

Scoil Bhríde Clane, Co Kildare

Roll No.: 19797E, RCN No.: 20124960

Principal: Mrs. Eimear Hennessy

Sustainability Policy Statement

Scoil Bhríde Clane, Co. Kildare.

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)

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 of 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

School Motto: *In Kindness and Friendship, we shine our light together*.

The Vision Statement of Scoil Bhríde promotes the development of health, happiness and confidence as pre-requisites of learning and full personal growth.

Our mission is to educate all our children to their fullest potential. We endeavour to do this in an environment where they feel cherished, safe and happy. We hope to create an inclusive environment through parents, children and staff working collaboratively to ensure that;

Children experience a broad-based curriculum and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities to fully develop their unique gifts and talents.

The individuality of each person is celebrated and all feel a sense of belonging. Respect and understanding underpin all relationships in the School Community. An attitude of acceptance is fostered for all who visit, work and learn here. Our Catholic Ethos is maintained while welcoming and respecting all faiths and none. Our responsibility for care of the environment is developed and maintained on a Local, National and Global level. Opportunities are provided to develop respect for our Irish Language, Culture and Heritage. The children of Scoil Bhríde will continue to contribute to the vibrant Community of Clane.

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 such as school site surveys.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (www.ISSN.ie)
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD.

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. We have so far received Green Flags in the following areas:

- Litter and Waste
- Water
- Energy
- Travel
- Biodiversity
- Global Citizenship – Litter & Waste
- Global Citizenship – Energy
- Global Citizenship – Marine Environment
- GC Food and biodiversity

The Green Schools 7 step programme is outlined below:

1. Green-Schools Committee: to direct and address all phases of the Green-Schools Programme.

2. Completing Environmental Reviews: to identify the initial situation within the school regarding the current environmental theme.

3. Implementing Action Plans: to identify goals and provide a structured timetable for the reduction of the environmental impacts identified in the review.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: to ensure that progress towards targets is checked, amendments made where necessary and success celebrated.

5. Curriculum Work: to link the themes (as above) in the school. Our school engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education such as 'Picker Pals.'

6. Informing and Involving: to spread the Green-Schools message throughout the whole school and the wider community e.g. flag raising days and school newsletters.

7. Green Code: to state the objectives that demonstrate the school's commitment to environmentally friendly actions.

Supporting Initiatives

Biodiversity

- Our school supports our natural biodiversity. We provide varied habitats in the school garden (insect hotels, wormery, pond, hedges, grassy areas and trees)
- We use 'Biodiversity in Schools' resources e.g. nature trail spotter worksheets and garden signs.
- We follow 'The Pollinator Project' education programme by participate in 'No Mow May' each year.
- We plant a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees that provide food for bees and butterflies (apple, cherry, holly)
- A Heritage in Schools expert visits our school to educate us on bird species and we support our native birds by providing bird feeders.

Water

- Students engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE
- Monitor water usage and report wastage.
- Rainwater is collected and used to flush toilets.

Energy

- Students engage in units of work relating to energy using the SEAI Energy in Education resources.
- Members of the Green Schools Committee act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off to conserve energy.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practise in sustainability in mind.
- A full energy retrofit of our old school building was carried out in 2025. This included upgrading to an air to water heating system and installation of solar panels.
- Energy consumption heat loss can be closely monitored, reported and managed with the new system.

Waste

- Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place. Recyclable and natural materials are used whenever possible.
- We promote recycled paper for printing and art and use recycled items in our school garden. We recycle batteries and electrical items.
- Recycling bins are provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office.
- Children and staff are encouraged to dispose of their waste correctly, for example to wash out yoghurt cartons before placing in the recycling bin.

- Food waste goes in our composting bin.
- 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 sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school. Our school does 'Walk on Wednesday' and we run cycling workshops.

Scoil Bhríde School Garden:

Our school garden is a great addition to our school where children get to learn in a new and exciting way:

- Demonstrates important examples of native habitats, biodiversity, the balance of nature and the web of life.
- Teaches children how to grow local organic food without using chemicals.
- Used as an outdoor classroom linking in with 70% of the curriculum.
- Hands-on practical sessions promote sensory, experiential and fun learning which helps to develop a well-balanced individual.

Outdoor Classroom:

At Scoil Bhríde we have installed outdoor classroom seating, blackboard, mud kitchen, tables, sand and water trays, outdoor Jenga and other resources. Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning at all class level. Children learn in a natural ever-changing environment where they get to appreciate nature, nutrition, and even how maths, reading, geography and history can be fun.

