

Single Use Plastic Policy

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School



In Partnership with



Sustainability Managers
for Schools
Nurturing sustainability in education

Approved by: Headteacher

Last reviewed on: Summer 2026

Next review due by: Summer 2028

AIMS

The aim of this policy is to set out how Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School will promote Single Use Plastic as part of our commitment to improving Sustainability practices within our school and community. This forms part of our Social Justice Teaching – Care for Creation (Stewardship).

Why we should reduce plastic

- What's good about plastic?
It's a lightweight material that can easily be adapted for lots of different uses. It is especially helpful in medical environments and for safety such as cycle helmets.
- What's bad about plastic?
The process of making plastic produces climate changing gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂). If plastic is not properly recycled it breaks down into tiny micro-plastics that pollute the land and water. These tiny particles get eaten by animals and humans.
- Reducing plastic is the best way to cut plastic pollution. Recycling should be the last choice when there is no alternative.
 1. Reduce
 2. Reuse
 3. Recycle
- Single-use Plastic ("SUP") is plastic that is only used once. It is typically used as packaging for stuff we buy but it can be used in toys or gadgets that are not made to last. This type of plastic is the easiest one to avoid.
- To make the biggest difference to plastic pollution, we need to think about how we can reduce the amount of single-use plastic we use at school, work, home and on the move.

Where SUP comes from

- Snack packaging e.g. crisps, cakes, biscuits, bars, sweets and ice cream
 - Solutions:
 - make and bake yourself
 - buy larger packs with less packaging and use containers/ foil/ beeswax wraps to eat on the move
 - choose healthier alternatives
- Cleaning products e.g. handwash, laundry detergent, cleaning sprays

- Solutions:
 - use refillable containers (choosing brands like Neat that we sell in school)
 - buy different types of products like soap rather than body wash
 - make your own at home
- Food packaging e.g. ready-meals, milk cartons, meat and vegetable packets
 - Solutions:
 - buy from independent shops like the butcher or greengrocer
 - choose to buy fruit and vegetables loose not in plastic bags
 - cook from scratch to avoid buying meals wrapped in plastic
- Fast fashion clothes e.g. polyester/nylon clothes and other plastic accessories
 - Solutions:
 - hand-me-downs
 - second hand uniform sales or swap shops
 - reduce the amount of branded uniform
 - fix and mend
 - buy from Vinted or search charity shops as your first choice
 - only buy what you really need

Solutions for schools

Adapt school policy

- Promote a community culture that supports the waste hierarchy:
 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Reusable water bottles only
- Don't laminate unless absolutely essential
- Avoid plastic wrapped snacks or lunches
- Create a permanent swap space in school for costumes/clothes/uniform/toys
- Promote local swap shops or re-use activities/events in the community
- Provide sufficient water refill points throughout school
- Celebrate plastic reduction champions
- Provide recycling bins and signage
- Educate staff and pupils on what can go in the recycling vs the rubbish bin
- Plan for Simpler Recycling legislation such as councils needing to recycle plastic bags and wrappings in 2027
- Return plastic water bottles and fruit and veg plastic to suppliers

Canteen actions

- Catering staff to remove SUP packaging wherever possible
- Switch milk to glass or rinse and recycle containers
- Return plastic to suppliers
- Remove SUP cutlery, plates, cups

- Do not provide SUP water bottles in packed lunches for trips
- Ensure the correct materials are going into the recycling and rubbish bins

Staff actions

- No unnecessary laminating, put a sign on the laminator to discourage
- Always use reusable coffee cups
- Always use reusable water bottles
- Encourage bringing lunch from home to avoid SUP packaged lunch purchases
- Ensure access to water refill points
- Embed plastic education into teaching

Pupil actions

- Reusable water bottles
- Costume swaps
- Uniform swaps
- Toy swaps
- Switch cling film for Tupperware /foil / beeswax wraps
- Become a plastic reduction champion
- Launch an Eco Shop with Neat