

LORETO ABBEY SECONDARY SCHOOL DALKEY



SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

'Our school is a caring, Christian community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.'

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states that Loreto Abbey Secondary School is a caring Christian community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.

1.2 As a secondary school, we recognise the importance of promoting sustainability in all areas of our operations, as it is critical to ensuring the long-term health of our planet and the well-being of future generations. Therefore, we aim to integrate sustainable practices into our policies and procedures, to educate and engage our students and staff, and to lead by example in our community.

1.3 We are keenly aware of the commitments the Irish government has signed up to in relation to environmental sustainability and the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a global level as the wider backdrop to the promotion of sustainable practices in our school.

2. Rationale

2.1 The world we live in today is facing major environmental challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.

2.2 These challenges affect everyone, including our students and staff, and we believe it is our responsibility to contribute to the efforts towards addressing these issues.

2.3 By promoting sustainability in our school, we aim to reduce our environmental impact, raise awareness about the importance of sustainable practices, and inspire our students to become responsible global citizens.

2.4 We believe that our students are key stakeholders in promoting sustainability in our school community. Therefore, we will encourage student-led sustainability initiatives and provide resources to support these efforts.

3. Aims

3.1 To reduce our environmental impact and resource consumption:

As a school, we recognise that we consume a significant amount of resources such as energy, water, and paper. Therefore, we aim to reduce our environmental impact by adopting sustainable practices.

3.2 To promote sustainable practices throughout the school community:

We believe that sustainability is a collective effort and requires the participation of all members of our school community. Therefore, we aim to promote sustainable practices through education, communication, and engagement. We will work to educate our students and staff on the importance of sustainability and provide opportunities for them to participate in sustainable initiatives.

3.3 To educate and empower our students to be environmentally conscious and responsible:

We believe that educating our students about sustainability is critical to building a sustainable future. Therefore, we aim to incorporate sustainability into our curriculum and provide opportunities for our students to develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to become environmentally conscious and responsible citizens.

3.4 To encourage collaboration with our wider community to achieve sustainability goals:

We recognize that sustainability is a global issue and requires a collective effort. Therefore, we aim to collaborate with our wider community, including local government, businesses, and non-governmental organisations, to achieve sustainability goals and promote sustainable practices.

4. Objectives

4.1 The objectives within this sustainability policy have been categorised into energy, waste, water, transportation, biodiversity, curriculum and external bodies.

4.2 Our objective to reduce energy consumption and expand the current use of renewable energies can be achieved by the adoption of the following strategies:

- When current light bulbs expire and need to be replaced, they should be exchanged for LED bulbs.
- Investigate the use of motion sensors to turn off lights in rooms not in use, as is the case in rooms F1, F2 and F3.
- Continue to promote the 'big switch off' rule for technological equipment, lighting and heating particularly when leaving the classroom.
- Move towards using renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- When equipment needs to be replaced the environmental impact of new purchases should be considered as part of the procurement process.
- Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy efficient school through participation in the Green Schools Committee and encouraging students to take part in the new Green Champions initiative.
- Use data about the school and local area when students engage in units of work relating to energy in Science, Business, Geography, CSPE and SPHE classes.
- Green Champions will act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used in an effort to conserve energy.
- The school delivers an annual report with energy saving plans to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Members of the Green Schools Committee and Green Champions should be included in this process to promote student voice within the school.

4.3 Our objective to reduce waste by encouraging recycling can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- To communicate to parents and students through our school newsletter ideas, tips and hints on best practice in regards to recycling.
- To encourage staff to increase their use of iPad-related activities to reduce paper consumption.
- Students are encouraged to follow the idea of 'What you bring in, you bring home', ie food and packaging brought in in lunchboxes should be brought home in lunchboxes. This will be made aware to students at the start of year inductions and through the use of posters in the school.
- To promote the use of reusable bottles and other reusable items. This could be added to the school booklist for parents.
- To raise awareness of electronic waste, the school will provide battery recycling boxes.
- To investigate the use of pen recycling in the school.

4.4 Our objective to reduce water usage by becoming more water-efficient can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- Communicate to parents and students through our school newsletter ideas, tips and hints on best practice in regards to reducing water consumption and waste.
- Continued awareness to staff and students of the necessity of turning off water taps after use.
- To reduce our water consumption, we aim to investigate the use of water-efficient technologies such as dual flush toilets.
- Invest in rain harvesters for school grounds maintenance.
- Increase the availability of water fountains
- To be mindful of pouring liquids down the drain so as not to contaminate the water table.

4.5 Our objective to promote sustainable transportation options can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- Communicate to parents and students through our school newsletter ideas, tips and hints on best practice in regards to reducing their carbon footprint.
- To reduce our carbon footprint, we aim to promote sustainable transportation options such as cycling and public transport.
- Encourage our students and staff to use these transportation options and provide resources such as bicycle parking facilities.

- Foster the use of Cycle on Wednesdays (COW) and Walk on Wednesday (WOW) initiatives on a regular basis.
- Ask parents to drop students further away from the school grounds to reduce carbon emissions and traffic problems.

4.6 Our objective to develop biodiversity within the school grounds can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- To involve our school community in biodiversity. This should be led by our Green Schools Committee.
- Involve students in conducting and publishing annual biodiversity surveys of the flora and fauna on school grounds for inclusion in the annual yearbook.
- A proportion of the school's grounds to be left 'wild' to create a habitat for native plant and animal life.
- Develop and implement a plan for the grounds which incorporates the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
- Aim to eliminate and/or reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides throughout the campus.
- Consult biodiversity experts on ways to improve our biodiversity, for example where to plant and what to plant.
- Involve students in planting and maintaining our grounds.
- Engage students and staff in the upkeep of our grounds, particularly from the litter perspective.

4.7 Our objective to educate students about sustainability through the curriculum can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- We aim to get students to appreciate the value of sustainability through study of the relevant areas of subject curricula such as Geography, Science, CSPE, SPHE and RE.
- Investigate the possibility of a sustainability education as a TY module.
- Provide opportunities for our students to develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to become environmentally conscious and responsible citizens through the Green Schools programme and GAISCE.
- Students are encouraged to participate in relevant local and national competitions, such as YEOTY, ECO-EUNESCO, GREEN AWARDS etc.
- We will establish a Sustainability Committee composed of representatives from different staff departments and student representatives. The committee will meet regularly to discuss sustainability initiatives, develop plans for implementation, and monitor progress towards achieving sustainability goals.

4.8 Our objective to work with external bodies such as local government and non-governmental organisations on our sustainability goals can be achieved by adopting the following strategies:

- Collaborate with local government such as Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council as to best practices procedures we should adopt in our school.
- Contact non-governmental organisations to increase awareness and develop programs to achieve our sustainability goals. This will include the procurement of education packs and invitation to guest speakers to address relevant year groups in the school.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, our sustainability policy is aimed at promoting sustainable practices throughout our school community, reducing our environmental impact, and educating and empowering our students to become environmentally conscious and responsible citizens. We believe that by implementing sustainable practices and collaborating with various stakeholders, we can contribute to the global efforts towards achieving a sustainable future.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 19th June 2023 and will be reviewed in 2026.

Signed: 

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 19th June 2023

Date for review: January 2026