

Castlerea Community School

Sustainability Policy Statement

Introduction

Castlerea Community School is committed to promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) through a whole-school approach that supports environmental responsibility, social wellbeing and sustainable practices.

We recognise the important role education plays in empowering young people to become active, informed and responsible citizens who can contribute positively to a more sustainable future.

In line with Ireland's *ESD to 2030 Strategy* and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our school aims to embed sustainability across all aspects of school life including teaching and learning, school culture, leadership, student participation and community engagement.

This year, Castlerea Community School established a Green Schools Committee to encourage student leadership, collaboration and active participation in sustainability initiatives within the school community. The committee plays an important role in promoting environmental awareness and supporting practical actions that contribute to a more sustainable school environment.

As a school community, we are committed to:

- promoting awareness of climate action, biodiversity and environmental sustainability
- encouraging responsible use of energy, water and school resources
- reducing waste and supporting recycling and reuse initiatives
- supporting student voice and leadership through the Green Schools Committee and other student-led activities
- integrating sustainability themes across curricular and extracurricular activities
- promoting inclusion, wellbeing, respect and social responsibility
- developing partnerships with parents, local organisations and the wider community to support sustainability projects
- reviewing and improving sustainability practices on an ongoing basis

Through education, participation and collective action, Castlerea Community School aims to foster a culture of sustainability where students and staff are encouraged to make informed choices and contribute positively to their local and global communities.

The development of this policy reflects the school's growing commitment to sustainability and will guide future environmental and ESD initiatives within Castlerea Community School.

Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement is to provide a framework that supports Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within Castlerea Community School. The policy outlines the school's commitment to embedding sustainability into all aspects of school life and promoting sustainable thinking, learning and action throughout the school community.

This policy aims to:

- promote awareness and understanding of sustainability issues among students and staff
- support the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development principles within the curriculum and school activities
- encourage environmentally responsible behaviour and sustainable practices
- foster student leadership and active citizenship
- support wellbeing, inclusion, equality and social justice
- guide the school community in making informed and sustainable decisions
- support the development of a whole-school culture of sustainability
- align with national and international sustainability frameworks including Ireland's ESD to 2030 Strategy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Castlerea Community School community including:

- students
- teachers
- school management
- administrative staff
- caretaking and ancillary staff
- parents and guardians
- visitors and external partners

The policy applies to all aspects of school life including:

- teaching and learning
- extracurricular activities
- school facilities and operations
- student leadership initiatives

- community partnerships
- school events and activities
- resource management
- wellbeing initiatives
- environmental awareness campaigns

The policy supports ongoing sustainability initiatives and will guide future planning, development and decision-making within the school.

Our Vision

Castlerea Community School strives to create a caring, inclusive and environmentally responsible learning community where sustainability is embedded into everyday school life.

Our vision is to empower students to become informed, compassionate and active global citizens who recognise their role in creating a fairer, healthier and more sustainable world.

We aim to nurture a school culture where environmental awareness, social responsibility, respect for diversity and responsible decision-making are promoted and valued.

Our Mission

The mission of Castlerea Community School is to promote Education for Sustainable Development through meaningful learning experiences, student participation and whole-school collaboration.

We are committed to:

- integrating sustainability into teaching and learning
- encouraging positive environmental action
- promoting student voice and leadership
- supporting wellbeing and inclusion
- fostering respect for people, cultures and the environment
- encouraging partnerships with the wider community
- creating opportunities for students to become responsible and engaged citizens

Through our sustainability initiatives, we aim to inspire students and staff to contribute positively to local, national and global communities.

Our Ethos

The ethos of Castlereas Community School is based on respect, inclusion, community, responsibility and lifelong learning.

As a school community, we recognise that sustainability extends beyond environmental awareness and includes social, economic and cultural responsibility.

Our school supports the principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to create a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful world by 2030. Through our teaching, activities and school culture, we seek to raise awareness of the SDGs and encourage students to consider how their actions can contribute positively to society and the environment.

Particular emphasis is placed on:

- responsible consumption and production
- climate action
- quality education
- reduced inequalities
- good health and wellbeing
- sustainable communities
- global citizenship
- partnership and collaboration

We believe that young people have an important role to play in shaping a sustainable future and that education can empower students to become thoughtful and active participants in society.

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

Castlereas Community School is committed to adopting a whole-school approach to sustainability. Sustainability is viewed as a shared responsibility that involves all members of the school community.

A whole-school approach means that sustainability is integrated into:

- school policies and planning
- classroom teaching and learning
- student leadership opportunities
- extracurricular activities
- school operations and resource management
- wellbeing and inclusion initiatives

- relationships with parents and the wider community

The school recognises that meaningful and lasting change is most effective when sustainability becomes part of the everyday culture and values of the school.

The establishment of the Green Schools Committee provides students with opportunities to contribute actively to sustainability projects and decision-making processes. The committee encourages student leadership, teamwork and participation in environmental initiatives.

The school also aims to strengthen links between sustainability and wellbeing by promoting outdoor learning, active citizenship, collaboration and respect for the environment.

The Board of Management, school leadership team, staff and students will work collaboratively to review sustainability practices and identify areas for improvement.

Environmental Sustainability

Castlerea Community School is committed to promoting environmental sustainability and encouraging environmentally responsible behaviour among students and staff.

The school aims to increase awareness of environmental issues including:

- climate change
- biodiversity loss
- pollution
- waste management
- energy consumption
- water conservation
- sustainable transport

The school will encourage practical environmental actions such as:

- reducing waste and litter
- promoting recycling and reuse
- reducing single-use plastics
- conserving energy and water
- supporting biodiversity initiatives
- maintaining clean and safe school grounds
- promoting sustainable travel where possible

The Green Schools Committee will support environmental campaigns and awareness initiatives throughout the school year.

