



Environmental Policy

2024-2025

Purpose

Fighting Words is an organisation committed to providing a creative space for children and young people to find and use their voices to discuss the issues and topics they care about in the world they live in. Fighting Words is committed to developing a pathway that will see the organisation moving toward carbon neutrality. As an organisation working with children and young people, it is our responsibility to take action regarding our activities to ensure that they have a positive impact on our planet.

We believe we can achieve this by involving our staff, volunteer team and programme participants.

Delivery will be through the key themes of our Environmental Strategy Action Plan: Operations, Building, Travel and Programmes.

Scope

This policy applies to all those who work and visit Fighting Words – staff, volunteer mentors, programme participants and visitors.

Responsibility

The Board is responsible for monitoring Fighting Words' progress towards Net Zero and reviewing this policy and implementing a strategy on an annual basis.

The Operations Manager and the Green Team are responsible for ensuring the Environmental Strategy Action Plan is set and followed and targets are met. They are also responsible for defining the policy, writing the strategy, implementing the strategy, setting targets and leading the organisation on environmental activity.

All staff, interns and volunteer mentors are responsible for following the Environmental Strategy Action Plan and identifying and implementing changes in all activities.

Monitoring and reporting

Our Environmental Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by our Green Team for approval by our Board and updated as necessary.

Implementation and performance will be continuously evaluated through environmental monitoring and measurement.

Our commitments:

- To embed environmental sustainability at the heart of Fighting Words activities.
- To work to the standards of the [Theatre Green Book](#) as broadly as possible
- To use the best tools and practice to help minimise our carbon impacts.
- To report on our progress annually.
- To share our experience and learn from others within the wider arts sector.

Our Green Team – and the wider Fighting Words community

Our Environmental Policy has been developed by our team and involves everyone at Fighting Words. Our Green Team is responsible for the ongoing development and implementation of the policy.

The Green Team comprises the following:

- Operations Manager
- Programmes Coordinator
- IT Administrator
- Youth Advisory Panel

The Green Team will prioritise the following areas:

- Workshop materials
- Managing the building at Behan Square, Dublin
- Waste
- Travel

Our wider staff, volunteer and programme participants must be part of the process. Everyone involved in day-to-day challenges are often best placed to identify opportunities and share challenges. Additionally, they must understand and implement any new systems. They play a vital role in feeding back and making improvements.

Implementing Action

With each area, we will focus on the following principles:

- **REDUCE** – reducing how much we use.
- **SOURCE** - sourcing what we use as sustainably as possible.
- **Reuse or RECYCLE** - reusing or recycling everything we can.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS & PUBLICATIONS

Printing

We know that publishing creative work is of huge benefit to the programme participants at Fighting Words. Since 2009, we have produced quantities of booklets, posters and other printed materials. We have printed dozens of books over the years as well.

We will, however, review our paper requirements to ensure:

- There are no viable paperless alternatives.
- We print only necessary quantities.
- We use recycled paper.
- For outsourced publications, we choose a local printer who uses recycled papers and sustainable printing methods.

Printing should be kept to a minimum.

Double-sided printing and multiple pages per sheet are to be used whenever possible to minimise paper and ink usage, and documents and correspondence should only be printed when strictly necessary.

All staff are expected to use the internal recycling facilities, which can take paper, cardboards, glass, plastics and cans.

Printer inkjet and ribbon cartridges are recycled through the IT Administrator or the Operations Manager.

Programme Materials

Many of our workshops are delivered using similar structures and/or themes. We commit to using sustainable materials, sourcing donated or second-hand materials and re-using/repurposing existing materials as regularly as possible.

DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Printing and Equipment

Digital printing is not a zero-carbon alternative. The internet, email and cloud-based services cause substantial carbon emissions in manufacturing, powering and cooling computers and data centres.

Active digital management is needed to minimise our digital footprint. To this end, we endeavour

- Choose an internet provider that offers sustainable operation.
- Minimise internet page numbers and data size.
- Repair devices and don't change them every two or three years.
- Correctly dispose of old devices.
- Buy devices that are repairable, refurbished or remanufactured.

All electronic equipment should be switched off when not in use.

At the end of the working day, the last staff member to leave the office should check equipment to ensure that all computers are shut down and all printers are switched off, unless otherwise labelled.

