St. Dominic’s College

Cabra



# Sustainable Environment Policy

**June 2021**

**St. Dominic’s College Sustainable Environment Policy**

**General aims and philosophy of the policy:**St. Dominic’s College has a duty to prepare future generations with the knowledge and skills to manage the world’s resources wisely. Education for sustainable development should enable the school community to develop a life ethic that values all people and the natural environment. It should further allow them to become aware of the actions that they ought to pursue in order to live more sustainably now and in the future.

The community of St. Dominic’s College is faithful to the environment created in the past over many generations. The school and its members are custodians of the grounds and take pride in their shared physical surroundings.

The implementation of this policy should therefore contribute to and support the provision of a pleasant and socially responsible environment. This policy supports the ethos of our school.

**Objectives:**

* to engage students and staff in a wide understanding of the impact of our individual actions on the environment, locally, nationally and globally.
* to promote high standards of care for our school, local community and the wider world.
* to encourage behavioural changes, increase participation in and communication of environmental responsibility.
* to minimise any adverse impact of our school on the environment
* to set clearly defined sustainable development objectives and targets.

**Policy Implementation:**

**The Green Flag:**

St. Dominic’s College was awarded its Green Flag in 2012. This flag was achieved specifically for recycling efforts in the school. Green Flags are earned and presented under the Green-Schools international environmental education award scheme.

**Eco- Team:**

St. Dominic’s College has an Eco- Team. The main goal of the Eco Team is to try to improve the environment of the school, both inside and out. It works at building a pleasant environment for all who share this campus, be they students, teachers, cleaners or other staff. (See Appendix 1)

St. Dominic’s College will endeavour to implement this policy by means of the following:

* **Green Flag activities**: the school community will continually monitor its goals to ensure the Green Flag award is maintained.
* **Legal compliance:** it will comply with relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives.
* **Energy conservation:** it will strive to reduce the use of electricity e.g., by switching off lights when not in use and using automatic sensor switches.
* **Heating/lighting:** energy efficiency is increased by continually upgrading the maintenance work of the school, e.g. the installation of a new boiler with a timer control panel and maintaining the efficiency of other boilers in the school. Energy-efficient light bulbs and lighting systems have been installed throughout the whole school in 2020.
* **Renewable Energy Sources:** by seeking ways to increase the schools use of renewable energy sources in the future; the schools’ energy supplier is Electric Ireland who are committed to increase renewables to 50% of generation capacity (generating 40% electricity) by 2030.
* **Recycling and Conservation:** St. Dominic’s College currently recycles paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, batteries, used garden bulks and compost. Recycle bins are in use in the staffroom and classrooms throughout the school.
* **By conserving paper:** The school endeavours to print on both sides of paper. The use of whiteboards and other electronic media is helping reduce the use of paper. Many important school policies are now shared via the school website rather than in paper form. Teachers’ notes and homework can be made increasingly accessible via google classroom in future, as appropriate, and more homework can be done on-line. The use of text messages to parents’ mobile phones and emails has greatly reduced the need to print and send notes home in schoolbags. Parents now access school reports via VSware. The photocopiers have a usage limit.
* **Upcycling and Reuse of products:** The Library often use**s** second hand books and tries to use local suppliers. Books are covered so they last longer. When retiring the books, the librarian endeavours to reuse them for other activities, e.g. Art Department projects. The Home Economics department upcycle**s** pillowcases for fabric use and re-uses buttons for fabric embellishments. The School operates the Book Rental Scheme for 1st to 3rd years.
* **Waste Management:** waste is segregated appropriately, and disposal of each type of waste is done correctly. Litter control is an integral part of this: students are encouraged to be responsible and keep classrooms clean. The use of a classroom cleaning rota supports this. First year students are encouraged to bring home their rubbish and this builds on best practice from their Primary schools. The school strives to ensure that all bins are clearly marked Recycle /General Waste. Litter pickers are available for use by teachers with class groups if and when they are needed.
* **Water Conservation**: water is conserved by the use of push taps in the toilets in the school building, by using basins for washing up in Home Economics and Art, and by washing a full load in the washing machine. Leftover water in used water bottles is used for watering house plants. The Student Council introduced reusable water bottles in 2019. The school has two water fountains to allow students to refill their bottles.
* **Transport:** reduction in transport-related carbon emissions is promoted by encouraging the use of public transport and cycling / walking. The school has a bicycle rack at the student entrance for use. Some teachers have availed of the Bike to Work Scheme.
* **School Trips:** St. Dominic’s College students and staff make use of local amenities which are within walking distance and use public transport when necessary. The school community appreciates its local environment when planning school trips, e.g. The Phoenix Park, Dublin Zoo, Glasnevin Cemetery etc. The PE Department uses Pope John Paul 11 Park as a nearby facility for activities.
* **Catering supplies:** the school uses wooden biodegradable cutlery for catering events, e.g. after school study, staff events.
* **Biodiversity:** An area in the school grounds is in the process of becoming a wildflower meadow. It is designated as a wildflower regeneration area. It is being maintained by staff and students. This will encourage biodiversity in the school grounds and attract bees, birds and butterflies. The school grounds have a natural woodland area to be enjoyed by staff and students.
* **Purchasing Policy / Procurement:** The Schools Procurement Unit (SPU), established and funded by the Department of Education and Skills, is the central support resource for providing guidance to our school on any procurement related issue.
* **Energy-rated appliances:** Appliances in the Staffroom and practical classes e.g. dishwasher, fridge have a high energy efficiency rating. The school considers the energy rating when purchasing.
* **Wellbeing of all:** The grounds can be enjoyed by all, for example through outdoor spaces designated for staff and students to use during lunch**.** The campus is further developed for the betterment and enjoyment of all by the flower beds and walled garden maintained by a Dominican sister.

