



Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS

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Principal: Ms. Caitriona Lancaster.

Deputy Principal: Mr. Shane Walsh

Sustainability Policy Statement

Introduction

Rathmore National School is committed to promoting sustainability and climate action across all aspects of school life. Under the **Climate Action Plan**, all public service bodies are required to adhere to the Public Service Climate Action Mandate and to develop Climate Action Roadmaps outlining how they will achieve energy efficiency and emissions reduction targets.

Schools now operate under a **separate School Sector Climate Action Mandate**, which requires each school to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. This policy has been developed in line with that mandate and is informed by the **National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2030 (ESD to 2030)**.

Education for Sustainable Development seeks to ensure that, by 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, global citizenship, human rights, respect for diversity and care for the environment (UN SDG 4.7).

This Sustainability Policy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate and the principles of ESD to 2030 and has been approved by the Board of Management of Rathmore NS.

Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement is to outline how Rathmore NS promotes sustainability and climate action through our policies, practices and daily activities. Sustainability is understood as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Scope

Sustainability is a whole-school and whole-community responsibility. This policy applies to all pupils, staff and employees of Rathmore NS. Parents and guardians are encouraged to support

and reinforce the principles of this Statement. The Board of Management will ensure that decisions made in relation to the school align with this policy.

Vision

Rathmore NS aim to nurture happy, confident children who are enthusiastic, independent and respectful. We the teachers aim to work as an approachable team in a professional manner and thus create a supportive and secure environment. We welcome parents into our school. We endeavour to make it a safe place where children will do their best, while being respectful towards their fellow pupils, the school environment and biodiversity, the teachers and others in the wider community

Mission/ values

Rathmore NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school committed to the aims and principles of the Primary Curriculum. We provide high-quality teaching, learning and support by celebrating the uniqueness of each child and nurturing their intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and physical development. We endeavour to enhance self esteem of everyone in the school community. To imbue in pupils respect for people and environment and to encourage them in the idea of being responsible.

School Motto:

“Ní neart go cur le chéile”

Whole-School Approach to Sustainability

- Rathmore NS has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement to guide climate action and sustainable practices across the school.
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is recognised as a **cross-curricular theme**, integrated across subject areas.
- Teachers identify opportunities to address sustainability, climate action and global citizenship within classroom learning.
- The school engages with national developments in ESD, including registration for the Department of Education’s quarterly ESD Newsletter.

Environmental Sustainability Initiatives

Green-Schools Programme

Rathmore NS is an active participant in the **Green-Schools Programme**, which provides a structured framework for embedding environmental education into the daily life of the school.

The school has been awarded **eight Green Flags** in the following areas:

- Litter and Waste
- Water
- Energy
- Travel
- Biodiversity
- Global Citizenship – Litter and Waste
- Global Citizenship – Energy
- Global Citizenship – Marine Environment (awarded 2025)

The Green-Schools Programme operates through a seven-step process:

1. Establishing a Green-Schools Committee
2. Conducting environmental reviews
3. Developing and implementing action plans
4. Monitoring and evaluating progress
5. Linking themes to the curriculum
6. Informing and involving the school and wider community
7. Developing a Green Code to reflect the school's commitment

Supporting Sustainability Initiatives

Biodiversity

- Engage with local community members and organisations to enhance school garden
- Participate in environmental education programmes such as *Heritage in Schools*
- Involve pupils, staff and community members in planting and maintenance
- Plant native trees, wildflowers and pollinator-friendly plants
- Develop vegetable gardens using seasonal planting
- Provide habitats to support biodiversity (e.g. insect hotels, bird feeders, hedgehog hotel)
- Use our outdoor space as a classroom and learning environment.

Water Conservation

- Promote awareness of responsible water use
- Integrate water conservation topics into SESE lessons
- Monitor water usage and report any wastage

Energy Conservation

- Promote a ‘switch off and save’ approach to lighting, heating and technology
- Assign classroom energy monitors through the Green-Schools Committee
- Integrate energy-related learning into SSE
- Progressively implement renewable energy solutions, including the installation of solar panels

Waste Reduction and Responsible Consumption

- Encourage correct waste segregation through clear signage and regular reminders
- Provide recycling bins in all classrooms, staff areas and offices
- Promote the reuse of paper and the use of recycled paper for printing and art
- Print and photocopy on **both sides of paper** wherever possible
- Reduce overall printing by prioritising digital communication with parents and staff
- Maintain composting systems for suitable organic waste

Hot Lunch Waste Reduction:

- Rathmore NS is committed to reducing food waste associated with the Hot School Meals Programme
- All full lunch containers and leftovers will be **sent home daily with each child** to support waste reduction and parental awareness

The school also engages with local environmental initiatives and community groups to promote sustainability.

Transport

- Promote sustainable travel choices, including walking and cycling to school
- Participate in initiatives where possible and try and encourage car pooling as it is not safe to walk to school.
- Plan to explore feasibility of ‘**Ceantar Scoile**’ road markings on the road approaching our school.

Building Capacity

Teacher Competence

- Teachers are supported in developing their knowledge and skills in ESD
- External speakers and experts are invited to support learning where appropriate.

Student Competence

- Pupils are encouraged to participate in peer-to-peer learning

- Pupils engage in action-based projects through the Green-Schools Programme

Parents' Association

- The Parents' Association actively supports ethical and sustainable practices
- Initiatives include reduced waste, recycling and environmentally responsible fundraising

Goals

- Rathmore NS aims to achieve the next Green Flag for **Global Citizenship – Travel** by 2027
- Based on the results of our Sustainability self-assessment tool Rathmore NS aims to:
 - 1: Develop and introduce a whole school planting plan to utilise our wonderful school garden (Sustainability Self-assessment tool no.19)
 - 2: Reduce the amount of food waste in our school by encouraging children to bring home all food waste in their lunch boxes and send home uneaten hot lunches.
 - 3: Reduce our energy usage by encouraging of switching off all classroom lights, Interactive white boards and closing all doors.
 - 4: Reduce the amount of paper being used in the school and encourage the reuse of paper where possible.

Success Criteria

Successful implementation of this policy will result in:

- Ongoing participation and progress within the Green-Schools Programme.
- Continued development and use of school gardens and outdoor learning spaces.
- Regular pupil engagement with sustainability themes across the curriculum.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this policy is shared by:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents and Guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management

Implementation and review

This Statement Policy was ratified on 11/02/2026. [date]. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Sustainability Statement Policy will be reviewed date every 2 years.

Signed: *Seamus Done.*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Cadriana Lancaster*
Principal

Date of next review: *Feb 2028.*