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**St. Ailbe’s School**

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**SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT**

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| Policy Area | Schools |
| Policy Reference number | ST.AIL/SUSTAIN/092/0 |
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| Document Drafted by | St. Ailbe’s School |
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**Sustainability Policy Statement**

**St. Ailbe’s School**

**Scoil Ailbhe Naofa**

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All public service bodies are required under the Climate Action Plan to adhere to the Public Service Climate Action Mandate – and to develop Climate Action Roadmaps setting out how they will deliver on their energy efficiency and emission reduction targets.

Schools now have a separate Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. The School Sector Climate Action Mandate can be read in full here: [gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate (www.gov.ie)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a1673-school-sector-climate-action-mandate/)

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development – ESD to 2030 also informs the content of the following Sustainability Policy Statement template.

ESD aims to ensure that “by 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”. (Sustainable Development Goal 4.7)

The following has been prepared as part the School Sector Climate Action Mandate, and in keeping with the principles and themes of ESD to 2030 and has been accepted by the Board of Management of our school.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement (“the Statement”) is to outline how our school promotes sustainability and climate action, through our actions and activities. Sustainability can be defined as the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future.

**Scope**

Sustainability is a community issue and applies to all students, teachers and employees of our school. Parents and guardians should note, and where possible, promote, the Statement. The Board of Management of the school will ensure that decisions made in respect of the school align with the Statement.

**Vision, Mission and Values**

Our school’s vision is:

* To provide quality education that meets the actual needs of young people in the best quality learning environment, creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence between students, parents, and staff which enhances self-esteem and self-worth.
* To help all pupils reach their full potential in all areas of life, moral, academic, social and vocational, recognising that there is no single standard that applies to all.
* To help pupils grow in confidence with a positive outlook on life and with the due consideration for others and for property.
* Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4 and 5.

**Whole School Approach to Sustainability**

* Our school has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement. It clearly details the aims and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in our school, its relationship to the vision and mission of the school.
* Our school recognises Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, and this is co-ordinated effectively in our school.
* Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects.
* All our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development.
* Resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability are adequate and sufficient at all levels.
* Our school carries out regular self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development.
* Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network ([www.ISSN.ie](http://www.ISSN.ie)).
* Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/a1d6e-education-for-sustainable-development-newsletter/>.

**Environmental sustainability**

Green-Schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school.

* Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme. Our school was awarded a Green Flag for Litter and Waste in 2021. Our school is currently working towards our second Green Flag for Water.

*Our school has a Green Team comprising staff and students whose role is to develop, encourage and embed a sustainable ethos across our school.*

* Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme’s curriculum linked energy Resources, pupil Workshops and teacher CPD

[Schools | Community Energy | SEAIhttps://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/](https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/).

* Our school engages with the [SEAI Energy in Education](http://www.energyineducation.ie/) resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption.
* Our school engages with Take 1 programme in the area of sustainable development.
* Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible.
* Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment for example using recycled paper for printing within the school.
* Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places. Signs, posters and displays regarding our school’s Sustainability and Biodiversity initiatives are clearly evident around the school building. Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
* Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. Our school sensory garden and school polytunnel are regularly used by the school body to promote hands-on learning about the environment, food production, climate change, food miles, organic food production and nature. The school sensory garden and school polytunnel are projects which transition year students have been working on for a number of years and are constantly developing these resources. Outdoor seating areas are provided in the school grounds to promote the enjoyment of nature and foster a respect and care for the environment. Students across the entire school body, encompassing a variety of subjects are involved in outdoor projects each year such as designing and installing garden mosaics, sowing pollinator friendly bulbs, building bird/bat boxes and raised bed construction as a means of promoting respect and an interest in nature and the environment.
* Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity through a variety of ongoing initiatives which are being constantly increased year on year around the school. Students have constructed bird houses which are hung around the school, bird feeding stations are monitored by students. Native trees and shrubs, pollinator friendly plants, fruit trees and plants have been planted around the school campus to promote Biodiversity. A pollinator corridor of fruit trees was established on a boundary fence to act as a source of food for pollinators. St. Ailbe’s school received sponsorship from ABP Group and they provided insect towers which were installed in the school grounds as well as native trees for the school grounds. Students have initiated a project to collect seeds from native and naturalised trees each year which are sown in pots in the school and grown to saplings which are distributed to families/locals in the area to enhance biodiversity.
* Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school through initiatives such as cycle to school week.
* Our school engages with the Safe Routes to School programme: <https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>.
* Our school engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education including Take 1, Teaching Nature and Green schools.

**Social Sustainability**

* Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity.
* Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level.
* Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community.
* Our school engages with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/> or other programmes working in this area.
* The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.
* All school staff are provided with the training in the area of conflict resolution, in order to support and affect positive student behaviour.

**Economic Sustainability**

* A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school’s allocation of its resources.
* Students are involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school. Our student council and green-schools committee are actively involved in working with our school leaders on projects including recycling, school anti-litter campaigns and community work.
* Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills such as transition year mini-company initiative.
* Our school’s fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.
* Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practise in the area of sustainability in mind.
* Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy.

**Cultural Sustainability**

* Our school ethos aims to foster students’ self-esteem, along with a mutual regard and respect for fellow students, and positive social interaction and relationships.
* Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare students for life in an increasingly multicultural society.
* Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement and encourages the community’s involvement with the school.
* Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community.

**Teacher Competence**

* Our teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD. Teachers are engaging with the Take 1 Sustainability programme, undertaking continuous professional development through the Teaching Nature programme, attending Green-schools online workshops, keeping up to date with developments in Sustainable Development through the ESD newsletter and being members of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network.

**Student Competence**

* Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities.
* Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects such as Scifest and Young Reporters for the Environment.
* Our school has a Student Council/Sustainability Committee/Green Team who are involved in decisions about school management including recycling in the school, water usage and reduction, energy efficiency community engagement such as Tidy Towns litter picking and the Hills tree naming project.
* Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects. Transition year students are working in conjunction with Tipperary Tidy towns and have a weekly litter picking route organised where students are litter picking in their community to raise awareness about the importance of keeping their town tidy. Transition year students are also involved with the upgrading the Tipperary Hills and are working on researching the history of Tipperary town and locality as viewed from the Hills with the aspiration of developing an app with their history for locals and visitors alike to use.
* Our schools are involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community.

**Goals**

Our school aims to achieve a Green Flag for Water by 2025.

**Implementation and review**

This Statement was implemented on 01/02/2024. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every two years.