



Sustainability and Environmental Policy Loreto College St. Stephen's Green

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Loreto College, St Stephen's Green relating to sustainability. Its purpose is to help the school community, including staff, students, parents, guardians and other relevant parties to understand the environment and approach of the school.

This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

Introductory Statement

This policy document is the result of the collaboration of the Sustainability Co-ordinator, Green Schools Committee, together with the Board of Management.

Mission Statement

"In an atmosphere of mutual respect and justice, we are a community that aims to provide a rich and diverse curriculum catering for the needs of each individual student. We provide a holistic education wherein we strive for excellence in the pursuit of knowledge. Social concerns and spiritual values are central to our educational philosophy, while sporting and cultural endeavours are encouraged. Each student is challenged to realise her full potential and to recognise the dignity of each human being".

Rationale

All schools now have a specific Climate Action Mandate within the Climate Action Plan 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 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. The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 and 'The Second National Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024 inform the content of the following Sustainability Policy Statement.

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)

Loreto College aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into many areas of the curriculum, establishing a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment both inside and outside school and participating in Green Schools. We will aim to lead the community by demonstrating good practice in waste management, water and energy usage, sustainable travel and developing the school grounds to promote biodiversity. We will continue our long standing tradition of encouraging our school community to be global citizens, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Sustainability and caring for the environment and others are central to the ethos of Loreto College through the teaching of various subject areas and is embedded into our curriculum from 1st to 6th year. The Mary Ward values of truth and justice encourage students to be reflective of how they live their lives, seek out the truth and be responsible global citizens and agents of change, committed to building a better world. The school community fosters a sense of responsibility and respect for people, the environment and awareness of how to live sustainably.

Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes:

- i. To become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments.
- ii. To develop an understanding of conservation e.g. recycling, energy and water
- iii. To develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
- iv. To promote alternative methods of transport to and from school e.g. cycling, scooting and walking to school and use of public transport.
- v. 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

through personal life style and participation in collective environmental decision making.

- vi. To enable the students to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and *Global Communities*.
- vii. To acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
- viii. Through explanation, investigation and hands on experiences our students will acquire skills to help care for our environment immediately and have a long term impact.
- ix. To understand the actions that people can have on the environment.
- x. Promote sustainable and green initiatives in any future development of the school including building projects and upgrades.
- xi. Offset carbon emissions from school trips.

Procedures and Guidelines

Environmental Sustainability

1. Energy

- Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy efficient school through participation in *Green Schools*.

2. Waste

- To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.
- Students take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper and rubbish in the appropriate manner.
- To ensure that waste from classroom is properly sorted into general rubbish and recycling bins.

3. Biodiversity

- To utilise our green areas to its full extent and continue to develop it.
- To have biodiversity as a key aim in the future development of the school through the *Think Big Project*.

4. Water

- To reduce the water consumption within the school.
- To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible. To monitor water usage and report wastage.

5. Travel

- To encourage the use of sustainable transport options including walking, cycling and public transport.

- To have appropriate infrastructure within the school to support these transport methods e.g bike racks and changing rooms.

Implementation

The school will continuously participate in Green Schools and work towards obtaining our Green Flags. Participation in the Take 1 Programme will help to embed the Sustainable Development Goals through the school curriculum. This includes every junior cycle class participating in regular CSPE lessons which will cover environmental, sustainability and social issues. All subjects will lend themselves to the promotion and implementation of our policy. The whole school community will be involved and made aware of the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates via the Green Schools Notice Board, the Green Schools Instagram account and the Green Committee Newsletter and the school app and website.

Energy

1. Promote a 'switch off and save' rule for technological equipment, lighting and heating/cooling particularly when leaving the classroom.
2. Try to switch the schools energy tariff to a green/renewable tariff.
3. When replacing appliances within the school try and purchase the most energy efficient options.
4. Students to engage in units of work relating to energy in Science, Geography etc.
5. Members of the Green Schools Committee will act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used in an effort to conserve energy.
6. Future building projects will be designed to be highly energy efficient and make use of any renewable energy initiatives.

Waste

1. Students are consistently reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner.
2. Waste from classrooms is disposed of daily and transferred to the correct bin.
3. Use recycled paper for printer/copier where possible.
4. Promote the reuse of paper in classrooms, staffroom and office.
5. Avoiding giving handouts and photocopies where possible and encourage the use of the IPADs and Google Classroom for notes etc.
6. Recycling bins provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office.

