MATIÈRE VERTE

**SUPPORT AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

FROM ENVIRONNEMENT JEUNESSE

Environmental policy

Name of the school

Insert the date of adoption of your policy

Add your school logo

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# About the ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

A policy is a commitment made by the leadership, the board of governors or the environmental committee. It identifies principles that the school or the environmental committee intends to respect so that all its activities contribute to the protection of the environment, well-being of its community and conservation of resources. An environmental policy identifies the school’s or environmental committee’s key guidelines in environmental, social, economic and cultural matters. It also sets out the main areas of intervention, both in terms of responsible governance and of environmental education.

# Instructions

This tool was developed for schools participating in the ENvironnement JEUnesse Support and Certification program. From Level 3 onward, schools must develop and adopt an environmental policy that applies either to the entire school or to the environmental committee alone. This template is designed to help the school's environmental committee with this process.

The template is fully customizable. Instructions and requirements for each section of the environmental policy are in **BLUE**. Questions to guide your reflections are in **GREEN**. Be sure to remove these from your final policy.

# 1. Preamble

The preamble explains the context for adopting the policy and the reasons why the school or committee is adopting an environmental policy.

Consider including the following in the preamble of your environmental policy:

* An overview of the school's environmental status
* A brief history of your school's environmental involvement
* A presentation of your environmental committee, its actions and its mission
* Major strategic directions for your school
* The factors that motivated your school or your committee to adopt an environmental policy
* Etc.

Example preamble: Example School is located in [borough, RCM, city, etc.], near [...]. In 2004, Example School created its environmental committee. Its mission is “to encourage and establish environmental projects at the school, to raise students’ awareness of environmental issues and to train students and staff to become eco-citizens.” Over the years, the environmental committee has accomplished several educational activities, such as creating a collective garden, organizing events for Earth Week and introducing composting.

In the medium term, the school is working towards a shared environmental education among the staff, a healthier and more environmentally friendly food offering, more active transport among the community and an ecological approach to waste management.

For the 2021–2022 school year, the school has joined the Matière Verte Support and Certification program from ENvironnement JEUnesse in order to unify its environmental approach. The school is committed to building a solid foundation in environmental education and to adopting environmentally sound, fair and sustainable management practices. Within this context, the school is adopting its first environmental policy this year. This policy will allow the school to define its major environmental goals and, in turn, contribute to students’ education within a school of eco-citizens.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* Does the school already have an environmental policy? If so, how long has it been in place? What changes have occurred since its adoption? This may be on a local scale (changes in the school, new environmental projects) or on a larger scale (government goals, scientific advances, international agreements).
* If the school does not already have an environmental policy, why do we want to have one? What are our ambitions?

# 2. Definitions

It is important to define key terms used in the policy statement, since these may not be commonly used. You can include your definition of environmental education (EE), sustainable development, the environmental committee, the “five Rs” (refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and rot), eco-citizenship, etc.

Example definitions:

* **The five Rs**: The term “five Rs” is an abbreviation of the following words: refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and rot. This approach helps us prioritize our waste management actions, to maximize their positive impact.
* **Environmental education**: A dimension of basic education, EE is any form of education that deals with our relationship to the environment. More than simply education about the environment, it is also education in, by and for the environment. Via three complementary approaches, it aims to help improve the quality of the environment, to foster the development of individuals and social groups and to contribute to improving pedagogy.
* **School community:** Includes school staff, students and leadership.
* **Sustainable development:** Development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term vision that takes into account the inseparable connection of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities.
* **A society of eco-citizens:** Ecological citizens collectively seek to understand the issues around humans’ cohabitation with other forms of life within a shared environment (i.e., the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, social inequalities, etc.). This understanding draws on different sources of knowledge including traditional, Indigenous, scientific and community knowledge. A society of eco‑citizens ensures the material, social and institutional conditions that allow citizens to critically reflect on the potential for action—and to co-construct the collective action that best suits them—in a transformative perspective of social and environmental justice.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* What are the key terms used in the policy and how do you define them at your school?
* How do the different people in the school perceive the environmental issues addressed in the policy?
* For each key term, do we rely on an existing definition, or do we have our own definition of the term?

# 3. Fields of application

Determine which individuals, institution(s) or suppliers(s) the policy applies to. Examples of community members: students, environmental committee, leadership, teachers, employees, material resources, board of governors.

Sample wording: This policy applies to all departments at [school name]. The policy applies to staff, students and leadership involved in school activities. Suppliers will be invited to review and follow the policy.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* Who is this environmental policy for? Who is affected by it?
* How can members of the community affected by the environmental policy contribute to its goals and commitments?

# 4. Guiding principles

In this section, describe the main guiding principles that underpin your policy. List the principles that support your choice of environmental guidelines.

We highly recommend that you include EE in your guiding principles, since it is the structuring and cross-cutting principle underlying the program. As an educational institution, you should place special emphasis on pedagogical approaches and training to encourage students and staff to become agents of change.

The Ministry of Education strongly recommends using the 16 principles of the Sustainable Development Act and suggests measures, tailored to the educational context, that are in line with these objectives:

1. Access to knowledge and information
2. Health and quality of life
3. Environmental protection
4. Responsible production and consumption
5. Economic efficiency
6. Protection of cultural heritage
7. Social equity
8. Participation and commitment
9. Prevention
10. Precaution
11. Subsidiarity
12. Partnership
13. Biodiversity preservation
14. Responsible production and consumption
15. Internalization of costs
16. Polluter pays

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* What are the school's environmental priorities? Feel free to refer to the initial diagnostic completed at Level 1 of the program.
* Do we want to use international laws or objectives to shape the guiding principles of the environmental policy? If so, which ones are most relevant for our school?
* Do any of the school’s other policies or action plans complement the environmental policy?

