



## Sustainability Policy Statement

All public service bodies are required under the Climate Action Plan to adhere to the Public Service Climate Action Mandate – and to develop Climate Action Roadmaps setting out how they will deliver on their energy efficiency and emission reduction targets.

Schools now have a separate Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. The School Sector Climate Action Mandate can be read in full here: [gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development – ESD to 2030 also informs the content of the following Sustainability Policy Statement template.

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)

The following has been prepared as part the School Sector Climate Action Mandate, and in keeping with the principles and themes of ESD to 2030, and has been accepted by the Board of Management of our school.

### 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



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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 create a safe, inclusive and nurturing school community where every child is supported to reach their full potential and develop as an active, responsible global citizen who respects the environment and contributes positively to a sustainable future.

### **Our school's mission is...**

To provide a high-quality, child-centred education in a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes curiosity, creativity, wellbeing and lifelong learning. We aim to empower pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to make informed choices and take meaningful action for sustainability, both locally and globally.

### **Our school's values are...**

Respect, care, inclusion, responsibility, teamwork, wellbeing, and sustainability. We value every child's voice and encourage active participation in school life and decision-making. We are committed to fostering respect for ourselves, others, and the natural environment, and to promoting a culture of care and responsibility in line with the principles of Education for Sustainable Development.

### **Linking our vision, mission and values to sustainability**

Our vision, mission and values are closely aligned with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to quality education, climate action, responsible consumption, and global citizenship. Through our commitment to sustainability, we actively promote environmental awareness, democratic participation, and social responsibility. Initiatives such as our Green-Schools work, student-led committees, outdoor learning spaces, biodiversity



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projects, and community engagement all reflect our ethos of learning for life in a sustainable world.

## 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](http://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.

Our school is an active participant in the Green-Schools Programme and has demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to environmental sustainability. Our Green-Schools



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Committee has been highly active for many years, leading initiatives, promoting awareness, and engaging the whole school community in environmental action.

To date, our school has been awarded five Green Flags for the following themes:

- Litter and Waste
- Energy
- Water
- Travel
- Biodiversity

These achievements reflect the consistent efforts of students and staff in improving our school environment and promoting sustainable practices.

We are currently working towards achieving our next Green Flag under the theme of Global Citizenship, further developing students' understanding of global sustainability issues and their role as responsible global citizens.

- Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme's curriculum linked energy Resources, pupil Workshops and teacher CPD  
[Schools | Community Energy | SEAI](https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/)<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/>
- Our school engages with the SEAI Energy in Education resources and energy management tools to monitor and report on energy consumption. As part of our commitment to reducing energy use, the school has installed 14 solar panels, supporting the generation of renewable energy on-site. This initiative contributes to lowering our overall energy consumption and promotes awareness among pupils of the importance of sustainable energy practices.
- 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.....
- Our school resources are procured and utilised with careful consideration of their impact on the environment. Recycling is embedded in daily practice, with clearly



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designated recycling areas in every classroom. We actively seek opportunities to use recycled and reusable materials wherever possible, helping to reduce waste and promote sustainable habits across the school.

- 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 actively promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. We are fortunate to have both a tree stump seating area and a small school garden, which provide valuable opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning across a range of subjects. These spaces are largely run and maintained by the children, fostering a strong sense of ownership, responsibility, and pride in their environment. Pupils are actively involved in planting, caring for, and developing the garden, supporting both their understanding of sustainability and their overall wellbeing.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity. We have developed a bug hotel to support insects and pollinators, and we have also designated a natural area within the school grounds that is left undisturbed to encourage native plants and wildlife to thrive. These initiatives help to increase biodiversity on our school grounds while providing students with opportunities to observe and learn about local ecosystems in a meaningful, hands-on way.
- Our school promotes sustainable transport, encouraging pupils to walk or cycle to school where possible. All children are encouraged to walk to school on Wednesdays, helping to reduce traffic and promote healthy habits. As part of our Wellbeing Wednesday initiative, classes also take part in a wellbeing walk, supporting both physical activity and mental wellbeing. These initiatives foster an awareness of sustainable travel choices while contributing positively to the health of our school community.
- 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. We actively participate in Picker Pals, encouraging pupils and their



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families to take part in regular litter-picking activities. This initiative has helped to strengthen our connection with the local community, as our pupils are highly visible in their efforts to keep the area clean. Through this programme, students develop a strong sense of environmental responsibility and pride in contributing positively to their surroundings.

- Additionally, for the past couple of years our senior pupils have taken part in a 12-week programme called Wildworks, a positive education philosophy based upon the outdoor and experiential know-how and expertise of Wild Work Outdoor Educators.

## 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.
- Our school engages with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/> or other programmes working in this area.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.
- All school staff are 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 actively involved in the decision-making process regarding resource allocation within our school. This is facilitated through the annually elected Student Council, which provides pupils with a voice in school matters and the opportunity to contribute ideas and decisions, including those related to sustainability and the use of resources.



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- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business and entrepreneurial skills through participation in the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. Through this programme, students work collaboratively to develop ideas, create and market products, and gain practical experience in areas such as planning, budgeting, and teamwork. This supports creativity, innovation, and an understanding of enterprise in a real-world context.
- 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 practise 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 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) through ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Staff regularly engage in relevant training opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, and confidence in delivering sustainability education across the curriculum. This ensures that ESD is effectively embedded in teaching and learning throughout the school.

## Student Competence



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- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer to peer learning activities
- Our school has an active Student Council / Sustainability Committee / Green Team who are involved in a wide range of decisions relating to the day-to-day running of the school. The group plays an important leadership role in school life, contributing ideas and helping to implement initiatives that support the whole school community. They have been directly involved in designing elements of the school uniform and also help to plan Wellbeing Wednesdays and other school initiatives, promoting student voice, wellbeing, and a positive school environment.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer and participate in local community action on sustainability projects. This includes involvement in community litter-picking initiatives and engagement with local Tidy Towns activities. Through these experiences, students actively contribute to improving their local environment, develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, and strengthen links between the school and the wider community.
- Our schools are involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community

## Goals

Our school will aim to achieve a Green Flag for Global Citizenship by 2027, further strengthening our commitment to Education for Sustainable Development and global awareness across the school community. In addition, we will continue to participate in the Wild Work programme on a yearly basis, supporting ongoing engagement with biodiversity, habitat creation, and outdoor learning initiatives. The school will also apply for water trough planters in 2026 to further enhance biodiversity within our school grounds and provide additional opportunities for pupil involvement in environmental care and learning. Schools may also refer to the school self-evaluation process or the standards within the Looking At Our Schools framework to identify relevant goals.

## Implementation and review



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This Statement was implemented on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 2 years.

## Ratification

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal Whitegate National School

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_