

St. Columba's College Stranorlar



Sustainability Policy

February 2023

Our Mission Statement

St. Columba's College, Stranorlar is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under the trusteeship of CEIST and is committed to 'the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment'.

Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, St. Columba's College is committed to the holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed by the teachings of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere guided by the core values of CEIST.

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development: We believe a knowledge of, and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning: We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person: We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person.

Creating Community: Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.

Being Just and Responsible: We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.

Rationale for Policy

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) launched 'Education for Sustainability', the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020 in July 2014. This strategy was primarily influenced by the national strategy on sustainable development, 'Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland' (hereafter referred to as 'Our Sustainable Future'), published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in 2012. 'Education for Sustainability' aims to ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the 'what'), the key dispositions and skills (the 'how') and the values (the 'why') that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future. The full strategy is available at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/National-Strategy-on-Education-for-Sustainable-Development-in-Ireland-2014-2020.pdf>.

‘Our Sustainable Future’ also identified three key policy areas that Education for Sustainable Education (ESD) should focus on:

- environmental issues (climate change; disaster risk reduction; biodiversity; environmental protection; natural resource management; urban decay; water security),
- socio-economic issues (economic growth; poverty; food prices; child labour; social exclusion; justice; debt-security; human rights; health; gender equity; cultural diversity; production and consumption patterns; corporate responsibility; population growth; migration) and
- ‘political’ issues (citizenship; peace; ethics; human rights; democracy and governance)

These areas were also informed by international guidance and practice, including policy documents from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (UNECE, 2005, 2009), the EU Council conclusions on Education for Sustainable Development 2010, and UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development – The Global Action Programme after 2014.

In response to and complementary to this guidance, St Columba’s College Sustainability Policy has been developed to ensure that we can collectively respond to the ever changing world in which we live and in turn prepare our students to be active and informed global citizens in same. Guided by the core values of CEIST, in particular Being Just and Responsible, we seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships in an environmental, socio-economic and political context. Through its implementation we seek to further develop in our school community, a shared life ethic that values and protects all people and the natural environment.

Objectives:

- To make the school community aware of the wider impacts of our individual actions locally, nationally and globally in an environmental, socio-economic and political context.

- To encourage behavioural changes that minimise any adverse impact, increase participation and communicate and take meaningful actions on our responsibilities as global citizens.

Policy Implementation:

The College community employs a range of appropriate practical strategies, methodologies and actions as we endeavour to meet our chosen objectives, including but not limited to;

- **Global Citizenship Education Committee** – This student centred body sees pupils raise awareness and take actions on a wide range of Global Citizenship Education issues, including climate change education, gender equality, Fairtrade, model UN conference, fast fashion, clothing swap shops, human rights and reducing single use plastic consumption.
- **Green Schools Committee** – The College has been awarded The Green Flag and this was achieved specifically for recycling initiatives and planting of indigenous pollinators and trees. Staff identified the need to re-invigorate this committee and its purpose in 2023, possibly involving CSPE classes in the school as an initiative.
- **Development Education Curriculum Inclusion** – Development Education is an established subject for Transition Year students and sees them examine a wide range of global citizenship and sustainability focused issues with the assistance of guest speakers and external agencies.
- **World Wide Global Schools (WWGS)** – The College has worked in collaboration with WWGS since 2010 and have been granted both the Citizen's and Diplomatic Passport Award for established engagement with GCE in 2017 and 2022. Continued Staff participation in CPD offered by WWGS is facilitated by the College.
- Student participation in competitions that promote Sustainable and Development Education values, namely BT Young Scientists, the Young Social Innovators and the Young Environmentalists Award (ECO – UNESCO) – Senior Eco Innovation award

winners 2022 with their entry '**2 Weeks to Change the World**' that encouraged participants to 'Use less to live more'.

- Across the Curriculum students are aware of issues relevant to Sustainable Education and Development Education in each subject area, as evidenced in WWGS term reporting.
- Co-curricular and extracurricular activities that complement and promote Sustainable and Development Education including Concern debates, participation and hosting of Euroscola events.
- Some classrooms have motion sensor energy efficient LED lights installed. Temperatures in rooms located in the 2010 extension are thermostatically controlled via an automated heating system.
- All future building development will be in compliance with all NZEB regulations.
- The Schools Procurement Unit (SPU), established and funded by the Department of Education and Skills, is the central support resource for providing guidance to the College on procurement related issues, as is the ICT Procuring Framework.
- Installation and maintenance of water fountains throughout the school and sourcing and supply of reusable bottles for student body in consultation with GCEC and Student Council.
- Canteen policy of using reusable cutlery and tableware. We aim to phase out use of paper napkins in the canteen by introducing compostable napkins.
- We aim to sell BPA free bottles in the canteen and cease sales of single use plastic bottles. As stated, water fountains are now provided throughout the school with another becoming available in the Library Block.
- We will investigate the possibility of providing a food waste bin in the canteen and staff room with a compost bin provided alongside the normal waste collection bin.
- We will investigate the introduction of recycling bins for plastic throughout the school

- Paper and cardboard recycling throughout the school and paper conservation through photocopier usage limits and utilisation of Google Classroom and other platforms where practical, to minimise consumption. Paper recycling bins are in use throughout some classrooms, we aim to provide recycling bins in all classrooms. Parents and guardians can access school reports via VSware. The College operates a book rental scheme for Junior Cycle students.
- The fabric of the College and surrounding grounds and campus is maintained by caretaking staff who employ a zero litter policy, assisted by students and facilitated by easily visible and accessible waste management points.
- Events and themed activities acknowledge and celebrate the multicultural and diverse character of the College community.
- The College encourages students to observe a 'Car Free Friday' initiative in order to reduce traffic congestion on the access avenue and to instead walk via the same approach. This needs to be promoted further in 2023.
- The College seeks to promote sustainable, low impact tourism and has established cooperation with the national body, Irish Camping and Caravan Club, to facilitate same through the use of college campus facilities.
- We will investigate the feasibility of refillable board markers to be used to cut down on non-recyclable waste?

Policy Review

This Sustainability Policy was formally adopted by the Board of Management on 8th February 2023.

The Sustainability Policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Board of Management, staff, parents and the student body.

Signature: P. Mc Gowan Date: 8/2/23
(Chairperson, St. Columba's Board of Management)

Signature:
(Principal)

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Date:8/2/2023.....

Date for Review: **February 2024**

