



New Century School Policy No. 805

Adopted: 12.19.2022

Revised:

805 WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The EPA estimates that 75% of the American waste stream is recyclable. Unfortunately, only 30% are recycled, but every year about 21.5 million tons of food waste are generated. (<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>).

According to National Institute of Health, recycling reduces the use of natural resources by reusing materials and about 94% of the natural resources used by Americans are non-renewable (<https://nems.nih.gov/environmental-programs/pages/benefits-of-recycling.aspx>).

New Century School initiated recycling program during 2018-2019 school year, but the progress was slowed down and further implementation was hindered due to Covid-19. Most of the school waste is recyclable and with the expansion of building facilities and the increase in the number of students, the volume of waste products has drastically increased. We have many new staff members and new students, so there is a high need for educational awareness. This is in line with the school's mission, to provide a high quality education that facilitate nurturing and inspires a community of learners through an innovative, holistic approach to education that embeds science and technology. This policy serves the purpose of boosting recycling awareness and ensuring that our school is green.

II. GUIDELINES

1. In order to ensure food waste reduction and increased recycling, this policy will be maintained, reviewed, and revised by a building Green Team annually:
 - a. A Green Team will be established. It will include two teachers, an admin, facility manager and a student. The Green Team will meet monthly to review this plan, create a calendar of school wide, community, and national events (with special attention to the first week orientation). The Green Team will communicate with the rest of the school regarding opportunities and expectations pertaining to waste reduction and recycling. The Green Team will also be aware of building wide goals and look into different grant opportunities that may exist.
 - b. Resources/tools (data, videos, power points, etc.) will be compiled and maintained via Google Docs by all members of the building Green Team.
2. At the beginning (as well as throughout) the school year, teachers and administrators will make a concerted effort to “on board” new members of the community (juniors, new seniors, and new faculty/staff) so they understand their role in waste reduction and recycling at NCS:

- a. The first week of school, administrators will welcome each Junior House and explain how the lunchroom will feel different because of our belief in food waste reduction.
 - b. The first week of school, teachers will explicitly teach students how to use the recycling containers and explain our community expectations around recycling behaviors.
 - c. The student on the building Green Team will introduce him/herself so their peers know they have support.
 - d. The building Green Team will integrate waste reduction and recycling practices into the first day of school.
3. Because food waste reduction and recycling are intended to be a community priority, there will be intentional time carved out of the school day to focus on a specific common topic:
 - a. NCS will have adapted schedules at certain times during the school year to incorporate an Advisory time to focus on topics important to the school vision and belief, some of which will be related to waste reduction and recycling for the whole school. This could include, but is not limited to guest speakers, short videos, Green Team student presenting data to their peers and setting goals, surveying students on their interests and habits, etc.
 - b. In addition, NCS will designate fieldtrips to locations that host activities focused on the environment.
4. Integrating waste reduction and recycling topics into our curriculum, if and where possible, will be a priority:
 - a. Students and their families will be surveyed throughout the year to learn more about their baseline understanding and practices of waste reduction and recycling. The Green Team and some classes may be able to incorporate this data into their lessons.
 - b. As teachers learn more about community/school/personal barriers to waste reduction and recycling, they will keep an eye on opportunities to integrate these topics into their curriculum.
 - c. When adding elective classes or Intensive Theme courses, we will ensure an environmental component is present.
 - d. Students will engage in art and science projects that aim at recycling and environmental awareness, such as using recyclable material for art.
 - e. Teachers will select books during reading time with topics related to recycling, reducing food waste, and taking care of the environment.

5. Students should be central to the work of creating a more sustainable school and, ultimately, world. Data-driven goals to improve our practices around waste and recycling should be created, monitored, and executed primarily by students, while being mentored by staff.
 - a. Students will work to create videos to model waste reduction and recycling best practices.
 - b. Advisory classes/Senior Projects of Building Green Team will work with the rest of the team to determine areas for improvement, based on data, and set goals which can be monitored and actively displayed so the whole student body sees progress.
6. Our commitment to waste reduction and recycling should be obvious in our words and actions, as well as visually represented across the building and via our digital presence:
 - a. Our tv screens and school communication will have information for students, prospective students, and the community regarding our practices and experiences.
 - b. All opportunities where students and/or staff create for the community will address the expectations to reduce waste and increase recycling.
 - c. Our school operations will be conscious about reducing the use of non-recyclable material, and other products that harm the environment.
 - d. Our leadership will always take into account options that are environment friendly when making decisions, such as reducing printed paper and utilizing digital resources when possible to reduce paper usage.
7. NCS will also interact with the greater community regarding waste reduction and recycling:
 - a. NCS staff and/or students will attend local conferences (and the Green Schools National Conference) regarding waste reduction and recycling (some examples: RAM/SWANA Conference; Reuse MN Conference; Minnesota Composting Council conference.
 - b. NCS will create and maintain partnerships with the community to learn and give more (ex: Dakota County, the MN ZOO, Oak Ridge Elementary School, the Partnership Garden). We will look to partner with Dakota Valley Recycling through the city.