

Athboy Community School



Sustainability Policy

Ratified 15 June 2026

1. Rationale

Athboy Community School is required as a public service body to adhere to the Public Service Climate Action Mandate (April 2025) and to develop Climate Action Roadmaps setting out how they will deliver on energy efficiency and emission reduction targets.

Schools are required to have a separate Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. ([School Sector Climate Action Mandate booklet-9.12.25-English.pdf](#))

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD to 2030) also informs the content of the following Sustainability 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.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Sustainability Policy 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 Our Vision

We have a vision of a School Community where equality, harmony and friendship exist. We accept and welcome that we are a community of diverse individuals. We work to ensure that each individual in our community may fulfil their purpose in life.

2.4 Our Mission

Athboy Community School is a partnership of Trustees, Board of Management, Parents, Students, Staff and our local Community. We value the on-going input of all our partners in the life of our School.

- We aim to provide the best educational environment where effective teaching and learning can take place. We aim to manage this with fairness and firmness.
- We recognise the individuality of our students. We provide a broad curriculum designed to meet their individual needs and to help them to maximise their potential.

- We help our students to have a healthy, wholesome and confident self-image and to develop positive relationships through our curriculum and our extra-curricular programme.
- We endeavour to co-operate with parents and religious leaders of all denominations to encourage the development of religious, moral and spiritual values in each Student.

2.5 Our Ethos

The school is a co-educational, multi denominational one which caters for students of all abilities under the Characteristic Spirit Statement as determined by our Trustees. There are currently over 740 students enrolled in the school.

Our aim will be to incorporate as many of the SDG's into the vision and mission statements of our school as possible.

2.6 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

They are as follows;



3 Whole School Approach to Sustainability

Our school aims to adopt this Sustainability Policy Statement which 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 is beginning to recognise Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, and we aim for this to be co ordinated effectively in our

school.

- Opportunities to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects will be introduced and increased.
- All our school policies are aligned to some of the principles of sustainable development.
- We have begun to compile resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability and we aim to develop these to ensure they are sufficient at all levels and are relevant to our curriculum.
- Our school will endeavour to carry out self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network.
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter.

4. Environmental Sustainability

- Green-Schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental 4 issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school.
- • Our school is working with the Green Schools Programme and we are aiming to be awarded our first green flag in the areas of litter and waste, in 2026-27.
- • Our school has a Green Team comprising staff and students whose role is to engage in activities that promote awareness of Green School initiatives in the school. These include
- The manufacture and installation of Green School's Board (Cross Curricular) in the General Purpose Area as part of a whole school initiative to educate the school community and to create a recycling hub for all staff and students.
- Whole school mascot competition to raise awareness of good litter and waste management.
- Aesthetic changes to the waste bins in the corridors, injection of colour and appropriate use of waste collection.
- In Engineering, students recycled plastics, screws and electronic components from old Junior Certificate projects from the last three years, all materials to be recycled and used for future projects.
- Students in special classes engaged in litter picking around the school grounds
- In Transition Year, students engaged in online learning course, "Climate Literacy" - students chose an area where they could make an impact in relation to waste and waste management in the school.
- In Sustainable Develop Goals class, TY students did mini-projects on one of the 17 SDGs each and presented to the class on their work
- The Chairperson of the local Tidy Towns organisation visited the TYs to speak to them about biodiversity and reducing the use of single use plastics.
- In 2024-25, TY students were involved with Climate Talks in conjunction with DCU and

won a prize for their project.

- Third Year students engaged in whole school surveys to collate data in relation to energy usage in the school
- We introduced hens to the school initially in 2024-25 and reintroduced them in 2025-26, and Woodwork teachers with students built and enclosed area in the outdoor garden at the Science labs ensuring that we have eggs for use in HE class and have set up a mini-enterprise with students from An Cuan
- • Our school engages with the SEAI Energy in Education resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption.

5. Social Sustainability

- In our Learning Code, one of the key expectations of students is that they are expected to be sustainable in school
- 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 community, we would like to expand on this to prepare them to be part of a global community.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.

6. 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 a very active student council and our school facilitates student voice assemblies.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills including the TY Enterprise Fair each year.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practice in the area of sustainability in mind.
- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy.

7. 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.

- We have been awarded the Amber Flag for the past two years through the work of a staff and student team who have raised awareness of mental health through this initiative run by the Irish suicide prevention charity **Pieta House**.
- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement, and encourages the community's involvement with the school.
- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community.

