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Principal:
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Chairperson:
Bridín Murphy

Sustainability Policy

Ratified September 2021. Reviewed October 2025.

RATIONALE

Clonroche National School aims to become a Sustainable School by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into all areas of the curriculum and instilling a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment. We will aim to lead the community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

PURPOSE

Energy

To control energy consumption so that we reduce our impact on the natural environment; avoid unnecessary costs associated with wasting energy; educate students, staff and whole community about the best practice for use of energy consuming equipment and services and to conduct an energy audit and maintain records of energy consumption.

Waste

To continue the development of a Waste Wise ethic within the whole school community; to provide and maintain a healthy and aesthetically pleasing learning environment through the reduction of waste and litter; to practise waste wise principles of reduce, reuse and recycle; to reduce the cost of waste and litter management.

Biodiversity

To improve our outdoor natural environment by planting more plants and involving our school community in the development and maintenance of the garden; using natural materials that reduce the impact on the environment.

Water

To encourage the school community to reduce water usage; to appreciate water as a precious natural resource; educate the community on ways to reduce water usage indoors and outdoors; conduct a water audit and maintain records of water consumption.

General

- Support the school in being a leader in the education of sustainable development.
- Create a more engaging learning environment for students.
- Focus on student involvement and learning.
- Create flow-on effects from the school to the local community.
- Involve the whole school community including students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents in sustainable practices.

Educational and Social

- Provide numerous opportunities to achieve learning outcomes across the curriculum.
- Cater for a diversity of learning styles.
- Provide leadership opportunities for students as well as teachers.
- Empower the school community to work on meaningful real-world problems and outcomes.
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork.
- Form partnerships with the community.
- Increase pride and self-esteem within the school community.
- Provide positive publicity for the school.

Environmental

- Reduce resource consumption eg. energy, water, gas, paper
- Reduce the school's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Influence more environmentally sustainable family behaviour at home.
- Cleaner, more attractive school grounds that students take pride in.

Economic

- Cost savings from reduced consumption of resources.

<i>GUIDELINES</i>

Energy

- Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy efficient school.
- Reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

Waste

- To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.
- To include the school community in the process of developing a Waste Wise school.
- Students to take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper and rubbish in the appropriate manner.
- To promote rubbish free lunches and reward those who participate regularly.

Biodiversity

- To use a garden plan for the future development of our school grounds.
- To utilise our garden area to its full extent.
- To involve community members in maintenance of school grounds.
- For each year level to have ownership in the upkeep of an area of school grounds.

Water

- To reduce the water consumption within the school.
- To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- To involve students and staff in the planning of water conservation initiatives.
- Assign students to monitor water usage and report wastage.

<i>AIMS AND TARGETS</i>

We aim to achieve the following goals and targets over the next three years:

1. To increase the school community's involvement in the development of a school garden.
2. To continue to reduce waste by up to 15%.
3. To reduce water consumption by up to 10%.
4. To reduce energy consumption by up to 15%.

<i>IMPLEMENTATION/ ACTIONS</i>

CURRICULUM FOCUS

There will be an environmental focus incorporated into the inquiry unit across all year levels.

Energy

- To promote a 'switch off and save' policy for technological equipment, lighting and heating/cooling.
- Students to engage in units of work relating to energy.
- Students will investigate the best ways to conserve energy.

Waste

- To assign students to dispose of waste and recycled products daily in the appropriate manner.
- For monitors to collect food waste weekly from each classroom and staffroom and transfer it to the main compost bin in the school grounds.
- For students to dispose of paper into recycling bins.
- Use recycled paper for printers, photocopiers and Eco-Pads insofar as is practicable.
- Promote the reuse principle of paper in classrooms, staffroom and office.

Biodiversity

- Consult local community members on ways to improve our garden (e.g. Where to plant, what to plant).
- Involve community members in planting and maintaining our gardens.
- Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our gardens.

Water

- To promote a 'water-wise turn off' policy.
- Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation.
- To assign students to monitor water usage and report wastage.
- Plant plants that require minimal watering.

