

St. Sinneach's N.S.

Colehill

Sustainable Environment Policy

It is the policy of St. Sinneach's N.S., Colehill 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 the conservation of our 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 and support the provision of a pleasant and 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 longstanding history with the Green Schools' program and are currently working towards our 7th flag under the theme of Global Citizenship - Energy. 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 Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Transport, Biodiversity, Global citizenship 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 program. The committee members, from each classroom, 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, we do our very best to continue on previous themes of litter minimisation, water conservation, energy conservation and sustainable travel.

Litter and Waste - We will

- Re-use single sided paper, print and photocopy on both sides.
- Where possible, laminate and re-use worksheets, charts and other documents used frequently.
- Recycle waste such as paper, clothes and ink cartridges
- Reduce the amount of waste produced.
- Encourage the re-use of scrap paper in classrooms.

Litter reduction and prevention is an on-going process that involves all members of the school community. We will

- 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.
- Participate in poster competitions encourage good litter minimisation, classroom and school tidiness and zero waste.
- Participate in regular litter picks.

Water Conservation - We will

- Establish and raise awareness of simple actions that can substantially cut down on water use e.g. pupil monitoring that taps are turned off properly and have lower flow when in use.
- Make pupils aware of the link between water use and 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 Trócaire, Irish Aid and other agencies.

Energy Conservation - We will

- Encourage children to undertake simple low-cost 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, keeping windows clean to allow maximum natural light.
- Monitor energy consumption by tracking the school's use of electricity and make annual return to SEAI.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Make all members of the school community aware of the link between energy use and financial cost.

- Talk to the children about new building regulations - educate the children about insulation and show savings that can be made

Transport – Sustainable Travel Habits - We will

- Encourage use of school bus.
- Encourage car-pooling where possible.
- Raise awareness about the impact of transport on the environment and on our health and subsequently, on our health system.
- Implement an effective awareness programme on road safety for pupils.
- Because our school is situated on a crossroads of 4 narrow converging roads and because of the volume of cars and the school bus within a very tight timeframe each morning and afternoon, we feel it unwise to encourage our pupils to cycle to and from school, given the many possibilities for potential accidents. We could not say that this would be safe practice for our pupils.
- We feel it unwise to encourage our pupils to walk to school, given the many potential safety risks involved.

The Outdoor Environment - We will

- Use the school grounds as a source of teaching and learning opportunities for pupils.
- Ensure that the school grounds provide for recreational use and exercise by our pupils.
- Develop the grounds as a place for aesthetic experiences - active walkway, playing field – weather permitting, basketball court.
- Our school grounds allow visitors to our school to create their impression of the school and will influence the attitude and behaviour of the pupils.

Curricular Activities - The themes of Waste Minimisation and Water and Energy Conservation 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, social and personal responsibility, communication and co-operation with others, media awareness.

Visual Arts: Creation of posters, signs, logos, fabric / textile art and crafts - reusing materials.

Geography: Global Citizenship – Litter, Water, Energy, Transport, Biodiversity; The Water Cycle, The Water treatment process, Pollution, Habitats and Creatures affected by Climate Change and Global Warming, Living conditions and irrigation systems in underdeveloped

countries, Rivers, Lakes, Oceans of Ireland and the world, Map-Reading - using maps, coordinates, symbols and keys.

History: Electrification in Ireland and the changes brought about, Advancement in technologies and their benefits, 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, Water quality sampling, Water experiments;

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, newsletter, letter writing.

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.

Ratification: This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 4th April, 2022.

Review Date: This policy will be reviewed as deemed necessary but not later than 2024 – 2025 school year.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Fr. Charlie Healy, Chairperson, Board of Management.

This policy will be available on the school website and in the school office.