8. Teacher and Student Competence

9.1 Teacher Competence

- We have an assistant principal leading Creativity and Sustainability and they organise the Green Schools team and are engaged in a five year roll out of our Climate Action Roadmap. All staff are supported in building their own capacity in the area of Educational Sustainability Development, undertaking CPD in the Take 1 programme and other CPD. Relevant CPD opportunities are shared with staff.

9.2 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 such as the Civic engagement with the community, Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Model United Nations, Gaisce and the TY Enterprise programme.
- Our school has a Student Council and a Green Team who are involved in decisions about biodiversity, litter and waste management, energy usage and water conservation in our school, Packaging options and single use plastic usage in our canteen, and policy making in our school.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects such as Tidy Towns.

10. Goals

The Sustainability Coordinator plans to conduct the Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool for Schools at the start of the school year 2026-27 in order to assess which changes are most required to suit our context and where we are on our Sustainability journey.

[sustainability-self-assessment-tool.docx](#)

11. Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

The school will continuously participate in Green Schools and work towards obtaining Green Flags (22/23 - Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste). Furthermore, every Junior class will learn about sustainability/biodiversity through CSPE, SPHE, Geography, Business, Horticulture/Animal Care & Science. Transition year students take part in Horticulture, SDG Class and Biodiversity. The Green Schools Coordinator meets Green Schools Team every

week. The whole school community will be involved in the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates at assembly, the app, social media and on the Sustainability Information board.

12. Implementation and Review

This Statement was implemented on 15/06/2026. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every two years.

This policy was presented to the Board of Management on 15 June 2026 for ratification.

Signed: _____ Chairperson of the BOM

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Principal

Date: _____

During Biodiversity week cross-curricular activities based on biodiversity/sustainability are encouraged. PowerPoints with activities are sent to class tutors to show classes during Class Tutor time.

3. Other Initiatives

3.1 Awards/Competitions

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

We are currently working as a whole school towards obtaining the Green Flag for Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste. We have previously been successful in obtaining Green Flags for Water, Energy and Biodiversity.

Our Junior Green School students take part in litter picks in the local area at lunch-time.

We encourage students to walk/cycle/scoot to school by taking part in Cycle on Wednesday initiative and giving students high visibility armbands.

We have applied to the YEA and we are working towards submitting two applications in the areas of waste and use of resources.

We have applied for funding to create another biodiversity area in the school garden.

The SDGs groups have taken part in an online course that explored flooding, prevention and remedies.

3.2 Recycling

Recycling Paper Recycling Bins

A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office, photocopying room and in each classroom to ensure that any waste paper will be recycled.

Litter Bins -General Rubbish

A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste and this is emptied on a daily basis.

Compost Bins

The teacher's staffroom is also equipped with compost 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. Home Economics rooms also have compost bins. The assembly area where the 2nd and 3rd years eat also have compost bins.

3.3 Lunches

The lunches from Fresh Today come in compostable containers.

All students are encouraged to bring in reusable bottles and refill them at the water stations.

All students were given reusable water bottles in Sept '21.

3.4 Re-Use

The school takes part in Junk Kouture, which encourages students to reuse rubbish.

The Green Schools team run a competition during Biodiversity to encourage students to reuse/upcycle items into something usable.

3.5 School Garden

A school garden has been set up where students have planted vegetables, herbs and flowers throughout the year. It contains a large compost area and is home to 3 chickens. It is maintained by a designated member of staff, members of Green Schools and the horticulture group.

There is also an area of the school that is designated as a sensory garden. It contains an area for plants and trees.

There are two wild areas in the school where wildflowers are allowed to grow.

There are areas of the school where many native trees have been planted.

In most of these areas there are leaf cages to catch leaves which we will use for the wormery and large compost bin.

4. Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- Continuous participation in the Green Schools programme and the aspiration to be rewarded further Green Schools' flags.
- Continuous improvement, development and use of the school gardens.
- Students will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability in CSPE, SPHE, geography, business, science and horticulture and SDG.

5. Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

- Teaching staff
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Students
- Student Council

6. Review of Policy

The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended every year.

7. Ratification & Communication

The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management to be formally ratified.

The policy will be available on the school website and app for parents and the wider school community. Staff can also access the policy in the staff handbook.

Signed: _____

Date: _____