

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra

GREEN SCHOOLS POLICY

Introductory Statement:

It is the policy of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, to foster in the children love, respect and appreciation of all living things and their environment and to become active agents in the conservation of environment for future generations. By participating in the Green Schools Programme – a European-wide environmental educational programme – we hope to promote responsible behaviour among the children, staff and the wider community. This policy was formulated in February 2017. Current update, March 2023.

Mrs Paula Mac Eoin made the initial application on behalf of the school, set up the Schools' Committee and set about implementing the Green-Schools seven point plan. Progress has been ongoing since 2011 and this work is continuing under our present committee comprising of teachers and, most importantly, pupils themselves.

In June 2013, Scoil Mhuire Clondra N.S. was awarded our first Green Flag by An Taisce. It was awarded for measures taken to reduce waste and knowledge on waste management. It was a great honour for the school, its pupils, teachers, parent body and the school community to receive this award and it marked the culmination of a lot of hard work by all concerned over a number of years. As well as being presented with the Green Flag, which is flown at the school's entrance, each qualifying school was also granted permission to use the Green Schools' Logo on school stationery.

Every school that has been granted the Green Flag is reviewed every two years. During the review the school must show that it has maintained the achievements of the previous two years and built on them by expanding its original programme and meeting new targets. Since then we have worked on the theme of Energy and achieved our second Green Flag in 2015. We have now been awarded a Green Flag for Water Management (2017) and one for Global Citizenship, Marine Environment (2019).

Aims

1. 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 life style and participation in collective environmental decision making.
2. To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
3. To acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
4. Through explanation, investigation and hands-on experiences the children will acquire skills to help care for our environment immediately and have a long term impact.

Implementing the Green Schools Programme

Scoil Mhuire Clondra School has always been a school which promoted among its staff, pupils and parents awareness of the environment and of the necessity to make the school community conscious of its obligations to preserve our green environment through the reduction of waste and waste recycling; energy awareness and an awareness of the importance of conserving water.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW & ACTION PLAN

THEME 1: LITTER

- Scoil Mhuire Clondra has always encouraged children to be responsible for their own litter.
- Pupils eat their lunch in the classroom so no food is taken to the yard.
- Wrappers, cartons etc. are taken home unless the pupil is able to wash carton themselves.
- Other rubbish is disposed of in the recycle bin or landfill.

What improvements have the Litter Policy brought about:

- An overall reduction of non-organic waste resulting in the black bin weighing less.
- A cleaner and healthier environment overall.

Policy on paper recycling:

- Before photocopying – Do you really need it?
- Photocopying both sides of the page.
- Write notes on the back of old letters/pages.
- Save old paper for art and use recyclable materials for Art & Craft where possible.
- Use recycled paper where possible .
- Return used printer cartridges for recycling or get cartridges refilled when possible.

Recommendations to Pupils

- Use your copies efficiently. Always fill the whole copy. Keep old copies as jotters. Remember paper is made from trees and trees help our environment.

THEME 2: ELECTRICITY

- Switch off those lights if you don't need them!
- Lighting is generally cost effective – fluorescent type in all classrooms
- Lights were often left on during breaks

Recommendations

- That a child in each class be assigned the task of switching off all lights at break-time and before going home in the evening. – Green Teams.

THEME 3: WATER

- We are delighted to have been awarded our third green flag for water awareness and conservation.
- We have an action plan in place, water themes are linked to the curriculum and we have put water saving techniques in place.

Curriculum

- Environmental Studies has been part of the School Curriculum since 1971 and the importance of caring for the environment has been further developed in the New Curriculum being implemented on a phased basis in all Irish Primary Schools.
- Care of and respect for the environment is Cross Curricular Geography, Religion, History and SPHE. The SPHE Volume of the New Curriculum states that children should be taught to: “Appreciate the environment and develop a sense of individual and community

responsibility for caring for the Environment and being custodians of the Earth for future generations.”

- Children are taught by example and the school alone cannot solve all the problems of the environment. Children should be taught not to litter and to take care of the earth’s energy and water resources from a very early age. Parents too need to be educated or re-educated as required.
- As a nation we are not the best at keeping our environment litter free. Irish people returning from holidays abroad often remark on how litter free other countries are. Likewise tourists visiting this country often remark on how we are defacing our beautiful country with litter.
- In teaching any subject the Curriculum recommends beginning with the children’s own experiences and environment. So the classroom work undertaken in Environmental Studies will always have its primary focus on the Home & School Environment and on the Green Schools Project.
- We may not be able to solve the problems of the world but we can strive to get our own ‘patch’ in order.

Informing and involving the school and wider community

- As is evident from the composition of the Green Schools Committee there is a wide cross section of people involved in organizing and implementing the Green Schools Programme – Teachers, Ancillary Staff, B.O.M. and pupils are all represented. **Ciaran Hussey** from Longford County Council is always at hand to give advice when called on.

Methods of transmitting information

- A special Notice Board in a prominent position has been set aside within the school and the contents of this Board can be viewed and read by pupils, teachers, ancillary staff and visitors to the school.
- PUPILS - The general pupil body are kept informed by the Notice Board, teachers’ and pupils on the committee.
- STAFF - Staff are kept informed by correspondence, staff committee members, the Notice Board and at Staff Meetings.
- PARENTS - The General Parent Body are kept informed by correspondence from The principal (as necessary), the Notice Board and the parent representatives on the committee.
- B.O.M. - The B.O.M. are kept informed by the Notice Board, B.O.M. members on the committee, correspondence and B.O.M. meetings.
- THE WIDER COMMUNITY- the secretary, Sheila Stephenson, regularly updates the school website.

Green Code

The Green Code Statement forms an important part of the Schools Green School Policy.

Our Environmental Review and Action Plan outline where we have come from and where we hope to go to as a school in relation to our school environment. Much if not all of what is to be contained in our Green Code Statement has already been dealt with in previous sections but the points need to be stated concisely and unambiguously to focus the attention of all concerned on the project at hand.

On arriving at a Green Code Statement the committee consulted with all relevant parties. A consensus was reached that the statement should be brief, practical, clear, have achievable aims and be easily understood by all.

SCHOOL GREEN CODE STATEMENT

We are dedicated to creating a clean, healthy and pleasant school environment for all our staff and pupils. We aim to achieve this by our Green School Code:

Green Code

Energy: 'Turn off the light, it's just right'

Litter: 'Join the big green world cleaning machine'

Water: 'Wasting H₂O is a big no no!!'

We will:

- 1- put our litter in the proper bins.
- 2- turn off unnecessary lights.
- 3- close all doors when we leave rooms.
- 4- make sure that all taps are turned off.
- 5- compost dead flowers.
- 6- not waste pages of our copies.
- 7- harvest rain water

Green Schools Committee

Our Green Schools Committee may comprise representatives from each classroom or from the senior room, and a co-ordinator who leads the project. Green Schools Committee meetings occur regularly, with each member asked to contribute their thoughts/ideas. Committee members are then responsible for reporting and decisions to their classroom.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

This policy was ratified on _____

Signed: _____

Ms Aileen Mollahan, Chairperson, Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra.