



St Louis High School



Environmental and Sustainability Policy

***St Louis High School is a dynamic community of learning
where we aspire to foster a happy and inclusive environment.
We nurture creativity, embrace diversity and cherish our values
while building on our rich traditions
in an atmosphere of respect, gratitude and generosity.
As active global citizens we share in the journey
towards a deeper understanding of and engagement in our complex, ever-changing and
inter-dependent world.***

DRAFT

This policy is devised pursuant to the School Sector Mandate to address Sustainable Development and Climate Change within the education sector, reflecting the change that has been implemented in the wider public sector.

The overall Public Sector targets are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% in 2030 and improve energy efficiency in the overall school sector to 50% by 2030.

Recognising the need for environmental responsibility and sustainability, and upholding our motto “Ut Sint Unum”, we in St Louis High School are committed to working together to create a more just, equitable world.

We recognise our duty as an educational community to prepare future generations with the skills and knowledge to protect and conserve the world’s resources and avoid jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Aims and Objectives within our School.

Through this policy we endeavour:

- to bring about an understanding of the impact of our individual actions on our environment not only locally but nationally and globally;
- to promote and encourage sustainability within our school leadership and student body;

- to encourage respect for our immediate school environment by employing a concept of “leave no trace” on our school campus;
- to promote ethical consumption and production by educating students and staff on growing your own fruits and vegetables in limited space;
- to recognise the importance of biodiversity and the impact of its loss on our planet;
- to effect behavioural changes, through promoting policies of reducing our consumption, re-using and recycling when possible;
- to decrease our school’s carbon footprint by avoiding waste of energy and resources amongst the whole school community.

Implementation of Policy

In recognising that young people are key contributors to our sustainable future, our school recognises the endeavours by the Greens Schools and Gardening Committees.

St Louis High School continues to excel in its engagement with the Green Flag movement and has been awarded its most recent Green Flag in Global Citizenship Litter and Waste. As part of the Green Flag initiative, for 2023-2024 the focus is on Energy consumption.

We are also active participants in Irish Aid’s World Wise Global Schools programme and the Louis Network, promoting Global Citizenship education.

To further implement this policy the school will endeavour to:

- comply with all relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% in 2030 and improve energy efficiency in the overall school sector to 50% by 2030;
- provide students with opportunities to engage and have their voices heard in the design delivery and monitoring of policies and programmes pertaining to Environmental and Sustainability;
- provide a full opportunity for inclusion of the student voice through our student representative council;
- continue to endorse and engage with Green Schools and to maintain our green flag awards and monitor goals achieved;
- continue to actively participate in Education for Sustainable Development programme as run by World Wise Global Schools. Global Citizenship Education is incorporated

into subject plans, thus each subject engages in raising awareness of Sustainable Development Goals as part of the curriculum.

Energy conservation

Energy conservation plays a vital role in combating many environmental challenges faced by us all. We will endeavour:

- to engage with the Energy in Education Programme to support climate action engagement and explore the potential to decrease our school's carbon footprint;
- to conserve energy and reduce the use of electricity by switching off lights when rooms not in use, or when natural light is sufficient. Install energy saving lighting, ensuring monitors and electronic equipment are powered off at the end of each school day. There are now students in each class with responsibility for "energy monitoring" ensuring that lights are not left on incessantly.
- to endeavour, when financially possible, to upgrade the school heating system to the optimum energy efficient system and explore the possibility of renewable energy sources in an effort to move away from reliance solely on fossil fuels;
- the school has signed up for the Department of Education Schools Photovoltaic Programme in February 2024 and will pursue this programme to introduce an energy renewable source to the school.
- to undertake to complete the annual energy monitoring and reporting legislated requirement to the SEAI;
- to ensure our school is committed to implementing Green Public Procurement on purchases over €25,000.00.

Recycling & waste management

This is a key area where all staff and students in the school can work together to ensure that we:

- continue to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic and batteries;
- correctly segregate waste. All members of the school community are encouraged to dispose of waste in correct bins to facilitate waste management. There are designated green and black bins in each corridor, in common areas and in the staff room.
- in particular, the Home Economics department actively encourage the use of re-usable containers when bringing ingredients into school. Vegetable and fruit peelings are composted. Upcycling of clothing is strongly endorsed as part of the curriculum;

- the Art Department continuously endeavour to re-use and upcycle materials in various projects which are displayed throughout the school – both indoor and outdoor;
- compost leaves in our “leaf pens” and we have introduced a wormery which is fed from vegetable and fruit scraps collected from classes (limited to 1st year and TY classes at present) and the staff room. The gardening club has taken on responsibility for this.

RECYCLING OF TONER / ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

- All broken electronic equipment is recycled through the WEE scheme.
- HP printers provide a recycling scheme for toner, which we are now signed up to.