Environmental sustainability will also be promoted through classroom learning, project work, school events and extracurricular activities.

The school recognises the importance of connecting students with nature and promoting a sense of responsibility for protecting the environment for future generations.

Social Sustainability

Castlerea Community School recognises that sustainability also includes social responsibility, equality, wellbeing and global citizenship.

The school is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all students feel valued and supported.

Social sustainability within the school includes:

- promoting student wellbeing
- encouraging inclusion and equality
- fostering respect and empathy
- supporting positive relationships
- promoting diversity and intercultural understanding
- encouraging active citizenship and community involvement

The school acknowledges the importance of helping students understand social justice issues and the interconnectedness of global communities.

Initiatives such as *Let's Fix Fashion* encourage students to explore sustainability within the fashion industry and consider issues such as fast fashion, ethical production, waste reduction and responsible consumer choices.

Participation in programmes such as *WorldWise Global Schools* supports global citizenship education and helps students develop awareness of global issues including inequality, poverty, climate justice and sustainable development.

The school will continue to support opportunities for students to engage in projects and activities that promote empathy, fairness, responsibility and social awareness.

Economic Sustainability

Castlerea Community School recognises the importance of promoting economic sustainability and encouraging students to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the use of resources.

Economic sustainability involves understanding the impact of consumption, waste and resource management on both local and global communities.

The school aims to:

- encourage responsible use of school resources
- reduce unnecessary waste and expenditure
- promote reuse and recycling
- encourage sustainable purchasing practices where possible
- raise awareness of responsible consumer behaviour
- support students in understanding the relationship between sustainability, economics and society

Students will be encouraged to consider how sustainable choices can positively impact communities, businesses and the environment.

The school will also seek opportunities to support local initiatives and community partnerships where appropriate.

Cultural Sustainability

Castlerea Community School values cultural diversity and recognises the importance of preserving and respecting cultural heritage, traditions and identities.

Cultural sustainability involves promoting understanding, inclusion and appreciation of different cultures and perspectives.

The school aims to:

- promote respect for cultural diversity
- support inclusion and equality
- celebrate the traditions and heritage of the local community
- encourage intercultural awareness and understanding
- provide opportunities for students to learn about global cultures and perspectives
- foster a sense of belonging and community among students

Through curricular and extracurricular activities, students will be encouraged to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity and understand the importance of respecting different traditions, languages and viewpoints.

Teacher Competence

Teachers play a central role in promoting sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development within the school community.

Castlerea Community School encourages staff to continue developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of sustainability issues and ESD methodologies.

Teachers will be encouraged to:

- integrate sustainability themes into teaching and learning
- promote critical thinking and problem-solving
- encourage student participation and collaboration
- model sustainable behaviours and practices
- participate in professional learning opportunities related to ESD and sustainability
- support cross-curricular approaches to sustainability education

The school recognises the importance of supporting teachers in building confidence and competence in delivering sustainability education.

Collaboration between staff members will be encouraged to support a consistent and whole-school approach to sustainability.

Student Competence

Castlerea Community School aims to support students in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to contribute positively to a sustainable future.

Students will be encouraged to:

- develop environmental awareness and responsibility
- think critically about sustainability issues
- participate actively in sustainability initiatives
- work collaboratively with others
- demonstrate leadership and active citizenship
- make informed and responsible choices
- understand the connections between environmental, social and economic sustainability

The school recognises the importance of student voice and leadership in creating meaningful change.

Through participation in the Green Schools Committee, classroom learning and extracurricular activities, students will have opportunities to contribute to sustainability initiatives and develop confidence as active and responsible citizens.

Goals

The goals of this Sustainability Policy are to:

1. Develop a whole-school culture of sustainability within Castlerea Community School.
2. Promote Education for Sustainable Development across curricular and extracurricular activities.
3. Support the work of the Green Schools Committee and encourage student leadership.
4. Increase awareness of environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability issues.
5. Encourage environmentally responsible behaviour and sustainable practices.
6. Promote wellbeing, inclusion, equality and respect within the school community.
7. Support global citizenship education and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.
8. Encourage collaboration with parents, local organisations and the wider community.
9. Promote responsible resource management and waste reduction.
10. Provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in sustainability-related projects and initiatives.
11. Review and evaluate sustainability practices regularly to support continuous improvement.

Green Code

Castlerea Community School Green Code

“Together we can create a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future for our school and community.”

Implementation

This policy will be implemented through:

- the work of the Green Schools Committee
- integration of sustainability themes into classroom teaching and learning
- awareness campaigns and school events
- student leadership opportunities
- collaboration with staff, parents and the wider community
- environmental initiatives and projects
- ongoing review and evaluation of sustainability practices

Responsibility for implementing this policy will be shared among school management, staff, students and the wider school community.

Monitoring and Review

The Sustainability Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

The school will monitor progress through:

- feedback from students and staff
- Green Schools activities and evaluations
- review of sustainability initiatives and projects
- consultation with the school community
- reflection on achievements and areas for improvement

The policy may be updated as sustainability initiatives develop within the school.

Conclusion

Castlerea Community School is committed to promoting sustainability through education, participation and positive action.

By embedding Education for Sustainable Development into school life, we aim to empower students and staff to make informed choices, contribute positively to society and help create a more sustainable future.

Through collaboration, awareness and shared responsibility, the school community will continue to develop and strengthen its commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Ratification

This Sustainability Policy Statement was developed in consultation with students, staff and school management.

The policy will be reviewed and updated as required.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____