



## **Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles**



## **SUSTAINABILILTY POLICY**

**May 2024**

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# Sustainability Policy Statement

*Colaiste Mhuire Co Ed Thurles*

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 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 vibrant and engaging environment where students can reach their full potential, both academically and personally, through academic excellence, personal growth and community involvement and a steadfast commitment to promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We strive to provide an education that fosters responsible and engaged global citizens.

Our school’s mission statement is to aspire to develop a caring and inclusive learning community which optimises the potential of each person. Through this policy we hope to further encourage students to develop academically, personally, and in their understanding of sustainability. Guided by our core values, we cultivate a supportive learning environment where students are empowered to thrive academically, personally, and in their understanding of sustainability. We integrate sustainability principles into our curriculum and extracurricular activities, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowering students to become agents of positive change.

Our school's values are respect, effort, honesty, and cooperation. These values guide our approach as we integrate sustainability principles into our curriculum, extracurricular activities, and everyday practices and allows us to foster a generation of responsible and engaged global citizens

## **Definition of Sustainable Development**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## 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 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 program, 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 are working to achieve our first flag in litter and waste management. We have a student body of over 50 students and two teachers.

- Our school engages with the ETB Take1 Program, EcoUnesco and Worldwide Global Schools in the area of sustainable development.
- 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 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. Our school is building a school garden and an area for animals such as chickens.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity, eg our Take1 Metre of Meadow on display at the school entrance.

- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school.
- Our school engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education eg Susan Adams Education for Sustainability courses funded by the Department of Education.

### **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 training in the area of conflict resolution, to support and affect positive student behaviour.

### **Economic Sustainability**

- A non-competitive ethos of cooperation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school's allocation of its resources.
- Students are involved in the allocation of resources within our school. For example, the students selected the current sustainability initiatives; Fast Fashion, Sustainable Farming and Waste Reduction.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills.
- 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.
- Our school encourages the use of technology in particular Google Classroom which limits paper waste.

## **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 capacity in the area of ESD. For example, Erasmus training, Take1 training and WorldWise Global Schools training.

## **Student Competence**

- Our students do the short course in CSPE for Junior Cycle.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action-oriented projects.
- Our school has a Sustainability Committee who are involved in decisions about any sustainable actions/initiatives/projects in our school.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects.
- Our schools are involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community.

## **Goals**

- Achieve Litter and Waste Green Flag by 2025: This goal aligns with LAOS 2022's Dimension 2: Learning and Teaching, Standard 3.3, which states that schools should "promote sustainable practices and encourage students to become active environmental stewards." By achieving the Litter and Waste Green Flag, we will demonstrate our commitment to environmental sustainability and provide students with hands-on experience in reducing waste and protecting the environment.
- Obtain Poultry Number from Department of Agriculture and successfully care for school chickens: This initiative aligns with LAOS 2022's Dimension 2: Learning and Teaching, Standard 3.6, which states that schools should "foster a school ethos that promotes sustainable practices and respect for the environment." Raising chickens on

school grounds can provide students with a valuable learning experience about animal husbandry, food production, and waste reduction. By creating a school-based circular economy, we can also reduce our reliance on external sources of food and provide our students with access to fresh, locally sourced eggs.

- Create a circular economy in our school by selling the eggs and reducing food waste by feeding our chickens: This initiative further aligns with LAOS 2022's Dimension 2: Learning and Teaching, Standard 3.6, and it also contributes to the school's overall sustainability goals. Selling the eggs from our school chickens can provide a source of income for the school, which can be used to fund other environmental initiatives. Additionally, feeding food scraps to our chickens can divert food waste from landfills and reduce the school's environmental impact.
- Incorporate ESD into all core subjects over the next five years: This goal is aligned with LAOS 2022's Dimension 2: Learning and Teaching, Standard 3.2, which states that schools should "integrate ESD into the curriculum and teaching and learning processes." By incorporating ESD into all core subjects, we can ensure that all students are exposed to environmental education and develop a deep understanding of sustainability issues. This will help them make informed decisions about their own environmental impact and become responsible stewards of the planet.
- Promote manageable solution-based initiatives to reduce eco anxiety in our students: This goal aligns with LAOS 2022's Dimension 1: Leadership and Management, Standard D.1, which states that schools should "create a supportive and inclusive school climate that promotes student well-being." Eco anxiety is a growing concern among young people, and it can be exacerbated by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. By promoting manageable solution-based initiatives, we can empower students to take action on environmental issues and help them feel more optimistic about the future. This can lead to a reduction in eco-anxiety and a greater sense of personal agency among our students.

### **Implementation and review**

This policy was implemented in May 2024. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every three years.