

Cabinteely Community School



Sustainability Policy

Ratified 23 January 2023

1. Rationale

Cabinteely Community School aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practises in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into many areas of the curriculum, instilling a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment and participating in Green Schools. We will aim to lead the community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity. Along with applying for our Green Flags every two years, we will be focusing on a whole school sustainability goal.

2. Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes to:

- To become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments
- To develop an understanding of conservation e.g. Recycling, energy and water
- To develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
- To promote alternative methods of transport to and from school e.g. cycling, scooting and walking to school.
- 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.
- To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of our community.
- To acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
- Through explanation, investigation and hands on experiences the children will acquire skills to help care for our environment immediately and have a long term impact
- To understand the actions that people can have on the environment.

3. Procedures and Guidelines

3.1 The school plans to reduce the school's ecological footprint in the following ways:

3.2 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.
- Designate a child per class group to turn off lights/projectors when classes/teachers leave rooms – receive merits.

3.3 Waste

- To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.
- Students to take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper and rubbish in the appropriate manner.
- Using fallen leaves for compost.
- Using compost bins for the students meals (compostable containers).
- Using compost bins in the staff rooms
- Using compost bins in the Home Economics rooms
- Students will be reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner through posters & videos.
 - Food waste is disposed daily and transferred to the correct bin.
 - Paper into recycling bins.
 - Use recycled paper for printer/photocopier where possible
 - Reduce use of photocopiers due to students & teachers
 - Promote the reuse of paper in classrooms, staffroom and office.
 - Recycling bins provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office. Waste bins are also provided and have black bags. Students and staff are encouraged to dispose of their waste correctly, for example to wash out yoghurt cartons before placing in the recycling bin.
- A compostable waste bin is provided in the staff room. Staff were informed of what and how to compost during staff meeting and through signage. Waste from this bin is placed in the wormery in the school garden and/or into the compost area in the garden.
- The school will be changing the ratio of black bins to green bins

3.4 Biodiversity

- To utilise our garden area to its full extent and continue to develop it.
- Planting native seeds/plants throughout the school grounds to help pollinators
- Leaving areas where plants are let grow & reseed naturally (wildflower areas)
- To involve staff and students in maintenance of school garden.
- Maintain the vegetable garden
- Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our gardens
- Improve our outdoor natural environment, by planting native trees
- Improve our vegetable garden by planting and harvesting more seasonal vegetables
- 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
- Support our native birds (particularly during the winter months) by providing trees and compost areas in the school garden.

4. Implementation

The school will continuously participate in Green Schools and work towards obtaining Green Flags (22/23 - Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste). Furthermore, every Junior class will learn about sustainability/biodiversity through CSPE, SPHE, Geography, Business, horticulture & Science. Transition year students take part in Horticulture and Biodiversity. The SDGs officer meets two groups each week to work towards improving awareness of the Unesco goals set by the state members and to liaise with, and provide support to Green Schools. The whole school community will be involved in the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates at assembly, the app, social media and on school notice boards.

During Biodiversity week cross-curricular activities based on biodiversity/sustainability are encouraged. PowerPoints with activities are sent to class tutors to show classes during Class Tutor time.

5. Other Initiatives

5.1 Awards/Competitions

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

We are currently working as a whole school towards obtaining the Green Flag for Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste. We have previously been successful in obtaining Green Flags for Water, Energy and Biodiversity.

Our Junior Green School students take part in litter picks in the local area at lunch-time.

We encourage students to walk/cycle/scoot to school by taking part in Cycle on Wednesday initiative and giving students high visibility armbands.

We have applied to the YEA and we are working towards submitting two applications in the areas of waste and use of resources.

We have applied for funding to create another biodiversity area in the school garden.

The SDGs groups have taken part in an online course that explored flooding, prevention and remedies.

5.2 Recycling

Recycling Paper Recycling Bins

A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office, photocopying room and in each classroom to ensure that any waste paper will be recycled.

Litter Bins -General Rubbish

A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste and this is emptied on a daily basis.

Compost Bins

The teacher's staffroom is also equipped with compost bins in order to set a good example to the younger members of the school and to reinforce the message that everyone is doing his/her part in caring for the environment. Home Economics rooms also have compost bins. The assembly area where the 2nd and 3rd years eat also have compost bins.

5.3 Lunches

The lunches from Fresh Today come in compostable containers.

All students are encouraged to bring in reusable bottles and refill them at the water stations.

All students were given reusable water bottles in Sept '21.

5.4 Re-Use

The school takes part in Junk Kouture, which encourages students to reuse rubbish.

The Green Schools team run a competition during Biodiversity to encourage students to reuse/upcycle items into something usable.

5.5 School Garden

A school garden has been set up where students have planted vegetables, herbs and flowers throughout the year. It contains a large compost area and is home to 3 chickens. It is maintained by a designated member of staff, members of Green Schools and the horticulture group.

There is also an area of the school that is designated as a sensory garden. It contains an area for plants and trees.

There are two wild areas in the school where wildflowers are allowed to grow.

There are areas of the school where many native trees have been planted.

In most of these areas there are leaf cages to catch leaves which we will use for the wormery and large compost bin.

6. 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 in CSPE, SPHE, geography, business, science and horticulture and SDG.

7. Roles and Responsibility

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

- Teaching staff
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Students
- Student Council

8. Review of Policy

The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended every year.

9. Ratification & Communication

The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management to be formally ratified.

The policy will be available on the school website and app for parents and the wider school community. Staff can also access the policy in the staff handbook.

Signed: _____

Date: _____