

Sustainability Policy Statement

The following policy has been prepared as part of the School Sector Climate Action Mandate, and in keeping with the principles and themes of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030, and as approved by the Board of Management of our school on 24th June, 2024.

ESD aims to ensure that “by 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”. (Sustainable Development Goal 4.7)

Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement (“the Statement”) is to outline how our school promotes sustainability and climate action, through our actions and activities. Sustainability can be defined as the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future.

Scope

Sustainability is a community issue and applies to all pupils, teachers and employees of our school. Parents and guardians should note, and where possible, promote, the Statement. The Board of Management of the school will ensure that decisions made in respect of the school align with the Statement.

Vision, mission and values

Vision Statement

Our school seeks to provide a welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment in an atmosphere of acceptance, kindness and empathy. Pupils are valued and are actively supported and nurtured to reach their full potential. Our school wishes to ensure a positive, holistic learning experience for all. The pupils are provided with the opportunity to engage with a broad and balanced range of educational activities and a love of learning is stimulated and fostered.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a warm welcome to all our pupils and to create effective learning opportunities in an inclusive setting. We provide an environment where kindness, respect and empathy are intrinsic to school life and wish that our pupils will emulate these core values in society.

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- Our school has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement. It clearly details the aims and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in our school, its relationship to the vision and mission of the school.
- Our school recognises Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme. Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom in relevant subjects across all class levels.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network and keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter.

Environmental sustainability

- Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme and is currently working towards our 6th Green Flag Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste. Our 1st Green Flag for Litter in Waste was awarded in 2006. Our Green Schools Committee comprises pupils from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class and includes school staff. The role of the committee is to promote our Green Schools objectives throughout the whole school and to monitor recycling efforts, energy usage and water conservation. The committee promotes initiatives such as WEEE Battery Recycling Challenge, collection of used stamps for Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Litter Picking schemes and Cycle or Walk to School Campaigns.
- We engage with programmes that support and promote Environmental Education, including Picker Pals, Kildare Bio Box and Heritage in Schools.
- Our school has energy efficiency measures in place and actively promotes energy conservation and the improvement of energy use in our school. We engage with the SEAI energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption. Our school retrofit programme, currently underway, includes replacement of school boiler and radiators, cavity wall insulation, roof insulation and replacement of

light fittings. This retrofit aims to reduce our energy use from 248,708 KWh to 68,811 KWh post works.

- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment and clearly displays information on sustainability in prominent and accessible places.
- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. We run a comprehensive annual vegetable planting plan and we are proud of our mini-forest, a habitat for a wide range of native birds and insects and an ideal area for outdoor learning. Biodiversity is promoted in our grounds. We have a no-mow mini meadow, we do not use pesticides or chemicals in our garden.
- Our school has installed energy efficient printers, as part of our Energy Reduction Plan. These new printers also impose a monthly limit on photocopying. This will help to reduce paper and print/ink wastage.
- We encourage waste reduction in our school. All lunch waste is brought home by pupils.

Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of, and is sensitive to, issues surrounding gender equity. We foster a spirit of peace and examine this in the context of the wider world.
- Our school ethos strives to prepare pupils for life as citizens of a global community. We engage with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as Global Classrooms.
- The needs of all pupils in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.

Economic Sustainability

- A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school's allocation of its resources.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles. Our Parents Association organises a second-hand uniform and Communion Dress sale, which promotes the principles of a circular economy.
- Our school retrofit programme, currently underway, will ensure that our buildings are maintained with sustainability best practise in mind.

Cultural Sustainability

- Our school ethos aims to foster pupils' self-esteem, along with a mutual regard and respect for fellow pupils, and positive social interaction and relationships.

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- Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare pupils for life in an increasingly multicultural society.
- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement, and encourages the community's involvement with the school. We are members of a Creative Cluster, working with three local primary schools on a shared project. We collaborate with several local groups and organisations including Tidy Towns, Maynooth University, Men's Shed, Knitting groups and our local library.
- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community. Our Intercultural Day celebrates the diverse backgrounds of our school community.

Teacher Competence

- Our Teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD and our School Leadership Team are committed to sustainability through a whole school approach.

Pupil Competence

- Our pupils are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities. 6th Class pupils participate in reverse integration programmes in our ASC class. The pupils participate in inter-class Maths Buddy and Book Buddy schemes.
- Our school has an active Student Council and Green School's Committee.

Goals

- Our school aims to increase the use of recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible and to improve the procurement and use of school resources, taking into account their impact on the environment.
- Our school aims to improve our outdoor learning space by re-introducing raised beds, pollinator zones, an outdoor sensory space and an outdoor classroom. Pupils will engage in planting activities, including growing food, native Irish plants and plants that encourage pollinators.
- Our school aims to encourage Walk on Wednesday / Cycle on Wednesday campaigns throughout the school year.

Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on _____. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed _____ years.

Presentation Girls' School, Maynooth

Signed: Duncan Uí Shingheáin
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 24/6/2024

Lona McGorry

Principal/Secretary Board of
Management