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Scoil Pól,
Kilfinane,
Co. Limerick.
V35 YH27

Sustainability Policy Statement

Scoil Pól, Kilfinane, Co. Limerick

Purpose

This Sustainability Policy Statement outlines how Scoil Pól promotes sustainability and climate action through our actions and activities, in accordance with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate and the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD to 2030). 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”. Sustainability is defined as the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future.

Scope

Sustainability is a community issue applying to all students, teachers, and employees. Parents and guardians should note and promote this Statement. The Board of Management ensures all school decisions align with these commitments.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision:

Scoil Pól envisions a sustainable school community where all members act with care for creation, respect for one another, and responsibility for the future. We nurture environmentally conscious, socially responsible young people prepared to contribute positively to their communities and the wider world.

Mission:

To provide an inclusive primary education that integrates sustainability into teaching, learning, and school operations. Through mutual trust and respect, we support pupils' personal, social, academic, and spiritual development while fostering understanding of sustainability as shared moral responsibility grounded in stewardship, justice, and care for the common good.

Values:

Our approach is underpinned by inclusion, respect, responsibility, stewardship, and service. We promote care for the environment, dignity for all individuals, and wise resource use, recognising the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic wellbeing.

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- Scoil Pól has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement detailing ESD aims and objectives aligned to our school vision
- ESD is recognised as a cross-curricular theme coordinated effectively across all subjects
- Opportunities to address sustainability are identified in classroom teaching at all levels
- All school policies align with principles of sustainable development
- Regular self-evaluation of teaching practices in sustainability occurs
- School is registered for the Department's ESD to 2030 Newsletter
- Resources supporting sustainability teaching are adequate and sufficient

Environmental Sustainability

Green-Schools Programme:

- Scoil Pól participates in the Green-Schools Programme
- Currently working towards Global Citizenship – Litter & Waste Green Flag award
- Green Team comprises staff and students driving whole-school sustainability through student leadership and staff oversight

Energy Management:

- SEAI Energy in Education resources and tools monitor and report energy consumption
- Energy awareness campaigns promote switching off lights and equipment when not in use
- Natural light usage is maximised where possible

Waste Management:

- Comprehensive three-stream recycling system implemented (general waste, recycling, compost) using ESD to 2030 funding
- Single-use plastics reduced in school operations by collecting re-turn bottles in designated bins and recycling appropriately.
- Waste-free lunches and reusable containers promoted.
- Organic waste composted where feasible.
- Repair and reuse encouraged before disposal
- Discarded printed paper professionally shredded for recycling

Biodiversity:

- Flower beds at school front support pollinators
- Bug hotel located on grounds
- Local litter-picking activities undertaken

Sustainable Transport:

- High-visibility vests provided to all students for safe walking/cycling
- School buses serve significant proportion of students
- Secure bicycle parking provided

Additional Programmes:

- TAKE 1 Programme facilitated annually, focusing on one SDG through cross-curricular education for one week
- School environment displays sustainability information on Green-Schools noticeboard
- Outdoor learning actively promoted through polytunnel and locality trips

Social Sustainability

- School ethos recognises importance of and sensitivity to gender equity
- Students provided opportunities to develop skills for solving community problems locally
- Ethos prepares students for citizenship in a global community
- Needs of all students regarding differentiated physical or learning abilities accommodated
- Staff receive training in conflict resolution to support positive student behaviour

Economic Sustainability

- Non-competitive ethos of cooperation and resource-sharing modelled
- Students involved in decision-making on resource allocation through Student Council and Green Schools Committee.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills by TY mini-company and the Leaving Certificate Life, Community and Work Programme.
- Fund-raising activities reflect ethical and sustainable principles
- School buildings maintained to high standards with sustainability best practice in mind
- Circular economy principles are educated on and promoted

Cultural Sustainability

- School ethos fosters students' self-esteem, mutual regard, respect, and positive social relationships
- Curriculum and ethos prepare students for life in multicultural society
- Commitment to community engagement demonstrated and community involvement encouraged
- Active role in supporting cultural diversity within school and wider community

Teacher and Student Competence

Teacher Development:

- Teachers supported in building ESD capacity through CPD opportunities
- Engagement with TAKE 1 Programme and other ESD providers

Student Leadership:

- Students encouraged to participate in peer-to-peer learning
- Action-oriented projects supported such as STRIPE YSE, GLOBE Programme & Erasmus+.
- Student Council & Green Schools Committee are involved in sustainability decisions
- Students encouraged to volunteer for local community sustainability projects (e.g., Tidy Towns)
- Project-based learning around real-life local community problems facilitated

Implementation and Governance

Responsibilities:

- **Board of Management:** Oversight and resource allocation
- **Principal:** Strategic leadership and policy implementation
- **Green Schools Team:** Coordinate initiatives (staff, pupils, parents); meet termly
- **All Staff:** Integrate ESD into practice and model sustainable behaviours
- **Pupils:** Active participation and leadership through classroom roles and Green Team
- **Parents/Guardians:** Support school initiatives at home and school
- **Caretaking Team:** Infrastructure management, waste monitoring, operational support

Monitoring:

- Annual sustainability audit using Department toolkit
- Termly Green Committee progress reviews
- Annual report to Board of Management
- Energy and waste data monitored
- Student voice surveys on sustainability awareness
- Reporting to Department of Education on ESD funding outcomes by end of academic year

Goals

- Achieve 40% waste reduction by June 2026 through new recycling system
- Achieve 70% recycling compliance across school
- Publish Sustainability Policy Statement on school website and submit link to Department
- Complete Department report on ESD to 2030 funded project by June 2026
- Work towards Green Flag for Litter & Waste
- Explore future Green Flag themes (e.g., Water, Energy)

Review

This Statement was implemented during the academic year 2025/2026. To ensure continuous improvement in sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed biennially or as required.

Policy Adopted by Board of Management:

Signed: Sister Eileen Kelly
Chairperson

Date: 13/05/2026