LITTER CONTROL

- Litter control is a very important part of our environmental strategy. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for the tidiness of the “base classrooms”. To support this, a cleaning rota is devised to ensure that each class room is tidy, clean and rubbish free.
- Promote the re-use and recycling of unused books and uniforms at the end of each academic year. The schools Parents’ Council is leading a book and uniform exchange at the end of the year which is proving very popular and supportive to families.

Paper use

- Printing on both sides of the papers is actively encouraged. As a result of increased use of technology, over-reliance on photocopying has begun to decrease. Teams’ platform is being used to share teachers’ notes and homework can be accessed and submitted on the teams’ platform.
- School policy documents are all available online and may be accessed via the school website. Notifications pertaining to school business are sent to parents and guardians via e mail, text message or the school app. School reports are also accessed via VSware. This has reduced the need to print documents to be sent to students and parents /guardians, reducing postage costs and carbon footprint.
- Agendas and minutes of staff meetings are shared to staff via teams with a very limited number of hard copies available, again reducing the need to print, avoiding waste of paper and energy costs associated therewith.
- A book-rental scheme is in operation especially for students in 1st and 5th Yrs and families who qualify. The free book scheme will be introduced in September 2024 for Junior Cycle.
- Unused textbooks are donated to Open Minds bookshop.

Water conservation

- Dual flushing systems and push taps in hand basin in the staff and student lavatories assists water conservation.
- The school has two water fountains in the main foyer of the school to allow students refill water bottles.
- We hope to install water buttresses which can be used to water plants / vegetation in the geodome.

Transport

- Encourage alternative means of transport to reduce transport-related carbon emissions. The use of public transport and, in particular, cycling or walking to school are to be encouraged and promoted effectively.
- Extra bicycle racks have been installed, as well as a bicycle shelter to encourage greater use of cycling.
- Explore a 'safe route' to school to encourage students to either walk or cycle to school.
- Liaise with Bus Connects and National Transport Authority (NTA) where issues arise re bus services to and from the school.

Biodiversity

- Areas of the school grounds have been designated wildflower areas to attract bees, butterflies, and wildlife, with the aim being to encourage biodiversity.
- Continue to expose students to the experience of growing vegetables, fruit and flowers. Educating and bring about awareness on issues around the area of food security, food miles etc.
- The continuation of the Gardening club to encourage students to learn about gardening techniques and expose them to the joys of growing and caring for plants.
- Continuing with a gardening module as part of the TY programme to encourage students to learn about gardening techniques and expose them to the joys of growing and caring for plants.
- To run an annual Meitheal day where parents, students and staff come together to prepare the garden for the coming growing season with a view to developing
- Encourage students to have an appreciation of nature by introducing some outdoor elements to CSPE classes and through nature-themed trips.

Wellbeing

- That outdoor spaces may be enjoyed by the entire school community.
- Students to be encouraged to go outside when the weather is good.

Catering Supplies

- Biodegradable cups are used in afterschool events (staff meetings etc).
- The Catering company Food Village endorses recycling and containers are recyclable.
- The school will look into the possibility of the use of commercial compost bins to deal with contaminated recycled materials.

Commitment to achieving our objectives:

St Louis High School will endeavour to:

- ensure the support, commitment and involvement of the entire school community, maintenance, housekeeping, teaching staff and student body;
- encourage personal responsibility for keeping one's own area clean and tidy (those who create the mess clear it up where possible);
- continue with the promotion of the environment and green schools, by allocating post/s of responsibility.
- Student leadership (SRC) will include a dedicated member of the SRC to promote environment and sustainability amongst the student body.
- continue engagement with World Wise Global Schools and Green Schools programmes;
- continue to inform and promote awareness of events and achievements in environmental issues through social media, school newsletters and school website;
- give recycling and sustainability a high profile and include environmental issues in school assemblies;
- increase engagement with environmental education and sustainability through CPD;
- encourage participation in competitions, exhibitions, seminars and lectures;
- promote the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products (in consultation with the cleaning company) where possible, using recycled paper and supporting environmentally-aware companies for Art and school supplies.

Policy Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be judged on the following:

- A school environment that is clean and litter-free;
- Surrounding grounds are conducive to fostering wildlife and biodiversity;
- Green Flags are retained and further Green Flags awarded;
- Reduced energy bills and reduced waste disposal bills.
- Student engagement in Green Schools, Louis Network and environmental/sustainability initiatives.

Policy reviews will be organised by the Board of Management on a regular basis, involving School Administration, Caretaking Team and the SRC.

This policy was ratified at the Board of Management meeting on **April 17th 2024**.

Signed: Patricia Bourden - P Bourden (Chairperson)

Signed: Ciona McDonough - C McDonough (Principal)