

Eco Newsletter

Autumn/Spring 2023-24

Hello everyone,

As of December, Mei and I are now at the end of our time as eco prefects. Reflecting on the past year some personal highlights from our time include: our very sunny WaterAid walk, making seed bombs, newspaper plant pots and upcycled bird feeders in a margarine coated lab with everyone on Mind, Body, Soul Day, starting the KS3 form plant fostering programme with gardening club and every clothes swap. I am excited to see ongoing initiatives like the plastic free schools group, rainforest fundraising and "waste not want not" continue to grow this year along with the fresh ideas of our new eco prefects. It's been a pleasure to hear your feedback and enthusiasm at every event and eco council meeting.

Thank you, Jocelyn



Hi guys! I'm Thea and I am so looking forward to being eco prefect this year! I'd really like to start up some kind of competition between the different forms, with an award for the form who recycles the most, to provide more incentive in making our school as environmentally friendly as possible!! As Francesca said, we're also really keen to make the lunch food more accessible to all students, which is a big priority for us.



INTRODUCING THE NEW ECO PREFECTS

Thea Collins and Francesca Ratcliffe

Hi everyone! I'm Francesca and I'm so excited to be eco prefect this year. I am eager to reduce the amount of waste produced at Sydenham, particularly litter around the school premises and promoting the use of different bins to recycle effectively. I am vegan and Thea is vegetarian, so we are keen to bring back Meat-free Mondays in order to reduce the school's carbon footprint as well advocating for healthier eating.

Eco Schools Update

At the end of the summer term, we received the fantastic news that our Eco Schools Green Flag Award had been renewed and thank you to everyone, who participated in all our Eco activities and events last year!

At Eco Council we have been setting targets and deciding on areas of interest for this year and are working at 3 topics in particular:

1. Litter
2. Marine
3. Transport

Please read on to find out more about some of the exciting plans we have for the next few months.



ECO COMMUNITY





Eco Events



UPCOMING EVENTS 2024

World Book Day Book Swap

7th March 2024

Big Plastic Count

11th-17th March

Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel 2024

11th-22nd March 2024

School Grounds Litter Picks

Fridays Week A 1pm

Do you GU?

Throughout March

Rainforest Fundraiser

March - Date TBC

MAKE A DIFFERENCE MARCH

Throughout March, we will be asking everyone to take part in a range of activities, initiatives and fundraisers to raise awareness and take action on a few points that are important to us as a school and that enable us as a community to work together and make positive changes to the world around us and live more sustainably. There are rewards for the more actions you undertake and participate in.

Eco Code

Based on pledges we made for COP26 and updated for 2023, our Eco Code now has 6 pledges:

1. To buy 2nd hand clothes or swap and recycle clothing where possible.
2. To use correct bins to ensure we recycle as much as possible.
3. To turn off devices and lights if they are not in use.
4. To save water at school and at home.
5. To use public transport when possible to travel to school.
6. To reduce the food we waste in school and at home.

PLASTIC FREE SCHOOLS



This year we are working towards achieving Plastic Free School Status, which means that we complete a programme of activities provided by Surfers Against Sewage and their Plastic Free Schools campaign.

This started last term with form assemblies about plastic pollution and why this is problematic. We have formed a Plastic Free Schools action group and have highlighted 2 main areas that we need to improve in.

We will be meeting with the catering team to see if we can deal with a few issues in the canteen and how we can support them and also to change our own behaviour and way of thinking.

RAINFOREST AWARENESS

Maya Lawson, Isabella Wigan, Nora Frediani and Audrey Gibby were in a Geography lesson about deforestation in the rainforests, and it inspired them to want to make a change.

Deforestation has increased dramatically in the past years; there is still time to stop it, but that time is running out...

- Deforestation is killing hundreds of animals every single day. Tigers and orangutans are seriously endangered. Around 25 orangutans die every day and we lose around 140 animals due to deforestation each day.
- Cattle ranching is the practice in which farmers raise herds on land and kill them for food and clothes. It also creates 80 % of deforestation in the Amazon currently. They poison the land so trees can never grow back.
- Poaching is where people trap, kill or take wild animals simply for enjoyment, trophies, food or their fur. Poaching and overfishing threaten endangered species and can result in species extinction. Although it is illegal to poach endangered species, poachers kill millions of animals each year.

There are so many little things that we can do to slow down deforestation... Simply by trying to use less paper, or buy less products that may have palm oil inside.

By doing this, you could be saving an animal's life... So, next time you buy some chocolate, stop and look at the packet. Eat less meat because then we don't need to farm as much. Please think to yourself, is it worth risking an animal's life or home just to have some chocolate?

Look out for our fundraising events in March for Rainforest charities!



GARDENING CLUB

It was good to be back in the Eco Zone for Gardening club this year following on from the renovation of the Science block and not being able to access the Eco Zone for 6 months.

This has left us with A LOT of weeding to do but we were very pleased to see that the seed bombs that we planted last year really took off and we have been able to harvest a large amount of spinach and chard, as well as the ever reliable rhubarb.

The spring sees us taking cuttings indoors during colder weather and planning the crops that we would like to grow this year.



FOSSIL FUELS

We all know that fossil fuels create huge problems for the environment and with the historic agreement at COP28 to reduce global fossil fuel use by 2050, steps are being taken to ween us off fossil fuels such as oil and gas.

But what can each of us do to make a difference?