Online Meetings

Meeting online is a great way to reduce our carbon footprint and to extend our programming reach, e.g. Online Write Club. There are costs associated with online meetings, however, so we endeavour to:

- Use video in a call only as needed (meet and greet, when speaking, during one-on-one or small group meetings)
- Stream video or audio in standard definition
- Reduce participation in unnecessary online meetings
- Using Google Meet, an efficient hosting platform

Email

Individual emails have a tiny footprint, but it can add up! Emails with big attachments have the biggest footprint.

Fighting Words commits to the following:

- Regularly deleting old emails from inboxes, particularly those with large attachments.
- Using links to online files, where possible, as opposed to attaching documents to emails.
- Sending 'Reply all' emails only if necessary.
- Emptying the Junk Email folder regularly.
- Unsubscribing from unwanted or no longer needed newsletters.

Digital Housekeeping

We recognise that each unit of data we deal with, whether it is sending an email, streaming a video or saving a file, has energy use associated with it. Our staff endeavour to:

- Stop keeping and storing data that will never be used again.
- Review and clean files and apps regularly - delete duplicate files.
- Think twice before downloading or uploading files or new apps.
- Reduce the file size of documents, images, video and other multimedia assets.

MAINTAINING THE BUILDING

Everyone at Fighting Words has the responsibility to ensure that our programmes are run as sustainably as possible.

Reducing Energy Use

It is essential to make sure that we are running our premises as efficiently as possible with the tools we have. To this end, we endeavour to:

- Maintain all services systems (lighting, heating, hot water, small power, technology), to run as efficiently as possible. The boiler in the main centre will be serviced annually.
- Use the controls we have to make sure they are drawing power only when they're needed.

Energy Sourcing

As Ireland's energy grid is increasingly powered by renewables, it makes sense to switch and/or update energy needs. We are certified to be consumers of fully renewable energy since 2021.

We endeavour to do the following:

- Continue to our heating and electricity from 'green' energy suppliers
- Use LED lighting to reduce energy consumption

Water

Water is a valuable resource. Sustainable water use in Fighting Words will focus on reducing, recycling and reusing.

Drinking (potable) water is available from the taps in the kitchen in the main centre and annex. Staff and volunteers should use glasses or water bottles for drinking water.

Recyclable cups are available but should only be used when absolutely necessary and cups should be placed in the recycling bin.

Hot water – In the main centre, this is heated by the boiler, which is on a timer. In the annex, hot water is controlled by a switch on the wall. The switch should be off when hot water is not needed.

Toilets - There are five toilets at the Fighting Words centre in Dublin. We aim to reduce water use by:

- Installing bags in toilet cisterns to lower water consumption.
- Installing low-flow taps and auto-stop features on taps.

Biodiversity

Fighting Words is located in an urban area. We commit to preserving and enhancing biodiversity by maintaining and further introducing pollinator-loving plants in our patio area.

Plants will be maintained using water from leftover water from kettles, before the water is replaced.

We will also install bird and bat boxes that can provide urban habitats and/or 'insect hotels' in our outdoor area.

Housekeeping

Day-to day upkeep of Fighting Words will focus on the following:

- Use of eco-friendly cleaning products.
- Soaps – use of eco-friendly foam hand soaps in the toilets.

- Hand towels in toilets will be of recycled materials.

WASTE

The Waste Hierarchy sets a framework for managing waste sustainably.

1. Prevent waste by using only what we need (for example, the number of booklets printed)
2. Reduce waste, before reusing (for example, a glass or crockery plate)
3. Recycling (for example, recycling the material in a paper cup to make new paper products)
4. Recovering energy value from discarded material (for example, burning timber products as biomass).

Only after these options have been considered should anything be finally treated and safely disposed of.

Reducing and Reusing

The best way to reduce waste is to avoid producing it in the first place.

To achieve this, we aim to:

- Audit supply chains to identify where we can avoid waste at source.
- Review activities such as workshop delivery and catering for teaching staff to see where waste is generated and how we can produce less.
- Encourage behaviour in participants, volunteers and staff that result in less waste generation.
- Reuse and repurpose workshop materials where possible,

In addition, we endeavour to:

- Choose suppliers who allow packaging, including crates and pallets, to be returned once no longer required.
- Choose products that allow containers such as bottles to be returned for reuse.
- Where packaging can't be returned, reduce it as much as possible.
- Eliminate single-use plastics.
- Reduce food waste through tracking food sales and consumption to avoid over-ordering.
- Cut paper waste by encouraging paperless offices and administration.

