tablets. This means our English curriculum is entirely paperless, with pupils using their own notebook and pen if they wish to do so.
3. Any paper used in the office is re-cycled and re-used as scrap paper.
4. Minimised vehicle uses unless deemed necessary – If our students live within 20 minutes walking distance of the Channel school or a particular location where an activity is being held (which around 70% of them do), we encourage them to walk to school or to the specified location every day.

5. Installed a rainwater harvesting system, used instead of fresh water to supply the toilet cisterns and wash vehicles with.
6. Told drivers to wait at the activity with the students in order to consume less fuel than if they were to drive back to our premises before picking them up again.
7. Built a sheltered bike rack to encourage and permit staff or students to cycle to school.
8. All food bought in for the barbeques during our evening activities is carefully quantified and stock rotation is carried out as to avoid food waste.
9. The students and staff members all bring their own packed lunches, which reduces any plastic waste through the use of re-useable containers. We also provide a 'food swap' box in the picnic area which prevents any food or snacks being thrown away.
10. Installed around the school water fountains, so that students can refill their drinking water bottles.

All staff members and pupils at Country Cousins are responsible for the implementation of the following principles in this Environmental Policy, which guide our activities across the school.