**St Mary’s (R.C.) Primary School**

**Environmental Policy**

***(PRELIMINARY VERSION)***



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| **2. EFFECTIVE DATE** | **31/08/2022** | **3. DATE OF NEXT REVIEW**  | **01/09/2023** |
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| **4. REVISION HISTORY** | **\*** |
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1. **PREAMBLE**

**The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) Section 4.2.1**

**The constitution, within its Bill of Rights (p.10), provides all citizens with the rights (a) *“to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being”*, and (b) *“to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures.”***

**WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**The White Paper on Education and Training states that *“environmental education, involving an interdisciplinary, integrated and active approach to learning, must be a vital element of all levels and programmes of the education and training system, in order to create environmentally literate and active citizens and to ensure that all South Africans, present and future, enjoy a decent quality of life through the sustainable use of resources.”***

1. **VISION STATEMENT:**

*We aim to:*

* Be an institution guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church, where everybody shows tolerance and respect for all creeds.
* Build an environment where happiness and team spirit prevail and create conditions conducive to:
* The holistic development of the child so that an education for life is attained.
* The generation of pride in self and school.
* Fostering meaningful relationships between the school, parents, teachers, learners, and the community.
1. **OUR MISSION:**

*To maintain and live our Catholic ethos by:*

* Ongoing and reflective programmes of responding to the needs of members of our school community.
* Creating an environment of caring for one another, e.g., stress management; communication skills; relationship building.
* Integrated academic, social, and religious dimensions of our school’s curriculum so that the atmosphere of care pervades the whole culture of the school.
* Developing the learners holistically, e.g., support and enrichment programmes.
* Responding to developmental needs of our community, e.g., poor; aged; orphans; parenting programmes.
* Exploring relevant issues such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexuality awareness, and to do something concrete.
1. **AIM:**

This policy is to establish clearly what is expected in terms of environmental protection and awareness for all stakeholder and learners so that our planet is protected and appreciated. The aim of participation in the ***Sustainable Schools Programme*** is to increase learners’ awareness of environmental issues through teaching and learning and to shift this knowledge into positive environmental action within the school and broader community. Our focus area for the next three years is *Production, Consumption, and Waste*, whereby the school will be tackling the issues of *waste and litter*. Within this focus area, we will be latching onto other focus areas such as *biodiversity, health, and well-being as well as community and social responsibility*. The implementation of this policy should therefore promote and support the provision of an enjoyable and socially responsible environment.

1. **SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL:**

Being a Sustainable School promotes education for sustainable development that provides learners with a greater understanding of both environmental and social systems through a variety of important environmental experiences that involve their senses, emotions and thinking. It should enable the school community to improve a life ethic that respects all people and the natural environment.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP:**

Every year new members from the current grade 6 classes will be elected to join the committee and play an active role within the committee for two years (grade 6 and 7). It is vital for grade 6s because they have an opportunity to enter a Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) managed by Nature Connect. This opportunity will allow them to pursue a career in environmental studies and enable them to continue their journey while at High School. There are two educators that lead this committee. Educators will plan weekly activities. The committee will have frequent meetings to discuss sustainable schools’ issues and to implement initiatives.

1. **ACTION PLANS:**

**WASTE ACTIVITIES**

* All classrooms and the office/copy room to have recycling bins for paper.
* Once a term a household battery drive will be initiated and dropped off at Woolworths Steenberg Village.
* Staff to be aware of environmental impact of photocopying and to only photocopy what is needed and to use double-sided copying where possible.
* Children to reuse paper where possible.
* Children to engage in recycled / “junk art” style projects occasionally, this can be done in different learning areas.
* Bread tags and bottle tops will be collected throughout the school. This collection will be dropped off at an organisation called breadtagsforwheelchairs. An organisation that melts down the plastic in exchange for a wheelchair that will help someone in need.

**ENERGY SAVING ACTIVITIES**

* Lights to be turned off when not in need / not in use.
* Computers to be placed on standby when not in use / during breaks.
* Staff only to photocopy what they need and to use black ink where possible.

**WATER SAVING ACTIVITIES**

* Ensure taps are not left open when not in use.
* Collect rainwater to use where possible.
* Make learners conscious of the link between water use and financial cost.
* Help learners and the broader community understand that conserving water is vital to our future.

**CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Many aspects of environmental awareness can be taught in the form of specific lessons that are CAPS aligned and which are designed by the sustainable school’s programme. Educators has access to these lesson plans on the sustainable school’s hub. Educators are encouraged to use this portal when teaching and has access in booking a visit from Nature Connect. Nature Connect is available to teach specific lessons to learners. Educators have a variety of themes that are linked to different focus areas that are integrated into different learning areas.

**THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

As a school we willdevelop and maintain the school grounds for an aesthetic experience that all stakeholders and learners can appreciate. The school grounds should be a source of teaching and learning opportunities for learners. As a sustainable school we should create habitats for a variety of insects/ bird species. We should always be aware that the school grounds provide the visitor with the first impression of the school and will influence the attitude and behaviour of our learners.

**HEALTHY LIVING**
As a school we will be mindful that good mental as well as physical health at an early age not only helps avoid future health problems, but it can also improve learners’ ability to learn. Our school has a feeding scheme that assists learners who do not have food. This meal sustains learners for the day. We aim to be a healthy school by looking holistically at issues of exercise, the aesthetic quality of the school and its grounds, bullying, gender violence and the risk factors associated with substance abuse.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Through the implementation of the Environmental Policy, it is important that partnerships are encouraged and formed between those directly associated with and affected by the actions of the school. This will be achieved by:

* Approving and facilitating interactions and communications of the school’s environmental actions between the school and members of the communities which surround its grounds and with which its staff interacts.
* Reporting annually on how environmental practices in the community have been addressed by the school.
* Learner involvement

The school will encourage learners to play an important role in the implementation, maintenance, and assessment of the environmental policy by:

* Increasing the ways in which learners can participate in the policy implementation.
* Ensuring policy implementation is fed back to the learners.
* Reporting annually on how learners have been involved in implementing the policy and assessing environmental issues on the school grounds.

**MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT**

*The School management will:*

* Incorporate the environmental responsibility into its mission statement.
* Continue to uphold the school’s responsibilities towards the environment.
* Ensure the implementation and monitoring of the environmental policy.
* Ensure that the community is aware of the policy and to communicate the results of the monitoring process.
* Maintain an environment which is conducive to good scholarship and provides good working conditions.
1. **APPROVAL**

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| **Recommended by:** |   |  |   |
| **Principal**  | **Signature:** |
| **(print name)** |   |
| **Date:** |   |
| **Approved by:** |   |  |   |
| **SGB Chairperson** | **Signature:** |
| **(Print name)** |   |
| **Date:** |   |
| **Verification by WCDE:** |   |   |   |
| **Cluster Manager** | **Signature:** |
| **(Print Name)** |   |
| **Date of Verification** |   |
| **Verification by WCDE:** |   | **Signature:** |   |
| **Circuit Manager** |
| **(Print Name)** |
| **Date of Verification** |   |
| **Certified by :** |   |   |   |
| **District Director** | **Signature:** |
| **(Print Name)** |   |
| **Date:** |  |  |  |