St. Patrick's National School, Drumcondra, D09XH52

Scoil Phadraig, Droim Conrach, Ath Cliath D09 XH52

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Charity number:20116453

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Introduction:
Schools have a Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (E.S.D to 2030) also informs the content of our Environmental Sustainability Policy Statement.
St Patrick's N.S recognises the importance of developing an awareness and understanding of how our actions affect the environment in which we live, work and relax. We aim to instil a sense of duty and care for our shared world. Through participation in the Green-Schools Programme, we commit to make pupils, staff and the wider community aware of the importance of environmental care and sustainable living.

Purpose and scope
The purpose of this Environmental Sustainability Policy Statement is to outline how our school promotes environmental sustainability through our actions and activities.

Sustainability can be defined as the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future. It is a community issue and applies to all pupils, teachers and employees of our school. Where possible, we should promote the Statement at school, at home and in our community. The Board of Management of the school will try to ensure that decisions made in respect of the school align with the Statement.

Relationship to School Ethos
Being community and environmentally aware closely aligns with our school mission statement, which emphasises nurturing responsible, respectful and engaged pupils who contribute positively to their community, are active citizens and foster respect for the world around us.

Aims
1. To foster responsibility for environmental protection and awareness among staff and pupils.
2. To integrate environmental themes into teaching and learning across the curriculum.
3. To engage pupils in practical environmental projects through the *seven-step Green-Schools process*.
4. To transfer environmental knowledge and values into positive action in school, at home and in the wider community

Policies and Procedures

Green-Schools Committee
Every year a Green School Committee is elected/chosen, consisting of members from each class from 1st to 6th Class. The committee has regular meetings with the Green School Co-ordinator to discuss Green School issues and to implement initiatives. They oversee the environmental sustainability activities in the school and ensure good practices are implemented on a whole-school basis in cooperation with the Board of Management and all members of the school community.

Litter/Waste Activities

1. All classrooms and the staff room have recycling bins.
2. The staff rooms have a compost bin for food wastes
3. Staff are aware of the environmental impact of photocopying and to only photocopy what is needed and to use double-sided copying where possible.
4. Pupils reuse paper where possible.
5. Pupils engage in recycled / “junk art” style projects periodically.
6. Hot food packaging is either recyclable or compostable
7. Pupils bring home food waste and organic materials to compost at home.
8. The Green School Committee operate a weekly schedule of litter picking in the school
9. Single-use plastic materials will be avoided as much as possible
10. Children are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to school
11. As far as is practicable, the school will endeavour to repair broken items, including electronic items, and to properly dispose of any waste.
12. An electronic waste collection is organised annually
13. Communication with parents is through email and text rather than printed paper.

. **Energy Saving Activities**

1. Lights and heat are turned off when not required.
2. Computers and interactive whiteboards are on standby when not in use.
3. Staff only photocopy what they need and should use black ink where possible.
4. Outside doors and windows are shut when appropriate to save heat except when required for enhanced ventilation.
5. The school is gradually replacing all ordinary light fittings with LED lights
6. Any damaged doors and windows are repaired quickly and the heating systems are maintained regularly to ensure efficiency.
7. The school completes an annual energy consumption report to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland SEAI.
8. The school participated in the solar panels schools project in 2024.
9. The school participated in an SEAI energy audit in 2026

Water Saving Activities

1. Taps throughout the school have an automatic stop mechanism
2. Each classroom monitors for leaks, and they are repaired quickly.

Transport

1. Pupils and staff are encouraged to use active modes of transport such as walking, or cycling to school where possible.
2. Parents are encouraged to park and walk to school.
3. The school participated in an annual Cycle to School Day (Cycle on Wednesday-CoW) promoting National Bike Week. The school may also participate in an organised Walk to School (WoW) Day.
4. The school participates in Cycle Right's cycling and safety training programme, for 5th class.
5. There are a number of cycle and scooter parking bays in the school; a new cycle shelter was made available in 2024.

School Garden and Biodiversity

1. The school enjoys a variety of open spaces on/ near the campus, including the courtyard garden of the senior building, a range of native fruit trees and a variety of other plants planted at the rear of the Junior school, access to the the local park beside the school and and occasional access to "Driseog Woods" at Belvedere House, DCU.
2. As part of the school's School Improvement Plan 2023-2026, the school identified the need for a sensory garden, which will promote outdoor learning and create a calming sensory space and to support biodiversity.

Global Citizenship

1. The Green School Committee operates a class schedule of litter picking throughout the school, where everyone plays their part.
2. Climate Action Week is marked in the school each year.
3. Green Schools features in assembly and in the school newsletters as a reminder to all in the school community
4. Additional ways of supporting global environmental campaigns will be explored.

Curricular Activities

Many aspects of environmental awareness will be taught in the form of explicit lessons which will complement the Green School activities taking place throughout the school in relation to litter, energy and water, travel & biodiversity. The themes are integrated across many different subjects easily. The following are some examples of where the Green-Schools programme can be linked to curricular work:

SPHE: promotion of personal development and wellbeing, citizenship and social/personal responsibility, communication / co-operation with others, media awareness

Art: creation of posters, murals, signs, logos, mascots, water as a medium for art, junk art

Information Technology: creating graphs and charts, using spreadsheets, designing signs and posters etc., carrying out research, use of interactive websites, sending emails/letters in relation to environmental issues, doing surveys, raising awareness through the school newsletter and website.

English: debates, poetry, essays, Green Codes, signs, newsletter, letters

Geography: The water cycle, the water treatment process, rivers, lakes, oceans of Ireland and the world, climate change and global warming, using maps, coordinates, symbols and keys

History: change in water quality and consumption over time, change in packaging/litter/ consumer trends over time, relate to changes in lifestyles and society

Science: pollution, properties of water, water quality sampling, water experiments

Maths: charts and graphs measuring volume, capacity, interpreting surveys.

Success Criteria

The effectiveness of this policy can be judged from the following indicators:

1. A litter-free, clean school environment;
2. Reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, water and waste disposal
3. Achievement and renewal of Green Flags across multiple themes; and
4. Active participation of pupils and staff in environmental initiatives

Implementation and Review

The policy has immediate effect and will be reviewed no later than 2028.

Ratification and Communication

The policy was ratified by the BoM on the date below. It will be posted on the school website.



Signed:
Prof. Anne Looney
(Chairperson, BoM)
Date: 09/03/2026



Signed:
Natasha Bassett
(Principal)
Date: 09/03/2026