



## **Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS**

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**Registered Charity Number: 20124151**

**Principal: Ms. Lucy Travers**

**Deputy Principal: Ms. Caitríona Lancaster**

### **Sustainable Environment Policy Statement**

#### **Introduction**

It is important for Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore National School community to have an awareness and understanding of the effects of their actions upon the environment in which they live, work and relax.

In order to do this, we need to take responsibility for our own actions and we need to have a sense of duty and care for the world in which we live. Through participation in the Green School programme, we ensure pupils, staff and the wider community are made aware of the importance of taking care of our environment.

Green Schools, known internationally as Eco-Schools, is an international environmental education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long term, whole school action for the environment.

Eco Schools is operated by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) whose main partners including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Green Schools in Ireland is operated and co ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland), in partnership with Local Authorities throughout the country, is supported by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore N.S. has been taking part in the Green Schools initiative since 2005. We have been awarded 7 Green Flags to date. On on the theme of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (litter & waste), Energy, Water Conservation, Travel, Global Citizenship, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship (litter and waste). We are currently working towards the Marine Environment (litter and waste) green school's flag.

#### **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to set out clearly what is expected in terms of environmental protection and awareness for all staff and pupils so that our planet is protected and appreciated.

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, then energy, water, transport, global citizenship, biodiversity and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the seven steps take a minimum of two years.

## Transport

Pupils are encouraged to use public transport to school where possible. As we are a remote country school with no pedestrian walkway or cycle track, car-pooling where practicable is also encouraged.

## School Garden/Biodiversity

A school garden has been established, which can be enjoyed by the children and staff alike. The focus has been on creating a haven for wildlife and insects and we will endeavour to promote biodiversity by using environmentally safe products and methods in our garden. A focus has also been placed on growing foods such as potatoes, chives and tomatoes to increase awareness around self-sustainability and understanding where food comes from. Natural growth of hedgerows and long grass around the school is promoted to foster the living things living in the natural school environment. A native tree is planted each year by members of 6<sup>th</sup> class.

## Curricular Activities

Many aspects of environmental awareness will be taught in the form of explicit lessons which will complement the Green Schools activities taking place throughout the school in relation to litter, energy and water. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotion of personal development and wellbeing</li><li>• Citizenship and social/personal responsibility</li><li>• Communication/co-operation with others</li><li>• Media awareness</li></ul>
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of posters, murals, signs, logos, mascots</li><li>• Water as a medium for art</li><li>• Information Technology – creating graphs and charts, using spreadsheets, designing signs and posters etc</li><li>• Carrying out research, use of interactive websites, sending emails, letters in relation to environmental issues, doing surveys, raising awareness through school Aladdin system/blogs/website/emails/newsletters etc</li></ul>
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Debates, poetry, essays, reports</li><li>• Green Code, signs, newsletters, letters</li></ul>
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The water cycle, the water treatment process, rivers, lakes, oceans of Ireland and the world</li><li>• Climate change and global warming</li><li>• Using maps, co-ordinates,</li><li>• Symbols and keys</li><li>• Programmes like Irish Aid sustainable development goal</li></ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change in water quality and consumption over time</li><li>• Change in packaging/litter</li><li>• Consumer trends over time</li><li>• Relate to changes in lifestyles and society</li></ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pollution</li><li>• Properties of water</li><li>• Water quality sampling</li><li>• Water experiments</li><li>• Life cycle of plants- planting and growing</li></ul>
Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charts and graphs measuring volume/capacity</li><li>• Interpreting surveys</li></ul>

## **Need for the Policy**

There is a need for a policy to be put in place so that clear guidelines are set out for all staff and pupils as to what is expected of them in terms of environmental education, protection and awareness. Instilling an awareness in young children is very important for the future of our planet. Furthermore, conservation of and careful use of precious resources such as electricity, water and heating fuel and the minimisation of waste is more economical and will help to save the school money. This money can be used on educational requirements instead. It is hoped through having an active Green Schools scene in the school, environmental issues will be discussed at home and awareness raised, thus encouraging recycling and energy/water/ fuel saving in our pupil's homes and in the wider community.

## **Green Schools Committee**

Every year a Green Schools Committee will be elected, consisting of two members (one boy and one girl) from each class from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class. Two teachers from the school will lead the committee. The committee will have regular meetings to discuss Green Schools issues and to implement initiatives. They will endeavour to gain as many Green Schools flags as possible through participation in each two-year programme and to maintain the existing flags.

## **Litter/Waste Activities**

- All classrooms and the staffroom to have recycling bins for paper, plastic and tins/cans.
- All classrooms to have a compost bin for fruit/vegetable peels and pencil sharpenings.
- All classes to assign pupils to be litter and energy monitors in each class.
- Battery recycling boxes located at reception for whole school use.
- Staff to be aware of environmental impact of photocopying and to only photocopy what is needed and to use double sided copying where possible. Photocopying allowance in place for each mainstream and SET teacher.
- Children to reuse paper where possible.
- Children to engage in recycled/junk art style projects periodically.
- Teachers to use resources from ReCreate Warehouse in art lessons where possible. ReCreate is a national social enterprise that takes end of line and surplus stock from businesses and makes them available as art materials.
- School undertakes annual clothing collection drive.

## **Energy Saving Activities**

- Lights and heat to be turned off when not needed/not in use.
- Laptops, iPad and interactive whiteboards to be placed on standby when not in use/during breaks.
- Staff only to photocopy what they need and to use black ink where possible.
- Keep outside doors and windows shut when appropriate to save heat, and therefore fuel and energy – except during the Covid pandemic they are encouraged to open doors and windows for better ventilation.
- Ensure the school is well insulated and that the heating system works efficiently.
- Devices and switches to be turned off at the end of the day.

## **Water Saving Activities**

- Ensure taps are not left on when not in use.
- Water harvesting system on roof to supply water to the school garden.
- Each classroom to watch out for leaks.
- Ensure that cleaners employed by the school use the minimum water required and that they use environmentally friendly products.

**Evaluation**

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

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

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed as and when is required.

**Ratified**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5/4/2022.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Ruby Towers 5/4/2022

Principal