



Our Lady of Fatima Special School

Roll No.	19266T
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Policy	Sustainability Policy
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	Chairperson, Board of Management
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Introductory Statement

In Our Lady of Fatima School, we care greatly about environmental issues and as a result we are part of An Taisce's Green School Programme. This involves setting up a committee of teachers, pupils, and members of the school community. Its aim is to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practises in our everyday lives.

Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes:

- To understand the impact of the actions of people on the environment.
- To explore how we can enhance our environment for future generations through energy conservation, reducing waste, composting, recycling, and reuse.
- Become aware of the impact of air, water, waste, and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments.
- Develop an understanding of conservation e.g. Recycling, energy, and water.
- Develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment.
- To foster a sense of responsibility for the long-term care of the environment and a commitment to promote the sustainable use of the Earth's resources through personal lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision making.
- To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- To acquire open, critical, and responsible attitudes towards the environment.

Procedures and Guidelines

How to reduce the school's ecological footprint:

Energy

- Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy efficient school through participation in Green Schools.
- To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.
- Students to take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper, and rubbish in the appropriate manner.

Biodiversity

- To utilise our garden area to its full extent and continue to develop it.
- To involve community members in maintenance of school garden.

Water

- To reduce the water consumption within the school.
- To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- To monitor water usage and report wastage.

Implementation

The school will continuously participate in Green Schools and work towards obtaining Green Flags. The whole school community will be involved in the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates:

- In the classrooms
- School website
- Social media
- Newsletter
- School Platforms
- School notice boards

Energy

- Promote a 'switch off and save' rule for technological equipment, lighting, and heating/cooling particularly when leaving the classroom to go the yard and hall.
 - Lighting within the school is generally cost effective and environmentally friendly fluorescent types are used in all classrooms.
- Members of the Green Schools Committee will act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used in an effort to conserve energy.
- The school delivers a report with energy saving plans.

Waste

- Students are consistently reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner.
- Food waste is disposed daily and transferred to the correct bin.
- Paper into recycling bins.
- Use recycled paper for printer/photocopier where possible.
- Promote the reuse of paper in classrooms, staffroom, and office.

- Recycling bins provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office. Waste bins are also provided and have black bags. Children and staff are encouraged to dispose of their waste correctly, for example to wash out yoghurt cartons before placing in the recycling bin.
- A compostable waste bins are also provided for fruit peelings, cores, and other organic waste.

Biodiversity

- Consult school community members on ways to improve our garden (e.g. Where to plant, what to plant).
- Involve school community members in planting and maintaining our gardens.
- Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our gardens.
- Improve our outdoor natural environment, e.g. by planting native trees in the school garden.
- Plant native plants and wildflowers that encourage and support the insect population, such as bees and butterflies.
- Improve our vegetable garden by planting and harvesting more seasonal vegetables.
- Use natural materials that reduce the impact on the environment.
- Provide varied living conditions in the school garden (insect hotels, hedges, walls, grassy areas, and trees) to offer potential food and shelter to our natural biodiversity.

Water

- Remind students and staff regularly the importance of turning off the tap when water is flowing.
- Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE and CSPE.
- Monitor water usage and report wastage.

Other Initiatives

Lunchbox Policy

Whatever comes in the child's hot lunch goes home in the lunchbox - i.e. a yoghurt pot, a wrapper, half eaten sandwich. This policy has numerous benefits.

- (1) It dramatically cuts down on the school's waste.
- (2) It encourages the parents to think of more ways to reduce their own waste
- (3) The parents can see how much their child is eating.

Pupils are encouraged to use a reusable drinks container daily. Each child is also encouraged to have a lunchbox and not to use Clingfilm or tinfoil. Cartons, yoghurt tubs (which must be washed out), cereal bar wrappers etc. are put back into the child's lunch box to ensure that the school's overall waste is kept to a minimum.

Re-Use

Children are encouraged to re-use plastic bottles for their drinks, conserve paper by writing on the back of sheets deemed "waste" etc. We also encourage the children to take their waste home with them so as to cut down on the volume that the school actually produces. Lunchboxes and re-usable drink containers are reused for lunches.

Text-A-Parent with Aladdin Schools

Where possible parents will be texted school information instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This will cut down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.

Individual Class Platforms

As well as a whole school platform, each class teacher has their own, where they can communicate with parents, further reducing waste.

Photocopying and Scrap Paper

It is policy with staff to photocopy on both sides of each page to reduce paper waste. Staff must also photocopy on black and white unless essential.

Each classroom is encouraged to have a scrap paper tray where used sheets can be put for children to draw on/ colour in instead of using new pages.

School Garden

A school garden has been set up where children have planted vegetable and flowers throughout the year. People in the school community have helped with the purchasing of equipment and bulbs and also supervised the classes during planting. There is a number of flower beds which we aim to increase.

Forest School

Forest School is an initiative to instil in the children a sense of ownership and respect for the local environment. It is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.

Environment

In keeping with our on-going environmental awareness, the schools Healthy Eating Policy will also reduce the amount of litter in the school and will give the pupils an understanding of how people affect the world around them and how they can improve it. In doing this, we will encourage the pupils to cut down on litter produced by packed lunches e.g. using resealable bottles instead of cartons or re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings. Any packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal. Any fully uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

Green Council

The school has set up its first Green School Committee, which is made up of two teachers, the caretaker and volunteer representatives from students in different classes throughout the school.

- The student members remain the same for the year to ensure continuity.
- The Green Council members liaise regularly with the organising teachers.

Green Flag

The school has been awarded its first Green Flag for the themes of Litter and Waste in September 2018. The school has been awarded its second Green Flag for the themes of Energy in September 2020 but delayed due to Covid. The school is now focusing on its third Green Flag with the theme of Water. It is the aim of the school to continue working on renewing the previous themes while simultaneously working on efforts for the new flag.

Curriculum

The school views environmental issues as being fundamental to the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to nurture a respect for the environment in their students. Environmental / Green issues are key elements of S.E.S.E., S.P.H.E. and C.S.P.E.

Practical issues that we aspire to

Turn it off campaign - e.g. water, electricity (lights, computers, tablets etc.).

Composting our fruit remains from lunch.

Composting pencil sharpening, newspaper and anything else suitable from our litter from our lunch.

Monitor the heating.

Don't leave windows open if the heat is on.

Turn off hot water in.