**Sustainability Policy Statement**

Ardfert Central N.S

Roll Number: 19384c



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 facilitate a thriving school community where all individuals can flourish and positively impact the world around them.
* To enable each child to meet social, emotional and academic needs always and in all ways.
* To actively engage students, staff and the community in developing a sustainable environment which fosters and inspires best practice and emphasises the importance of preparing and empowering individuals to become responsible for contributing to a sustainable future.
* To seek to provide a new model of primary education that reflects Ireland in the 21st century.
* To develop critical thinkers who model an inclusive spirit in an equality-based environment which is democratically run.
* To help build resilience in our students by encouraging collaboration, communication and problem-solving.
* To teach students how to navigate their own decision-making process by considering ethical factors, such as respect, fairness, equality and kindness.
* To impress on the students that small decisions made by each and everyone have a compounding effect that leads to extraordinary results, for better or for worse.

Our school’s mission is:

Ardfert Central National School which is comprised of pupils, teachers, SNAs, management and ancillary staff is committed to the education and development of the young people in its Christian community.

* Ardfert School staff strives to recognise the dignity and uniqueness of each child.
* Ardfert School staff actively aspires to providing the highest quality education in a safe environment.
* Ardfert School staff values the support and co- operation of parents/guardians in the education of their children.
* Ardfert School staff seeks to build a Christian environment in which each individual child is taught and treated with love, respect and understanding.

Our schools values are…

* Ardfert Central N.S. strives to provide a nurturing, positive, holistic learning experience for every pupil.
* We commit our resources to challenging and empowering each other academically, socially, physically and emotionally.
* At all times, we strive to develop resilience, tolerance, respect and team spirit among pupils and staff.
* Ardfert Central N.S. values its relationship with its

local community by actively promoting our pupils’ and families’ involvement in the community.

* We endeavour to provide a school environment, indoor and outdoor that ensures the promotion of the physical and mental wellbeing of all pupils and staff.
* We recognise the individuality and uniqueness of every child and staff member.  We welcome and celebrate difference.  We believe in the overall goodness of each individual.
* We expect truthfulness in all our dealings with one another.
* Forgiveness is at the heart of our core values.

**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.
* We are currently developing our resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability.
* Teachers are becoming more aware of developing their 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)) and various classes have watched some webinars provided by the network.
* 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 since 2007. In 2023 we achieved our 9th green flag for Global Citizenship – Travel. We are now working towards our 10th and we are working on the theme of Global Citizenship Food and Biodiversity. Our school has a Green Team comprising staff, students and parents whose role is to be the driving force behind fostering sustainability and environmental awareness within the school. They strive to inspire, educate and empower the school community to become stewards of the environment.
* Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme’s curriculum linked energy Resources and pupil Workshops

[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 each year.
* Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place, and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible. We use recycling materials in arts based lessons, children are involved in collecting, recycling and using imagination to rework it back into use for our own learning/creativity e.g making games, houses, dioramas etc.
* Our school has comprehensive policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste, food waste and single use plastics.
* Our school had Solar PV panels installed in April 2024 and the children can now track the energy generation through the screen that was installed with the system.
* 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 has a school garden, a sensory garden, an outdoor classroom which has been installed in the last term of the school year 2023/2024.
* Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity - bug hotel, section of our playing field is uncut and so contains many wild flowers and grass, we have also just installed a polytunnel which will allow us to grow many more types of fruit/vegetables/herbs etc.
* Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking, cycling and scooting to school. Our school installed bicycle racks and scooter racks in the last two years.
* Our school engages with the Safe Routes to School programme: <https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>
* Our school engages with programmes and professionals that support and promote Environmental education. We are currently working with MTU lecturer and parent in our school Tomás Aylward to develop expertise amongst the staff in delivering outdoor learning experiences to the pupils. (CPD amongst staff)

**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 Concern programmes such as Primary Debating Ireland <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school> . Pupils get opportunities to research, write arguments, consider both sides of a motion in many of the areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
* The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated. Many supports have been put in place in the school and we continuously do so as the need arises.

**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. We have recently democratically elected a student council in the school.
* Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills. Every year 6th Class pupils take part in the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. This involves individual idea generation, group idea stage, groups presenting to a ‘Dragon’s Den’ style adult committee, development of the idea chosen - market research, marketing, advertising, financing, producing and selling the product/service.
* Our school’s fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles. Each year many charities are supported through our fundraisers.
* 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. We have an supportive and active Parents’ Association who work with the school regularly to enhance the school life of all pupils, families and staff. Many sporting organisations are involved in the life of the school through coaching and the use of their sporting facilities. Our newly built school hall has been partly funded by the Sports Capital Fund as a result of our partnership with Cillard Camogie Club. This wonderful facility is available for many local groups to use outside of school hours.
* Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community. In recent years more children of different nationalities have enrolled in our school.

**Teacher Competence**

* It is our aim that our teachers and all staff members will be supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD. We have made a good start this school year 2023/2024 but we would like to develop this further with support in 2024/2025
* It is hoped that staff competent in this area would share their expertise with other members of staff and facilitation of this would be encouraged.

**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 - Science Blast projects
* Our school has a Student Council who are involved in decisions about school life and how it can be improved for them. Our Green Committee are involved in decisions about how to encourage the school population to reduce, reuse and recycle and how to spread our new messages each year with each new theme.
* Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects e.g Beach Clean ups in our local beach – Banna, County Clean Up in April each year.

**Goals**

Our school will aim to achieve a Green Flag for Global Citizenship Food and Biodiversity by 2025.

Our school will also aim to develop the work and voice of the pupils through the Student Council as highlighted in our current School Self Evaluation cycle. The ‘standard’ from the LAOS document that we aim to improve on is ‘Promote and facilitate the development of pupil participation, pupil leadership and parent participation

- Those in leadership and management roles ensure that the pupil council is democratically elected, that it is a visible and meaningful presence in the school and that it is included in decision-making.’

Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on //2024. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 2 years.