



Sustainability Policy Statement

Scoil Mhuire, Ballyleague NS

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 students, 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

Our school’s vision is to become a sustainable school by adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives.

Our school’s mission is

- To foster a sense of responsibility for the long term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the Earth’s resources
- To enable each child to live as an informed and caring member of our local, national, European and global communities
- To enable pupils to acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment
- To develop in pupils a sense of responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
- To enable pupils to acquire skills to help care for the environment by having hands-on experiences at school
- To foster a sense of responsibility for the long term care of the environment and a commitment to sustainable development goals

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, and this is co-ordinated effectively in our school.
- Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects.
- All our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development.
- Resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability are adequate and sufficient at all levels.

- Our school carries out regular self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (www.ISSN.ie)
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/a1d6e-education-for-sustainable-development-newsletter/>

Environmental sustainability

Green-Schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school.

- Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme. We were awarded our 9th Green Flag in June 2024. We are now working towards our 10th flag on the theme of Global Citizenship Food and Biodiversity. Our school has a Green Team comprising staff and students. Litter picks, recycling, reducing and reusing are part of the culture of our school. We also do battery collections every second year.
- Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme’s curriculum linked energy Resources, pupil Workshops and teacher CPD
- Our school engages with the [SEAI Energy in Education](#) resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption.
- Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place, and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible.
- Our school has comprehensive policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste, food waste, single use plastics, energy, etc.
- Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment.
- Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places.
- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. We are hoping to soon develop an outdoor garden also.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity – bug hotel, hedgehog house, bird houses
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school. We have a “Feet First Friday” whereby pupils walk to school on the first Friday each month, or if that’s not possible, pupils meet at a point close to the school and walk together from that point.
- Our school engages with the Safe Routes to School programme: <https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>
- Our school engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education e.g. ECO UNESCO, Picker Pals, etc.

Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity.
- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level.
- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.
- All school staff can be provided with the training in the area of conflict resolution, in order to support and affect positive student behaviour.

Economic Sustainability

- A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school's allocation of its resources.
- Students are involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school through our student council.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills. E.g. Bizworld, mini-companies
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practice in the area of sustainability in mind.
- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy

Cultural Sustainability

- Our school ethos aims to foster students' self-esteem, along with a mutual regard and respect for fellow students, and positive social interaction and relationships.
- Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare students for life in an increasingly multicultural society.
- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement, and encourages the community's involvement with the school.
- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community.

Teacher Competence

- Our Teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD.

Student Competence

- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer to peer learning activities
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects
- Our school has a Student Council & Green Schools Committee who are involved in decisions about sustainability.

- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects e.g. Tidy Towns
- Our schools are involved in project based learning around real-life problems in the local community

Goals

- Our school aims to work towards our tenth Green Flag on the theme of Global Citizenship Food & Biodiversity in 2024/25.
- This year we also aim to use resources from the SEAI's Education and Youth Programme. We have applied for an SEAI workshop for pupils throughout the school.
- We aim to create a designated notice board with information about sustainability.

Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on 4th October 2024. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 2 years.

Signature: Brenda Reynolds
Chairperson, BOM

Caroline Fallon
Principal