



## Straffan National School

### Sustainability Policy Statement

#### 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

It is the policy of Straffan N.S. to foster in the children a love, respect and appreciation of all living things and their environment.

We aim to embed in the children the importance of the conservation of environment for future generations. Through participating in the Green-Schools – a European educational programme, we hope to promote responsible behaviour among the children and the wider community.

Education for sustainable development should give pupils a greater understanding of both natural and human systems through a range of immediate environmental experiences that engage their senses, emotions and thinking.

It should enable the school community to develop a life ethic that values all people and the natural environment.

It should further allow them to become aware of the actions that they ought to pursue in order to live more sustainably now and in the future.

The implementation of this policy should therefore contribute to and support the provision of a pleasant and socially responsible environment.

We aim to cut down on the waste of energy throughout the school enabling it to run more efficiently and contributing to a healthier environment

### **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 has a Green Student Council Team comprising staff and students whose role is to ensure we adhere to our commitment to reduce waste and enhance our school community for the benefit and wellbeing of all.

Every year, we set up a new Green Schools committee who serve as the main coordinators and communicators of the program. The children write letters of application and then serve on the committee with the co-ordinating teacher. The children meet with the teacher regularly to make decisions and then deliver the information to classes. The children have worked on several themes. While the majority of the work is directed towards the current theme, schools are also expected to maintain the work that has taken place on the previous themes.

### **Litter and Waste**

We will:

- Re-use single sided paper, print and photocopy on both sides.

- Where possible, laminate worksheets and other documents used frequently, especially outdoors.
- Recycle waste such as paper, clothes and ink cartridges
- Reduce the amount of waste produced.
- Encourage the use of scrap paper trays in classrooms. · Litter reduction and prevention is an on-going process that involves all members of the school community.
- Regard litter clearing as a positive environmental action, which will also help foster a sense of personal pride and responsibility in pupils.
- Demonstrate that litter prevention improves the environmental quality of the school and the neighbourhood- poster competitions, regular litter picks

### **Water**

We will:

- Establish and raise awareness of simple actions that can cut down on water use substantially e.g. pupil monitoring that taps are turned off properly, water harvesting
- Make pupils aware of the link between water use and financial cost.
- Help pupils and the wider community understand that conserving water is vital to our future- global projects, looking at the information that the school has been given from Trocaire

### **Energy Use**

We will:

- Establish and show that simple low- or no-cost measures to conserve energy can be effective and bring about significant savings e.g. turning off lights and electrical appliances when not in use and keeping windows clean to allow maximum natural light.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Monitor energy consumption by tracking the school's use of electricity
- Make all members of the school community aware of the link between energy use and financial cost.
- Talking to the children about new building regulations, A rated buildings in new extensions, educating the children about insulation and showing savings that can be made

### **Transport**

We will:

- Encourage use of buses and walking to school
- Encourage car-pooling where possible

- Raise awareness about the impact of transport to the environment and to people's health.
- Provide adequate and safe facilities for pupils and staff cycling and walking to school. Our cycle shelter was installed in school grounds in 2021
- Implement an effective awareness programme on road safety for pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> class annually.

### **The Outdoor Environment**

We will:

- Use the school grounds as a source of teaching and learning opportunities for pupils use of our outdoor classroom
- Ensure that the grounds provide for recreational use by pupils as well as provision to undertake exercise.
- Develop the grounds as a place for aesthetic experiences- active walkway, friendship benches
- Create habitats for a range of other species- bug hotel in outdoor classroom
- Be aware that the school grounds provide the visitor with the first impression of the school and will influence the attitude and behaviour of the pupils.

### **Curricular Activities:**

The themes can be integrated into 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, junk art- reusing materials

**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, etc.;

**English:-** debates, poetry, essays, Green Code, 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.

- Our school engages with the [SEAI Energy in Education](#) resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption.
- Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place, and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible.
- Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment.
- 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 through our school garden.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school.
- 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 eg Picker Pals or any other programmes working in this field.

### **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.
- 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 through Restorative Practice 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 involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school through the student council
- 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 ESD through courses ran in the Education Centres, online CPD and Summer CPD.

## **Student Competence**

- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer to peer learning activities
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects eg. Mini Scientist and Parish Sacramental Preparation Projects
- Our school has a Student Council/ Green Team who are involved in decisions about school improvement issues for all.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects eg. Tidy Towns
- Our schools are involved in project based learning around real-life problems in the local community

## **Goals**

The effectiveness of this policy can be observed through the following measures:

- A litter-free, clean school environment;
- Reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, water and waste disposal;
- The retention of the current Green Flags and obtaining further Green Flags
- A happy, safe learning environment which offers a wellbeing outdoor space for everyone to work with biodiversity.

## **Implementation and review**

This Statement was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2023. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 2 years.