Travel

1. Upgrades to the school bike racks.
2. Encourage students to use public transport options or walk/cycle to school.
3. Teachers can opt in to the Bike to Work scheme.

Biodiversity

1. Involve students and members of our school community in planting and maintaining our gardens e.g TY Horticulture course.
2. Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our green areas.
3. As part of the Think Big project, Improve our outdoor natural environment, by planting native trees or native plants and wildflowers that encourage and support the insect population, such as bees and butterflies.
4. Any future building projects should use natural and sustainable materials that reduce the impact on the environment.
5. Provide varied living conditions in the school garden (insect hotels, hedges, walls, grassy areas and trees) to offer potential food and shelter to our natural biodiversity.
6. Have a variety of green plants within the indoor areas of the school.

Water

1. Remind students and staff regularly about the importance of turning off the tap when water is flowing.
2. Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in Science, Chemistry and Geography.
3. Facilities team to regularly monitor water usage and report wastage.
4. Remind students to use water fountains to refill their reusable water bottles during break times.
5. The school harvests rainwater using water butts that are on the school grounds and use for watering plants and trees in summer months.

Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equality (SDG 5) through CSPE and SPHE classes.
- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level e.g Amnesty and Mission Possible Groups.
- 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 through our AEN department in cooperation with all school staff.

Economic Sustainability

- An 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 within our school through the elected Student Council.

- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills eg. Young Social Innovators and Business Enterprise.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.
- 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 interactions and relationships. Initiatives such as the Friends for Life programme help give students the tools to do this.
- 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 e.g Soup Run, Carols by Candlelight.

Other Initiatives

Activities and information campaigns such as the following are currently running within the school:

- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network.
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter.
- We are currently working as a whole school towards obtaining the Green Flag for Biodiversity.
- Recycling Bins: A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office and in each classroom to ensure that any waste paper will be recycled.
- Participation in the Every Can Counts Recycling Campaign which includes having TY Recycling Ambassadors collect aluminium cans in the school and promote sustainability and the correct disposal of waste.
- Litter Bins - A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste i.e. left over pieces of food, floor dirt etc. and this is emptied on a daily basis.
- Staff will keep recyclable items for art materials i.e. cardboard rolls, cardboard, paper, tinfoil, recycled bottle tops which can be used for Junk Kouture.
- School App: Parents will be sent school information via the app where possible instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.
- Uniform Swap - The Green Committee in conjunction with the Parents' Association will hold a uniform swap at the end of each year to recycle clothing

- **Mobility:** The school community is working on improving mobility. Students are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.
- **Green Flag:** The school has been awarded its Green Flags for the themes of Litter and Waste, Energy, Water and Transport. The school is now focusing on its fifth Green Flag under the theme of Biodiversity. It is the aim of the school to continue working on renewing the previous themes while simultaneously working on efforts for the new flag.
- **Competitions and Initiatives:** Students and teachers regularly take part in environmental and sustainability competitions such as the Young Environmentalist, BT Young Scientist, SciFest and Green Schools Competitions.
- **School Trips** - walking or public transport is used to travel to school trips or field trips if feasible.
- **Catering** - biodegradable or recyclable materials are used for catering purposes
- **Curriculum:** The school views environmental issues as being fundamental to the curriculum. Participation in the Take 1 Programme to make students aware of links between the curriculum and the Sustainable Development Goals. Teachers are encouraged to nurture a respect for the environment in their students. Environmental / Green issues are key elements of C.S.P.E., S.P.H.E., Religion, Science and Geography etc. The school community will work together to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world-views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living by teaching sustainability. A cross curricular approach will be taken to the teaching of sustainability.

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- Continuous participation in the Green Schools programme and the aspiration to be rewarded further Green Schools' flags.
- Continuous improvement, development and use of the school gardens.
- Students will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability through the Take 1 Programme.

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

- Teaching staff
- Admin Staff
- Facilities/Housekeeping Staff
- Students
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Student Council

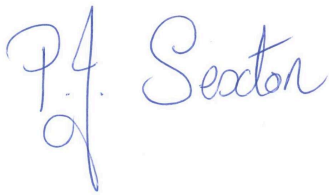
Implementation Date

This policy was ratified on 18th April, 2024.

Timetable for Review: The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended every 2-3 years in line with the new themes for our Green School flags.

Ratification & Communication: The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in at which it was formally ratified. Notification that the policy is available for viewing will be communicated to the parents via the school app.

It will be available for viewing on the school website.



Signed by PJ Sexton
Chair of the Board of Management

18th April, 2024.

Date ratified by the Board of Management