Recycling

Once waste is generated and the products can no longer be reused, reduce how much waste is sent to landfill by increasing recycling rates.

In order to limit contamination, it is important to make sure recyclable material is of good quality. To this end, we will:

- Identify the most common waste materials and separate them.
- Train staff to understand the waste management and recycling system and how waste products are streamed.
- Educate participants, volunteers and visitors to dispose of waste properly and reduce contamination.
- Provide sufficient bins to allow for on-site separation of multiple waste streams (e.g. residual, dry recyclables - including Re-Turn bins for drinks containers, organic waste).
- Provide clear, concise recycling signage to guide staff, volunteers, participants and visitors.

TRAVEL POLICY

As an organisation, we work across Ireland, and travel is often an element of this. As part of our commitment to monitoring and managing our environmental impact, we aim to measure and reduce our travel-related carbon emissions.

When travelling for Fighting Words, the method of travel should be chosen on the basis of cost effectiveness and environmental impact.

- For journeys within Dublin, we will use bicycle, walking or public transport whenever time allows rather than taxis. Some pre-planning should help keep use of taxis to a minimum.
- For journeys within Ireland, train or bus should be chosen over car travel where possible.
- Only if it is the most sustainable option should a car be used on Fighting Words business.
- For international flights, non-stop flights are preferred to multiple short-haul stops.
- We will work towards increased use of video-conferencing where appropriate to limit travel.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required and not later than September 2025.

Fighting Words Environmental Action Plan 2024-2025

Action Plan

Area	Action	Responsibility	Notes	Completed
Energy Use	Review electricity and gas providers Arrange for annual boiler service	Operations Manager	Boiler serviced	Yes
Energy Use	Track energy use by reviewing monthly statements	Operations Manager		Ongoing
Recycling	Improve recycling in main space Clearly marked bins in place to separate waste: paper, drinks containers, etc in main workshop space	Programmes Manager	New bins purchased	Yes
Recycling	Advise volunteer team of changes to recycling programme	Operations Manager	Email volunteer team	

Recycling	Design and print engaging posters for the recycling areas	Digital Content Intern	Create and hang posters	Yes
Printing	Office paper in printers is recycled	Operations Manager	Source products from Klee Paper, supplier with commitment to eco-friendly products	Ongoing
Cleaning	Environmentally friendly cleaning products and soap in use Hand towels in toilets and toilet paper made of recycled paper	Operations Manager	Source products from Klee Paper, supplier with commitment to eco-friendly products	Ongoing
Reducing use of single-used plastics	Eliminate the use of single use containers to the largest extent possible, particularly coffee cups. Advise volunteers not to bring single use coffee cups to the centre by email and at training Advise teachers not to bring single use coffee cups to the centre at	Operations Manager Programmes Coordinator	Confirmed with Russell Street Bakery that staff, volunteers and visitors can bring reusable cups and mugs to purchase coffee Communicated to staff and volunteers. Posters up in both centres Bookings for catering	Yes

	time of booking Agree with Russell Street Bakery about use of reusable cups and mugs Choose catering suppliers that use recyclable packaging. Do not use disposable cups and cutlery		policy advised to staff	
Food Waste	Reduce the amount of food waste in our local community Source snacks for Word Warriors and Write Club from Tesco via FoodCloud	Programmes Coordinator Programmes Administrator Operations Manager	Complete Food Safety Level 1 course Designate press for food storage	
Digital Footprint	Conduct website green audit: Test it on this Website Carbon Calculator to find out! https://www.websitecarbon.com/ Contact our provider and ask for their green credentials.	IT Administrator		
Digital Footprint	Review use of email, online meetings and conduct digital housekeeping	Operations Manager	Action plan communicated to all staff	Yes
Travel	Staff to cycle or use public transport when travelling on behalf of Fighting Words	All staff	Per travel policy	Ongoing

Youth engagement	Involve the Youth Advisory Panel in the development and maintenance of the policy and action plan	Projects Administrator	Designated as an action point for YAP in 2025	
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