Travel

- Reduce the number of cars outside our school at least one day per week
- Encourage children and parents to park and stride.

<i>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</i>

We will encourage community participation in environmental projects undertaken, as well as, invite parents with expertise to help maintain and improve our school environment. We will also promote sustainable living through educating the school community through our students.

<i>RESPONSIBILITY/ COMMUNICATION</i>

All people within our school will be informed and responsible for implementing these programs. The various committees and staff, in conjunction with the Principal, will be responsible for keeping records and reporting on the outcomes and progress of each program to the whole school community, through school newsletters, website etc. The parties involved will provide reports, where necessary, to staff and Board of Management outlining the goals, aims, costing, savings and other relevant issues. Each of the programs will be subject to annual review by school staff, student and BoM.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

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

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

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

Policy reviews will be carried out annually by the Green Schools Coordinator, Committee and other members of staff where appropriate.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Clonroche National School on 28/09/21.

Principal

Chairperson

Date

Initiatives in place in Clonroche National School:

Recycling:

Paper recycling bins: A recycling bin for paper is located in the staffroom, office and in each of the classrooms. A member of the Green Schools committee collects and empties the recycling bins daily into a recycling wheelie bin which is collected and emptied fortnightly by our waste disposal contractors.

Litter bins: A general litter bin is placed in each classroom and office. These are collected and emptied daily by the school cleaner and deposited into the waste recycling bin which is collected and emptied fortnightly by our waste disposal contractors.

Compost bins: Each classroom and the staffroom has a compost bin. These are emptied weekly by members of the Greens Schools committee. The compost is then emptied into the main compost bin in the school grounds.

Glass: The staffroom had a container for glass bottles / jars. These are brought to the local glass recycling bins monthly. Sometimes they are used for art.

Batteries: WEEE Pledge is a FREE Schools Waste Battery Recycling Programme that educates and encourages environmental awareness among students. Our school facilitates the collection of batteries from our school community and distributes battery collection boxes to pupils to encourage disposal in the correct manner. *(especially at Christmas time)*

Energy:

The Green schools committee act as “*Energy Wardens*” and ensure that all electrical equipment is completely switched off when not in use in an effort to conserve energy. They also switch off all lights and unplug electrical equipment at break-times and before leaving school each evening. Regular readings are taken of the ESB meter and we are mindful of our usage by regular monitoring our ESB bills.

Water:

All children are taught the benefits of water conservation by their class teacher and to impress further upon the school community the importance of water conservation, we participated in a “*Water Wise*” workshop facilitated by Wexford County Council to develop our understanding further. Water conservation measures were installed in the school comprising

of a Water Valve which is timed to coincide with school hours only, reducing the volume of water used considerably daily.

Waste:

Pupils take responsibility for disposing of paper and rubbish in an appropriate manner. Whatever comes in a pupil’s lunch box / bag goes home in the lunch box / bag with the exception of fruit peelings/cores etc. which are placed in the classroom composting bins. This cuts down on the volume of waste that the school actually produces. Pupils must also use a reusable drinks bottle.

The school uses Aladdin Connect to send messages / information to Parents. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.

School staff must photocopy on both sides of a page to reduce paper waste and they are encouraged to only photocopy in black and white unless essential.

Travel:

We walk to school every Wednesday. This is to cut down on the number of cars outside our school for at least one day per week.

We take part in the Big Travel Challenge by walking to school everyday for the month of April. This reduces traffic congestion outside the school.

Green Schools:

Clonroche National School began its Green Flag journey in 2008. Since then we have achieved three Green Flags for Waste and Litter, Energy and Water. We place a huge emphasis on sustainability and this is at the core of what we try to achieve by taking part in the Green Flag programme.

Green Flag:

The school was awarded its first Green Flag in 2010. The theme was ***litter and waste***

The school received its second Green Flag in 2014. The theme was ***Energy Conservation***

The third Green Flag was awarded to the school in 2020. The theme was ***Water***

The fourth Green Flag was awarded to the school in 2023. The theme was ***Travel***.