Sustainability Policy Statement- Donagh N.S.



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 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 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 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 Donagh National School will ensure that decisions made in respect of the school align with the Statement.

Donagh N.S. Vision Statement

Our school’s vision is based on celebrating and nurturing the uniqueness of the child in education. The curriculum in Donagh N.S. aims to enhance this uniqueness as well as recognising the child’s potential for development. All facets of his/her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical will be enhanced through the curriculum.  
We also believe that each child’s education should be fulfilling, rewarding and cater as much as possible, to their individual and specific needs.

Through the comprehensive and flexible content contained herein, Donagh N.S. envisages that each child’s education at this school should be happy, imaginative, stimulating and enable children to develop, with confidence, onto the next level of education and beyond.

Donagh N.S. – Commitment to Sustainability

Our commitment to sustainability, environmental awareness, and climate action aligns seamlessly with our core values. We believe that by fostering a culture of responsibility and stewardship, we can empower our students to become proactive agents of change in safeguarding our planet for future generations. Through interdisciplinary learning experiences and community partnerships, we integrate environmental education into our curriculum, promoting sustainable practices and encouraging students to explore innovative solutions to global challenges. In doing so, we reinforce our dedication to excellence, care, equality, and respect, while fostering a strong sense of community and collective responsibility towards building a more sustainable and equitable world.

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.
* Our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development.
* Green-Schools is an environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for our school to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school.

The Green Schools Programme

* Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme. Our school is currently working on our seventh green school’s flag based on the theme Global Citizenship- Water.
* Our Green Schools Committee serves as the driving force behind fostering sustainability and environmental awareness within educational institutions. Its purpose is multifaceted, aiming to achieve several key objectives. In essence, the purpose of having a Green Schools Committee is to inspire, educate, and empower the school community to become stewards of the environment.
* In conjunction with the Green Schools Committee, the themes of the five flags will be revisited annually. These include: Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel and Biodiversity. Children will be encouraged to switch off lights and devices were not in use. Children will be encouraged to conserve water by turning off taps when not in use. Water for use in the polytunnel will be collected in the school water butt. Children will be encouraged to develop a lifelong love of nature and biodiversity through the work that is completed in the classroom. There will be a specific focus on one theme for a period of two years until the flag is achieved on that theme. Green flag themes will take global citizenship and the sustainable goals into consideration at all times.

Environmental Sustainability

Art and Craft Materials:

* The use of single use plastics and materials for art activities which contain micro plastics will be banned throughout the school. We commit to not purchasing any further supplies of glitter.
* Junk art activities will take place in the infant classroom, where the children will be encouraged to take recyclable material into the classroom to use for their junk art. Junk art will be displayed as applicable.
* Class teachers will refrain from washing paint into the water courses. Paint trays will be lined with bun cases, so that the paint can be disposed of in the general waste.
* All classes will include art activities which use recyclable materials at least once per term. A whole school competition will take place annually e.g. recycled Christmas decoration.

Outdoor learning:

* Teachers will be encouraged to use the outdoor classroom area at least once per fortnight as a basis for a lesson.
* Children with Special Educational Needs will be taken outside for movement breaks throughout the school day.
* Maths trails will be used to encourage children to learn in the outdoors and to experience the positive aspects of this.
* All classes will take responsibility for maintaining the school garden and poly tunnel. The pupils in the senior room will have overall responsibility for weeding poly tunnel.
* Vegetables will be grown annually in the school garden, and will be harvested in the autumn time. All classes will use some of the harvested vegetables to create healthy meals.
* Children will be encouraged to bring in the correct clothing during the winter, so that their outdoor play can continue. Children will be encouraged to bring in wellington boots and leave them in the centralised hallway so that they can continue to play on the grass throughout the year.

Initiatives:

* Amber Flag
* Green Schools
* Initiative such as the Amber Flag and Green Schools committee will continue annually. Children will be elected onto various committees using the process of democracy. They will be encouraged to make posters to discuss their ideas should they be elected onto various committees. Ballots will take place to elect new members to these committees. The school is committed to ensuring gender balance, and diversity of ages and abilities on all committees.

Transportation to school:

* The school is committed to ensuring that the school bus is available for all children who qualify under the School Bus Scheme. Children will be encouraged to walk or cycle to school where appropriate, giving due concern to the dangerous nature of some rural roads around the school area. The school will take part in Walk to School Week, Bike Week and/or Scoot to School week annually and children will be encouraged to participate in activities planned during these weeks.
* A census of the various methods pupils use to travel to school will be taken once a year and the results will be compared annually.
* The school will commit to providing a bicycle shelter for the safe storage of bicycles and scooters on the school grounds in the next school year 2025 to 2026. This will be done through an application for grant for a bicycle shed through An Taisce.

Funding:

* Some of the Funding obtained from School Completion will be used for sustainable education. This will include field trips to various areas of natural beauty in the local area, where the children can experience different habitats first hand. Some examples of this are the woodland, the bog, the beach and the wildfowl reserve.
* Prior to the Parents Association fundraising events, some of the money to be raised will be earmarked for sustainable development within the school. Some examples of this will be development of the outdoor classroom and the playground equipment for children.

Paper:

* Donagh N.S. is committed to reducing its annual paper usage. School messages to parents will be sent via email and text. Information from the office/ Principal will be shared with teachers via their school email addresses.
* Pieces of paper from the office which are not confidential in nature will be used in the classrooms as scrap paper. Children will be encouraged to write and draw on both sides of a piece of paper.

Teachers Planning:

* Teachers will commit to saving Student Support Plans and results of Standardised Tests online. Attendance records will also be saved online via the Databiz app.

Lunches:

* The school is committed to using a School Meals supplier who uses recyclable or compostable containers to deliver the meals. Children will be encouraged to eat as much of their school meal as possible, and to cancel meals if they are consistently not being eaten. Children will be encouraged to use a reusable drink bottle in class. Single use plastics will be discouraged at all times.

Waste Management:

* There will be a system of paper and plastic recycling, general waste and compost in every classroom and in the staff room. Posters will be displayed at different times based on the focus of learning at that time to encourage all school members to reduce, reuse, recycle.
* The green team will organise an annual letter picking event in conjunction with the National Spring Clean. The Picker Pals Programme will also be used with all classes. Details of school that are picking offense will be posted on the school Facebook page.
* The school will encourage recycling of plastic bottles via the Return Deposit Scheme through the school.
* The school will continue to collect batteries for recycling at the local Recycling Centre.

Community Links:

* The school will develop community links with sustainable committees in the local area. These include the library, Tidy Towns Commitee, local schools, Spraoi Agus Sport Resource Centre and others.
* The school will encourage a circular economy through links with clothing recycling. The Parents Association will organise a charity shop fundraising event annually. Clothes will also be recycled through the clothing bank located at the entrance to the school.

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.
* The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.

Economic Sustainability

* A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school’s allocation of its resources.
* Our school’s fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles, where possible.
* Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practise in the area of sustainability in mind. Solar panels have been installed and the school is committed to improving electrical systems, including LED lighting in the coming years.
* 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.

Student Competence

* Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to- peer learning activities
* Our school has a Green Team and other committes who are involved in decisions relating to school matters.

Review

To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 3 years.

Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Donagh N.S.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_