# 5. General goals

Define the general goals of the policy. Your general goals should be broad and not too detailed. They should not be measures, nor approaches to achieving the goals. These goals can be related to each of the fields of application set out in Section 3.

Example: The environmental policy will allow our school to achieve the following goals:

* To determine roles and responsibilities (of leadership, teaching staff, students, board of governors, parents, etc.) with regard to the environment
* To establish the frame of reference for the school's environmental protection measures
* To define attitudes and educational practices that foster eco-citizenship
* To establish an analytical framework for evaluating the practices adopted
* To decide on a set of practices to reduce the school’s environmental impact
* To share the principles that guide decision-making, actions and relationships, in line with the school’s mission and values
* To specify the responsibilities of the various bodies affected by the policy and to involve them in its application
* To set out the main areas of intervention in environmental matters in order to guide the school in developing action plans
* To progressively strengthen the culture of environmental protection in the actions of the school’s members.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* Why do we want to achieve these goals? Are they consistent with the fields of application and guiding principles? Are they consistent with the school’s other goals?
* What are our specific needs for achieving these goals? Is it possible for the school to meet these needs?
* What are the potential barriers to achieving our goals?

# 6. Areas of intervention and commitments

This section specifies the areas of intervention in which the policy will be applied and the concrete actions that correspond to these areas. Based on the guiding principles chosen, define the commitments you will make to achieve your goals. Remember, this is not an action plan. The commitments included here must be general. Actions may be specified as needed, but bear in mind that your policy must remain relevant in the long-term.

Here are some examples of areas of intervention and commitments, arranged by theme:

### Environmental education and eco-citizenship

Example: The school aims to increase the number of teaching and learning activities situated or contextualized with respect to environmental (or socio-ecological) realities, fostering critical thinking.

* Raise the school community’s awareness of environmental issues through activities (themed exhibitions, conferences, debates, highlighting innovative environmental initiatives and practices, etc.).
* Raise staff members’ awareness of the environmental impacts of their work and the services they provide.
* Disseminate information on the environmental consequences of some of the school's activities and on the measures taken to minimize these consequences.
* Integrate relevant environmental issues into the school's educational program.

Note: Education for sustainable development is recognized by ENvironnement JEUnesse as a component of environmental education.

### Residual waste management

Example: Strive for zero waste or carbon neutrality by optimizing the use of resources and by reducing environmental impact. To do so, we will apply the “five Rs” in all our spheres of activity.

### Sustainable transport

Example: Reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions by promoting active and collective transport for staff and students; this includes trips between home and school as well as outings with students. This measure also promotes a healthy lifestyle.

### Contact with nature

Example: The school believes that students must have the chance to experience nature first-hand, and this must be an integral part of their physical and mental development. As such, activities that bring students into contact with nature are a priority. We encourage staff to strengthen this connection and to actively encourage healthy life habits.

### Health and nutrition

Example: The school is committed to promoting healthy eating and to sourcing as much local, organic and fair-trade food as possible.

### Reducing and controlling energy consumption

Example: Make informed choices about energy sources, technologies and protocols for technology use in order to minimize energy consumption in a way that respects everyone’s needs.

### Responsible purchasing

Example: Using ecological procurement guidelines, prioritize products that are minimally harmful to the physical and social environment, genuinely necessary, reusable and recyclable. Make suppliers aware of environmental protection and encourage them to reduce the environmental impact of their products.

### Other areas of intervention

Here is a non-exhaustive list of other possible areas of intervention: water conservation, design of outdoor spaces, cultural awareness, well-being and air quality.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* Which environmental issues do we want to focus on in developing the environmental policy’s areas of intervention?
* Are these areas of intervention sustainable in the long-term?
* Are the environmental policy’s guiding principles linked to the areas of intervention?

# 7. Environmental committee

Describe the composition (types of members, not names), roles and responsibilities of the environmental committee. You may wish to refer to the environmental committee membership chart available in the program progress report.

Here are some questions to guide your reflections:

* What are the roles and responsibilities of our school's environmental committee?
* Which members of the school community are represented on the environmental committee (students, leadership, teachers, maintenance staff, etc.)?

# 8. Roles and responsibilities

Decide who will be responsible for implementing and promoting the environmental policy in the school or on the committee.

This section should also include the more technical details: the role of teachers, students, employees, leadership, etc.

Questions to guide your reflections:

* How will the environmental policy be implemented and promoted in the school community or on the environmental committee? Who will be responsible for this process?
* What are the roles of each member of your school community or committee concerning the environmental policy?

# 9. Start date and review

Write the exact date the policy came into effect in the organization. Also plan a system for reviewing or updating it (approximately every five years).

Example: This policy was adopted by the school on September 1, 2021. It is effective at the time of adoption. The environmental policy will be evaluated, reviewed and updated by the environmental committee every five years.

Questions to guide your reflections:

* How often do we want to review the environmental policy?
* Which elements will need to be considered when reviewing the environmental policy to determine if it is still relevant?