



## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT POLICY / STATEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

It is important for St. David's National School community to have an awareness and understanding of the effects of their actions upon the environment in which they live, work and relax.

In order to do this, we need to take responsibility for our own actions and we need to have a sense of duty and care for the world in which we live. Through participation in the Green-Schools Programme, we ensure pupils, staff and the wider community are made aware of the importance of taking care of our environment.

Green-Schools, known internationally as Eco-Schools, is an international environmental education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment.

Eco-Schools is operated by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) whose main partners include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Green-Schools in Ireland is operated and co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland), in partnership with Local Authorities throughout the country, is supported by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

St. David's National School has been taking part in the Green-Schools initiative since 2010. We have been awarded 3 Green Flags to date. One on the theme of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (litter & waste), one on Energy and one on Water Conservation. We are currently working towards our fourth flag, for Travel.

## **AIMS**

The aim of this policy is to set out clearly what is expected in terms of environmental protection and awareness for all staff and pupils so that our planet is protected and appreciated.

The aim of participation in the Green-Schools Programme is to increase students' awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and wider community. A seven-step process sees schools tackling the issues of waste and litter, then energy, water, transport, global citizenship, biodiversity and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the seven steps take a minimum of two years.

## **NEED FOR THE POLICY**

There is a need for a policy to be put in place so that clear guidelines are set out for all staff and pupils as to what is expected of them in terms of environmental education, protection and awareness. Instilling an awareness in young children is very important for the future of our planet. Furthermore, conservation of and careful use of precious resources such as electricity, water and heating fuel and the minimisation of waste is more economical and will help to save the school money. This money can be used on educational requirements instead. It is hoped through having an active Green-Schools scene in the school, environmental issues will be discussed at home and awareness raised, thus encouraging recycling and energy / water / fuel saving in our pupils' homes and in the wider community.

## **GREEN-SCHOOLS COMMITTEE**

Every year a Green-Schools Committee will be elected, consisting of two members (one boy and one girl) from each class from 1st to 6th Class. Two teachers from the school will lead the committee. The committee will have regular meetings to discuss Green-Schools issues and to implement initiatives. They will endeavour to gain as many Green-Schools flags as possible through participation in each two-year programme and to maintain the existing flags.

## **LITTER/WASTE ACTIVITIES**

- All classrooms and the staff room to have recycling bins for paper, plastic and tins / cans;

- All classrooms to have a compost bin for fruit / vegetable peels and pencil sharpening;
- Battery recycling boxes to be available throughout the school;
- Small electrical items to be collected in school also for recycling;
- Staff to be aware of environmental impact of photocopying and to only photocopy what is needed and to use double-sided copying where possible;
- Children to reuse paper where possible;
- Children to engage in recycled / “junk art” style projects periodically;
- Teachers to use resources from ReCreate Warehouse in art lessons where possible. ReCreate is a national social enterprise that takes end of line and surplus stock from businesses and makes them available as arts materials;

### **ENERGY SAVING ACTIVITIES**

- Lights and heat to be turned off when not need / not in use;
- Computers and whiteboards to be placed on standby when not in use / during breaks;
- Staff only to photocopy what they need and to use black ink where possible;
- Keep outside doors and windows shut when appropriate to save heat, and therefore fuel and energy – except during the covid pandemic encouraged to open doors and windows for better ventilation;
- Ensure the school is well insulated and that the heating system works efficiently.

### **WATER SAVING ACTIVITIES**

- Ensure taps are not left on when not in use;
- Water harvesting system on roof;
- Each classroom to watch out for leaks;
- Ensure that cleaners employed by the school use the minimum water required and that they use environmentally friendly products;

### **TRANSPORT**

Pupils are encouraged to walk, cycle, scoot or use public transport to school where possible. Car-pooling where practicable is also encouraged.

## **SCHOOL GARDEN / BIODIVERSITY**

A school garden has been established, which can be enjoyed by the children and staff alike. The focus has been on creating a haven for wildlife and insects and we will endeavour to promote biodiversity by using environmentally safe products and methods in our garden.

## **CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Many aspects of environmental awareness will be taught in the form of explicit lessons which will complement the Green-Schools activities taking place throughout the school in relation to litter, energy and water. 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, mascots, water as a medium for 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 school blogs / website / emails / newsletter 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.

## **EVALUATION**

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

- A litter-free, clean school environment;
- Reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, water and waste disposal;
- The retention of the current Green Flags and the obtaining of further Green Flags.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed as and when is required.

## **RATIFICATION**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on date below.

The policy will be available in the school for parents to view.

**Ratified by Board of Management on:**      1st December 2021

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson**

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**Principal**