1. **Think about how you get from A to B** Cars and other modes of transport produce a lot of CO2 emissions and if we can switch to walking, cycling or using public transport then this is an easy way to reduce carbon emissions. Switching to electric cars can also help with this
2. **Switch energy supplier** The energy used to power and heat our houses is said by researchers to be the biggest use of fossil fuels. There are of course lots of companies that provide solar panels on the roofs of houses and many electricity suppliers now just sell renewable energies so it is important to shop around and make the right choice.
3. **Recycle** Take a few steps to a recycling centre in your building to deposit aluminium cans, plastics, glass, office paper, newspaper, cardboard.
4. **Think about your litter and waste** Picking up rubbish and not littering are important ways to improve the world around us. Why not volunteer and go rubbish picking on a beach or in a park to make a difference.

Every little helps and will make a positive difference!

CLOTHES SWAP - NOVEMBER 2024



Thank you to all students who participated in the Clothes Swap on Thursday 24th November. As ever it was very well supported and it was another real success.

This is such a good way to maintain our goal as a school of eliminating our participation in fast fashion as it is so detrimental to the planet and to society: 8-10% of internationally emitted greenhouse gases are produced by the fashion industry.

According to the United Nations, "It takes around 7,500 litres of water to make a single pair of jeans, equivalent to the amount of water the average person drinks over a period of seven years."

All the clothes that weren't swapped were given to charity. We hope to go on to do even wider reaching clothes swaps next year.

Vegan recipes for you to try ...

Vegan Valentine's Cookies

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 10)

- 300g of plain / all purpose flour
- 80g of icing / powdered sugar
- 5 tablespoons of cocoa powder (see step 2)
- 150g of dairy-free block butter
- 3 – 4 tablespoons of dairy-free milk
- Vegan Nutella spread

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees c fan and line 2 baking trays with grease proof paper. Set aside.
2. Add the flour, icing sugar, 2 tbs of the cocoa powder and 3 tbs of dairy-free milk. Mix until a cookie dough forms. You can mix by hand or in a food processor.
3. Remove 1/2 of the dough and set aside. Add in the remaining cocoa powder and extra tbs of milk, mix to combine into a rich chocolate cookie dough. You'll have a darker dough and a lighter dough.
4. Roll out each dough individually to the same thickness, around 1 inch thick. Use a mini heart cookie cutter to cut hearts out of each coloured dough. Place the dark chocolate hearts into the light coloured dough and light hearts in the dark colour dough so you have two patterned doughs. Cut the hearts in a uniform pattern for the best looking result.
5. Use a medium sized shaped heart cookie cutter to chomp out the heart shaped cookies and place on the lined trays. Use the mini heart cookie cutter to cut out the middle of only half of the cookies (you want the other half full as these are for the base / bottom of the sandwich cookie).
6. Place into the freeze for 5 minutes to help firm up the biscuits before baking.
7. Place into the oven and bake for 8-10 minutes until lightly golden in colour. Remove from the oven and allow the biscuits to cool on the tray.
8. Flip all of the cookies (without the heart cut out) upside down. Spread or pipe vegan 'nutella' on top of the cookie then place a cookie with the heart cut out on top. Press down to secure it in place.
9. Serve and enjoy!

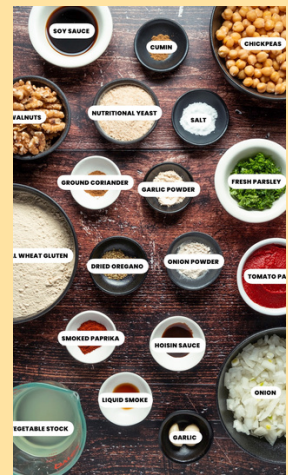
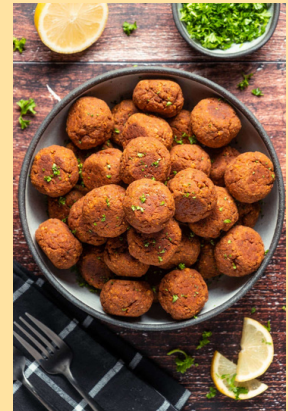


Recipe from The Little Blog of Vegan

Vegan Meatballs

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

- 1 cup Walnuts (100g)
- 15 ounce Can Chickpeas Drained
- 1 Medium Onion White, Yellow or Brown, Finely Chopped
- 2 Cloves Garlic Crushed
- ¼ cup Nutritional Yeast Flakes (15g)
- 2 Tablespoons Soy Sauce
- ½ cup Tomato Paste (130g)
- 1 teaspoon Hoisin Sauce
- 1 teaspoon Garlic Powder
- 1 teaspoon Onion Powder
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- ¼ teaspoon Cumin
- ¼ teaspoon Ground Coriander
- ½ teaspoon Dried Oregano
- 1 teaspoon Smoked Paprika
- ¼ teaspoon Liquid Smoke
- ¾ cup Vegetable Stock (180ml) or Broth
- 1 ½ cups Vital Wheat Gluten (225g)
- Olive Oil Extra Virgin, For Brushing, Optional



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add walnuts to a food processor and process into crumbs. Transfer the crumbs to a bowl and set aside.
2. Add drained chickpeas, chopped onion, crushed garlic, nutritional yeast, soy sauce, tomato paste, hoisin sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, cumin, ground coriander, oregano, smoked paprika, liquid smoke and vegetable stock to the food processor and process until smooth.
3. Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl and add the walnut crumbs. Mix together.
4. Add vital wheat gluten and mix in. The mix will be very thick. Don't overmix as this will cause the gluten to become tough and chewy. Just mix it until mixed and then stop mixing.
5. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).
6. Scoop the mixture using a heaped tablespoon measure and roll them into balls. Aim to get around 30 meatballs.
7. Place the meatballs onto a parchment lined baking sheet.
8. Brush the meatballs with olive oil (optional) and then bake for 15 minutes on one side, then flip them over and bake for 15 minutes on the other side. They should be browned and crispy on both sides.

Recipe from www.lovingitvegan.com