



# Green School Policy

*This policy has been formulated by Caheragh NS to assist teachers, pupils and parents in making an informed decision in relation to promoting and maintaining a green school.*

## **Policy Introduction**

In Caheragh National School we care greatly about environmental issues and as a result we are part of An Taisce's Green School Programme. This involves setting up a committee of teachers, pupils and parents. The aim is to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of the school. These efforts are awarded through An Taisce's Green Flags for schools.

## **Aims**

- To understand the impact of the actions of people on the environment
- To explore how we can enhance our environment for future generations through energy conservation, reducing waste, composting, recycling and reuse
- Become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments
- Develop an understanding of conservation e.g. Recycling, energy and water
- Develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
- Promote alternative methods of transport to and from school e.g. cycling, scooting and walking to school.
- 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.
- To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- To acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
- 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



## **Awards/ Competitions**

Activities and information campaigns such as the following are currently running within the school:

- looking after our school garden and generally being conscientious.
- The correct usage of the bins – litter, recycling and compost is taken into consideration for individual certificates.
- As the school grows we aim to have a weekly tidy classrooms competition. Our cleaner will check each classroom every evening in order to ensure that the standard stated as part of the tidy classrooms guidelines has been maintained on a daily basis.
- We take part in the Cork County Council Tidy Schools Art Competition.

## **Recycling**

### **Paper Recycling Bins: (open rectangular bins)**

A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office and in each classroom to ensure that any waste paper not suitable for the scrap paper tray will be recycled.

### **Litter Bins -General Rubbish: (closed cylindrical bins)**

A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste i.e. left over pieces of food, floor dirt, old crayons etc. and this is emptied on a daily basis.

### **Compost Bins: (cylindrical stainless steel closed bins)**

Each classroom also has a compost bin for fruit peelings, cores and other organic waste. The content of this bin is emptied into the main compost bin daily by members of the Greens School Committee. This bin is located in the school garden. The teacher's staffroom is also equipped with two bins in order to set a good example to the younger members of the school and to reinforce the message that everyone is doing his/her part in caring for the environment.

## **Energy**

The Green School Committee act as the classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used in an effort to conserve energy. Lighting within the school is generally cost effective and environmentally friendly fluorescent types are used in all classrooms. The committee monitor the Energy usage and graph this on a monthly chart. This information is displayed on our Green School notice board. We



participate in the Guzzler workshops where energy conservation is celebrated through a poster competition.

Children will write pledges and mottos to encourage themselves and others to save energy.

A child in each class is assigned the task of switching off all lights at break-time and before going home in the evening.

### **Water**

A campaign for the benefits of water conservation was introduced by class teachers.

Children wrote pledges and created posters on the topic in order to advertise the benefits of saving water for the future. Water conservation measures were installed in the school in 2012 comprising displacement bags in the cisterns, percussion taps in the sinks and including isolation valves.

Water usage is being monitored and this is graphed on a monthly chart which is displayed on our Green School notice board.

### **Other Initiatives:**

#### **Lunchbox Policy:**

Whatever comes in the child's lunchbox goes home in the lunchbox - i.e. a yoghurt pot, a wrapper, half eaten sandwich. This policy has numerous benefits.

- (1) It dramatically cuts down on the school's waste.
- (2) It encourages the parents to think of more ways to reduce their own waste
- (3) The parents can see how much their child is eating.

Pupils are encouraged to use a reusable drinks container daily. Each child is also encouraged to have a lunchbox and not to use Clingfilm or tinfoil. Cartons, yoghurt tubs (which must be washed out), cereal bar wrappers etc. are put back into the child's lunch box to ensure that the school's overall waste is kept to a minimum.

#### **Paper Tray in Staffroom:**

The staffroom has a paper tray in which waste paper is used by the children for free colouring activities or art activities.

#### **Re-Use:**

Children are encouraged not to use tinfoil or cling-film in their lunches, to re-use plastic bottles for their drinks, conserve paper by writing on the back of sheets deemed "waste" etc.



We also encourage the children to take their waste home with them so as to cut down on the volume that the school actually produces. Targeted Recycling Weeks throughout the year will be introduced where old phones, used batteries, ink cartridges and old clothes will be collected by relevant agencies/companies to be recycled.

