

Sustainable Environment Policy

October 2023

Policy Document



Belclare National School

Sustainable Environment Policy

It is the policy of SN An Croí Ró Naofa to foster in the children a love, respect and appreciation of all living things and their environment. We aim to embed in the children the importance of conserving the environment for future generations. Through participating in the Green-Schools – a European educational programme, we hope to promote responsible behaviour among the children and the wider community.

Education for sustainable development should give pupils a greater understanding of both natural and human systems through a range of immediate environmental experiences that engage their senses, emotions and thinking. It should enable the school community to develop a life ethic that values all people and the natural environment. It should further allow them to become aware of the actions that they ought to pursue in order to live more sustainably now and in the future. The implementation of this policy should therefore contribute to support the provision of a pleasant socially responsible environment.

We aim to cut down on the waste of energy throughout the school enabling it to run more efficiently and contributing to a healthier environment.

Aims:

We have a long-standing history with the Green-Schools programme. 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, energy, water, transport, global citizenship, biodiversity and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the seven steps take a minimum of two years.

Every two years we set up a new Green-Schools committee who serve as the main coordinators and communicators of the programme. The children write letters of application and then serve on the committee with the co-ordinating teacher. The children meet with the teacher regularly to make decisions and then deliver the information to classes. The children have worked on several themes. While the majority of the work is directed towards the current theme, schools are also expected to maintain the work that has taken place on the previous themes.

Litter & Waste

We will:

- Re-use single sided paper, print and photocopy on both sides.
- Where possible, laminate worksheets and other documents used frequently, especially outdoors.
- Recycle waste such as paper, clothes and ink cartridges.
- Reduce the amount of waste produced.
- Encourage the use of scrap paper trays in classrooms.
- Litter reduction and prevention is an on-going process that involves all members of the school community.
- Regard litter clearing as a positive environmental action, which will also help foster a sense of personal pride and responsibility in pupils.
- Demonstrate that litter prevention improves the environmental quality of the school and the neighbourhood through poster competitions and regular litter picks.

Water

We will:

- Establish and raise awareness of simple actions that can cut down on water use substantially e.g. pupil monitoring that taps are turned off properly, cistern bags, water harvesting.
- Make pupils aware of the link between water and the financial cost.
- Help pupils and the wider community understand that conserving water is vital to our future – global projects, looking at the information that the school has been given from Trocaire.

Energy Use

We will:

- Establish and show that simple, low or no cost measures to conserve energy can be effective and bring about significant savings e.g. turning off lights and electrical appliances when not in use and keeping windows clean to allow maximum natural light.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Monitor energy consumption by tracking the school's use of electricity during energy flag renewal, completion of activities around Guzzler – SEAI.
- Make all members of the school community aware of the link between energy use and financial cost.
- Talking to the children about new building regulations, A rated buildings in new extensions, educating the children about insulation and showing savings can be made.

Transport

We will:

- Encourage the use of buses, gathered children's Eircode's and created maps to show who lived on the bus route.
- Encourage car-pooling where possible.
- Raise awareness about the impact of transport to the environment and to people's health.
- Provide adequate and safe facilities for pupils and staff cycling and walking to school, cycle centre installed just outside the school grounds.
- Implement an effective awareness programme on road safety for pupils.

The Outdoor Environment

We will:

- Use the school grounds as a source of teaching and learning opportunities for pupils, like an outdoor classroom.
- Ensure that the grounds provide for recreational use by pupils as well as provision to undertake exercise.
- Develop the grounds as a place for aesthetic experiences – active walkway, friendship benches.
- Create habitats for a range of other species e.g. bug hotel, willow tunnel.
- Be aware that the school grounds provide the visitor with the first impression of the school and will influence the attitude and behaviour of the pupils.

Curricular Activities:

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, junk art / reusing materials.

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 etc.

English:- debates, poetry, essays, green code, signs, 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, quality sampling, water experiments.

Maths:- charts and graphs, measuring volume, capacity, interpreting surveys.

Evaluation:

The effectiveness of this policy can be observed through the following measures:

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

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **28/11/2023** and will be reviewed in two years

Signed-

Richard Broderick

Chairperson of Board of Management

Agnes Martyn

Principal

28/11/2023

Date

05/12/2023

Date