- Heritage in Schools experts on gardening, biodiversity and local history are invited to do workshops with teachers and pupils.
- We participate in the Incredible Edibles programme by growing a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables organically in our raised beds. We won a Gold Award in 2023.
- We use Agri Aware lessons in our classrooms.
- We visit the LIDL FARM to Fork experience.

Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity. The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.
- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community and to encourage students and teachers to become lifelong advocates on issues relating to development, poverty and human rights.
- Our school participates in Global Citizenship Education programmes such the Irish Aid 'Our World Awards Challenge to Change programme which teaches children about the work of Irish Aid and the UN Global Goals.
- We compete in the 'Concern Primary Debating' competition to promote a deeper awareness and understanding of the global issues affecting the lives of millions of people in the developing world.
- Our engagement in the Erasmus programme promotes links with schools in other countries.
- We support a simple community initiative called *Hands of Friendship: Building Belonging Together*. The aim is to encourage small but meaningful actions that promote inclusion, empathy, and welcome across our community.
- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level:
- 'KiVa Anti Bullying Programme' is a research- and evidence-based anti-bullying programme that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland. The goal of KiVa is to prevent bullying and to tackle the cases of bullying effectively. KiVa is based on three main elements: prevention, intervention and monitoring.
- The Parents Association held "Go Phone Free" week sought agreement for a code of conduct that includes delaying smartphones and social media until after primary school.

Economic Sustainability

- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy. A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing is modelled.
- Students are involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school through our student council and Green Schools committee.
- Our Parents' Associations value and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles e.g. charity fundraisers/donations, recycling initiatives and reduced waste/ plastic initiatives.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills. Our senior pupils run annual Christmas markets and cake sales.

- We do the Christmas Shoe box appeal and donate hampers to St. Vincent De Paul annually.
- We have established a Fairy Garden with the help of local crafts people in making fairy statues and the Men's Shed in creating miniature woodwork pieces recycled items.
- Trees have been donated by O' Reilly Auctioneers.
- We support local charity shops in sourcing items for our outdoor areas.

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. Our SEE Coordinator circulates details of all upcoming relevant courses to teachers.
- Teachers are equipped with all resources necessary for ESD e.g. gardening equipment and biodiversity lesson plans
- Irish Aid provide resources and guidance to teachers on sustainable development and global citizenship
- Teachers attend training on ESD global goals with Concern Primary Debating.

Student Competence

- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer to peer-learning activities such as 'Playground Leadership'.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects.
- Our school has a Student Council and Green Team who are involved in decisions about all aspects of sustainability.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects. Students are given the opportunity to meet with Tidy Towns representatives or other local community organisations to present our Green Schools projects and demonstrate our sustainable practices.

- As part of Challenge to Change pupils met with local TDs to present their projects.
- Our schools are involved in project -based learning around real-life problems in the local community such as poverty, Kiva anti- bullying, road safety, litter.

Goals

- We will apply to include our school on the Department map of school Sustainability statements.
- Our School aims to build a sensory Garden in 2026.
- We will introduce the new SEE Curriculum in our school and engage in relevant Teacher CPD and use our outdoor classroom.

Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on in March 2026.

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

The LAOS Framework and ESD self-assessment audit tool will be used to identify some areas where we might like to make progress and inform the school's Sustainability Policy Statement.

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.
- Children will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability and Global Citizenship in the SEE.

Roles and Responsibility

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

- Staff
- Students
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Caretaker

Signed: Colm Early (Chairperson)

Date: 28.04.2026

Signed: Eimear Hennessy (Principal)

Date: 28.04.2026

Useful websites:

ESD:

- https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/national-strategy-on-education-for-sustainable-development-in-ireland/
- **Bord Bia:** http://www.bordbia.ie/aboutgardening/organicgardening/Pages/default.aspx
- **Scoil Naomh Molaise School in Sligo:** www.ourschoolgarden.ie
- **Incredible Edibles:** http://agriaware.ie/incredibleedibles/

- **An Taisce Green Schools:**
  http://www.greenschoolsireland.org/
- **Compost::**
  http://www.compostguide.com/
- **IOFGA** - Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association
  http://iofga.org/education/schools/factsheets/
- **HDRA** - Henry Doubleday Research Association - working with schools:
- **Stop Food Waste**
  http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie/
- **Agri Aware**
  http://agriaware.ie/
- www.treecouncil.ie- resources for tree week
- www.ecoschools.org
- www.epa.ie
- Irish Schools Sustainability Network (www.ISSN.ie)

- SEAI Energy in Education