**Achieving the Objectives**

To achieve the objectives of this policy St. Dominic’s College will:

* fully involve the Maintenance Department and whole school community
* ensure that those who create a mess clear it up when possible
* continue our Green-Schools involvement
* continue the post of Environment Co-ordinator with a Post of Responsibility
* continue to encourage staff to engage in CPD on the topic of sustainability and the environment
* give re-use and recycling a high profile and include environmental issues in school assemblies
* promote awareness through the Newsletter, the school website, increase environmental education across the curriculum and in co-curricular activities
* encourage participation in environmental competitions, exhibitions
* ensure that "green" criteria, including energy efficiency, are used and promoted in any new buildings, re-builds/restoration work.
* The school should consider the environmental aspects of the acquisition, use and disposal of goods and services when these are purchased e.g., switching to recycled paper; purchasing Fair Trade goods; when purchasing food, take “food miles” into account and use local suppliers where possible; for cleaning materials and chemicals eco- friendly detergents should be sourced where possible.

**Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy can be judged from the following indicators:

* a litter-free, clean school environment
* grounds are well maintained and thriving in terms of plant and bird life
* further support of biodiversity
* the retention of the Green Flag and the obtaining of further Flags
* reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, and water and for waste disposal.

This Policy is embedded across all subject departments. The grounds lend themselves to outdoor teaching when the conditions are favourable. This can support student care and wellbeing and broaden teaching strategies. Students have a greater awareness and an active interest in Environmental options. This policy is in support of our Mission statement and the holistic development of our students.

Policy reviews will be organised by the Board of Management on a regular basis, involving the school Administration, the Maintenance Department, the Eco-Team and the Student Council.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Chairperson, Board of Management*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Principal*

*22nd June 2021*

**Appendix 1**

The Eco Team 2021

The Teams are divided in to three groups this school year.

They are a first- year team, a combined second & third- year team and a team made up of fifth & sixth- year students. The team arrangements may change each year depending on the number of applications.

The method for joining is that an interested student fills out an application form and leaves it in the box provided at the student entrance. We try to arrange for the teams to be selected before the end of the school year and when we return in August we arrange for the first- year team to join us. I read the application forms and see what level of interest is expressed. The form invites the student to write down her reasons for wanting to be on the team and what they believe they can bring to the team if selected. Many Eco Team members were on similar teams in Primary school and bring a wealth of ideas and experience to our school. Our teams wear distinctive badges usually presented to the students by the Principal/Deputy Principals.

The procedure to buy supplies involves writing up a requisition form (Blue form in office) for materials when needed. We try to get the best value possible in outlets such as Woodies, Lidl Aldi, Mr Middleton etc. We try to keep spending as low as possible.

The role of all teams is to promote the school environment for the enjoyment of all. We interpret the environment widely and encompass the plant inside and the shared Pleasure grounds as well.

We work alongside the maintenance & Cleaning staff.

The Teams undertake many diverse activities such as the following:

* clean paper cardboard recycling
* plastic bottle recycling
* propagation of the school plants to increase the collection at no cost to the school
* maintaining the school plant collection by regular watering, dead heading & topping up containers when required
* ongoing battery recycling
* regular cleaning of the shared grounds with our own litter pickers
* placing notices around the school to reduce wastage of lights and the turning off radiators when not required
* on occasions running poster competitions to promote the environment
* maintaining the Eco noticeboard
* e-cycling in the Social area working with Imelda
* planting up a number of flower containers around the school
* linking in this year with Health Fest by providing compost & containers for all first years to plant some seeds
* dusting some of the school furniture collection in conjunction with Dolores & her team
* encouraging staff to use double sided photocopying
* addressing the staff as the Eco Team when we want to emphasise/promote a particular issue
* major projects have included the changing of taps to push style to save water and the very recent installation of low-energy lightbulbs.

We have an Eco Storeroom for our resources in the Lima block.

We try to have nice features around the school to make the environment pleasing for all e.g. window sill displays…...we link with the Art Dept. to have pupils ‘work displayed and rotated at intervals.