Staff will keep recyclable items for art materials i.e. toilet rolls, cardboard, paper, tinfoil, recycled bottle tops. Biscuit tins, plastic baby food containers etc. are used to store maths equipment. Jars are used for art materials. Lunchboxes and re-usable drink containers are reused for lunches.

**Text-A-Parent:**

Where possible, parents will be texted school information instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This will cut down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.

**Photocopying and Scrap Paper:**

It is policy with staff to photocopy on both sides of each page to reduce paper waste. Staff must also photocopy on black and white unless essential.

Each classroom must have a scrap paper tray where used sheets can be put for children to draw on/ colour in instead of using new pages.

**National Spring Clean:**

Once a year the whole school will take part in the National Spring Clean initiative. This involves all the children and staff cleaning up their local area. The Junior Classes will focus on their immediate school environment and the older classes will focus more on the local community e.g. carpark, local green areas.

**National Tree Week:**

Once a year, the whole school will take part in National Tree Week. This involves children learning all about trees, how beneficial they are and what can be done to help the trees/ earth. This is linked into the classes curriculum work with art and poetry projects for different classes.

**National Walk to School Week:**

Once a year the whole school take part in National Walk to school Week, however, due to the location of the school, we mark this by talking the pupils on a walk instead of having them



walk to school. This involves children learning about the benefits of exercise, road safety and use of more environmentally transportation. This is linked into the classes curriculum work with P.E., SPHE and SESE.

### **School Garden:**

A school garden has been set up where children have planted vegetable and flowers throughout the year. Parents have helped with the purchasing of equipment and bulbs. There is a number of flower beds which we aim to turn into raised beds.

### **Environment**

In keeping with our on-going environmental awareness, Caheragh National School's Healthy Eating Policy will also reduce the amount of litter in the school and will give the pupils an understanding of how people affect the world around them and how they can improve it.

In doing this, we will encourage the pupils to cut down on litter produced by packed lunches e.g. using re-sealable bottles instead of cartons or re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings.

A large percentage of school waste is composed of organic material (e.g. fruit and vegetable peelings). Pupils will use special compost bins to dispose of organic material. This compost will be used as soil conditioner or surface mulch to help us in maintaining our school gardens.

Any packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal. Any fully uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

### **Green Council**

The school has set up its first Green School Committee, which is made up of one teacher (the principal), the school cleaner and one representative from each class from Junior Infants up to Sixth Class. This will be eight children in total.

- Their peers vote the students onto the council.
- The student members remain the same for the year to ensure continuity.
- The Green Council members liaise regularly with the school principal.



## **Green Flag**

The school has been awarded its first Green Flag for the themes of Litter and Waste in September 2018.

We hope that the school will be awarded its second Green Flag for the themes of Energy in September 2020.

After that, the school will begin to focus on its third Green Flag with the theme of Water. It is the aim of the school to continue working on renewing the previous themes while simultaneously working on efforts for the new flag.

## **Acknowledgement of Effort**

The council meets regularly and involves itself in initiatives to improve the school environment through e.g. the Green Awards for the most conscientious student throughout the week. As the school grows we will also include Green Classroom Awards for the tidiest / most energy saving (all appliances turned off) classroom as well as foster an awareness throughout the school of the importance of environmental issues.

## **Curriculum**

The school views environmental issues as being fundamental to the curriculum Teachers are encouraged to nurture a respect for the environment in their students Environmental / Green issues are key elements of both the S.E.S.E. and the S.P.H.E. Curriculum.

## **Practical issues that we aspire to:**

Turn it off campaign - e.g. water, electricity (lights, computers, CD players etc.).

Composting our fruit remains from lunch.

Composting pencil sharpening, newspaper and anything else suitable home our litter from our lunch.

Monitor the heating.

Don't leave windows open if the heat is on.

Monitoring who walks, cycles, and scoots to school.



**Mission Statement**

Wherever possible the school shall endeavour to place environmental / green issues at the heart of decision-making in the school structures, as outlined in the school mission statement.

**Ratification & Review:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be reviewed in 2 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_