

Policy 23

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Purpose

Yellowknife Education District No.1 (YK1) is committed to preparing students for the challenges and careers of the future and supporting their personal growth as conscientious and responsible members of the local and global community. YK1 further recognizes that to be a good public citizen, its operations and activities should reflect a commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship that safeguards this future.

Implementation

YK1 pursues these goals and responsibilities by implementing environmental education and sustainability initiatives at the classroom, school, and district levels.

Classroom Approach: Enhanced Learning Opportunities

YK1 supports education programming and experiential learning that promotes an appreciation and understanding of the natural world in conjunction with Indigenous language and culture education. YK1 achieves these curricular objectives by:

- highlighting environmental concepts in science and social studies classes
- fostering northern scientific, traditional, and local ecological knowledge
- embedding sustainability into classroom practices
- providing opportunities for outdoor and on-the-land learning
- partnering with community organizations to sponsor service learning activities

Furthermore, YK1 seeks partnerships with post-secondary institutions and government departments to inspire careers in research, environmental stewardship, and innovation.

School Approach: Green Initiatives

The formation of school green teams is encouraged for planning, implementing, and evaluating the school's environmental sustainability initiatives. These teams also provide a venue for students, staff, and parents to participate actively in practicing and promoting environmental stewardship in both their school and community.

Green teams may tailor their initiatives, their membership, and organization relationship with other existing school committees and groups according to the interests and needs of the school. Such school-wide initiatives may, but not exclusively involve:

- energy conservation
- recycling
- waste reduction and diversion
- composting
- school grounds beautification
- sustainable transportation (walking and cycling)
- gardening
- fundraising
- field trips

Green teams provide leadership to the broader school community and advise the principal on school needs. The team may also make requests or recommendations to the YK1 board on behalf of the school.

District-wide Approach: Ethical sourcing

YK1 emphasizes waste reduction strategies by encouraging the reuse and repurposing of existing assets, from school supplies to building materials. When purchasing new goods, YK1 recognizes that the school system plays a substantial role in the local economy and community, and works to ensure ethical sourcing in its procurement practices. This is realized through the following strategies:

- positive purchasing, whereas goods produced to high labour and environmental standards are given preference
- negative purchasing, whereas goods deemed unethical or lacking any identifiable standard are avoided
- bulk purchasing, whereas YK1 uses its purchasing power to encourage its suppliers to pursue ethical choices in their supply chains
- sound disposal plan, whereas the lifecycle of goods is considered when making purchases

Commonly used certification standards are used to guide purchasing. Local goods and service providers are given priority, ensuring that both economic development and environmental goals are met.

All trustees, staff, students, parents, and volunteers are expected to embrace this policy that supports efforts to promote environmental awareness and build a sustainable school community for present and future generations.