

Sustainability Policy Statement

Mount Saint Michael



Introduction

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](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/68400-school-sector-climate-action-mandate/)

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development -- ESD to 2030 also informs the content of this Sustainability Policy Statement.

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 of 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 Mount Saint Michael Secondary 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.

At Mount Saint Michael, we recognize that sustainability encompasses three equal and interconnected pillars:

- **Environmental Sustainability** – protecting and preserving natural resources for future generations
- **Social Sustainability** – promoting wellbeing and equity for all members of our community
- **Economic Sustainability** – using resources efficiently and responsibly to ensure long-term viability

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 provide a holistic education that empowers young people to become responsible global citizens who contribute positively to society and the environment.

Our school's mission is to foster academic excellence, personal development, and social responsibility in a caring and inclusive learning community that respects diversity and promotes sustainable living.

Our school's values include:

- Respect for ourselves, others, and our environment
- Excellence in all endeavours
- Integrity and ethical behaviour
- Community engagement and social responsibility
- Innovation and critical thinking

These values align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- Mount Saint Michael Secondary School has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement, which clearly details the aims and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in our school and its relationship to the vision and mission of the school.
- Our school recognises Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, coordinated through our Green Team and integrated across all subject departments.
- Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom across all subjects, with particular emphasis in Science, Geography, Home Economics, Business Studies, CSPE, and SPHE.
- All our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development, including our Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, and Health and Safety Policy.
- Resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability are adequate and sufficient at all levels, including access to online resources, library materials, and practical equipment.
- Our school carries out regular self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development through staff meetings, student surveys, and the school self-evaluation process.
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD.

Environmental Sustainability

Mount Saint Michael Secondary School is committed to minimising our environmental impact and fostering environmental stewardship among our school community.

Green Schools Programme

- Our school has achieved Green Flag award, focusing on the Litter and Waste theme.
- Our school has an active Green Team comprising staff representatives and student volunteers from all year groups, who meet monthly to plan and implement environmental initiatives.

Energy Management

- Our school will engage with the SEAI Energy in Education resources and energy management tools to monitor and report energy consumption, with the goal of reducing our energy use by 10% over the next three years.
- Energy conservation measures include switching off lights and equipment when not in use, utilizing natural light where possible, and setting appropriate heating temperatures.

Waste Management and Recycling

- Our school has a comprehensive recycling policy in place, with clearly labelled recycling bins for paper, cardboard, plastics, and general waste in every classroom and common area.
- We use recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible and encourage staff and students to minimize single-use items.
- Our school has comprehensive policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste reduction, food waste management, and elimination of single-use plastics.

Sustainable Procurement

- School resources are procured and utilized taking into consideration their impact on the environment, including the use of recycled paper for printing, eco-friendly cleaning products, and locally sourced supplies where feasible.

Environmental Awareness

- Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places, including posters, notice boards, and digital displays.
- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment through assemblies, classroom activities, and school events.

Outdoor Learning and Biodiversity

- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning, including the use of our school grounds for lessons in Science, Geography, Art, and PE.
- Our school is developing a school garden/social area to provide hands-on learning opportunities and promote biodiversity through native planting, a bug hotel, and bird boxes.

Sustainable Transport

- Our school promotes sustainable transport, including walking and cycling to school, through participation in Walk to School Week and Bike Week.
- We engage with the Safe Routes to School programme (<https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>) to identify and advocate for safer walking and cycling routes to school.
- Secure bike parking facilities are provided for students and staff.

Social Sustainability

Mount Saint Michael Secondary School is committed to promoting social justice, equity, and wellbeing for all members of our community.

Equity and Inclusion

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity, working to challenge stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for all students.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities are taken into consideration and accommodated through our Additional Educational Needs department and inclusive teaching practices.

- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself and in the wider school community, celebrating cultural events and promoting intercultural understanding.

Community Engagement

- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level through partnership with local organisations and community groups.
- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement and encourages the community's involvement with the school through open evenings, community events, and partnerships.

Global Citizenship

- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community, building awareness of issues such as fair trade, migration, global hunger, human rights, and development cooperation.
- Our school engages with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools (www.worldwiseschools.ie)

Wellbeing and Positive Behaviour

- Our school ethos aims to foster students' self-esteem, along with mutual regard and respect for fellow students, and positive social interaction and relationships.
- All school staff are provided with training in the area of conflict resolution and restorative practices to support and affect positive student behaviour.
- The school fosters a spirit of peace and examines this in the context of the wider world through our CSPE, SPHE, and RE programmes.
- Our school supports extra-curricular activities around sustainability, including environmental clubs, social justice initiatives, and community service projects.

Economic Sustainability

Mount Saint Michael Secondary School is committed to using resources efficiently and promoting sustainable economic practices.

Resource Management

- A collaborative ethos of cooperation 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 through the Student Council and Green Team.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practice in the area of sustainability in mind, including regular maintenance to ensure energy efficiency.

Circular Economy

- Our school educates on and promotes the principles of a circular economy through classroom teaching and practical initiatives.
- We promote a reuse/repair/recycle ethos, including a book rental scheme, uniform swap initiative, and repair workshops.

Sustainable Fundraising

- Our school's fundraising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles, supporting charities and causes aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Enterprise Education

- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills through the Transition Year Mini-Company programme, with an emphasis on sustainable and ethical business practices.

Cultural Sustainability

Mount Saint Michael Secondary School is committed to protecting and supporting our school culture while preparing students for life in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

- Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare students for life in an increasingly multicultural society through intercultural education and celebration of diversity.
- Our school promotes and celebrates Irish language and culture while also embracing the diverse cultural backgrounds of our school community.

- We support student voice and participation through our active Student Council, ensuring that students have meaningful input into school decisions and policies.

Teacher Competence

- Our teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD through access to professional development opportunities, including ESD CPD, Global Citizenship Education CPD, and engagement with programmes such as the Take 1 programme.
- Our school leadership team is committed to sustainability through a whole school approach, with sustainability as a standing agenda item at staff meetings.
- Our staff are familiar with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and their linkages across the curriculum.
- Our staff appreciate the three equal strands of sustainability: Environmental, Social, and Economic.

Student Competence

- Our students are knowledgeable about the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and their relevance to local and global issues.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities, including student-led workshops and presentations.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action-oriented projects, such as participation in BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSE), Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA), and other sustainability initiatives.
- Our school has an active Student Council and Green Team who are involved in decision-making about school policies, environmental initiatives, and community projects.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects, such as Tidy Towns, beach clean-ups, and other local environmental initiatives.
- Our school is involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community, connecting classroom learning with practical action.
- Our students understand the global implications of their individual actions and are empowered to make sustainable choices in their daily lives.

Goals

Over the next three years, Mount Saint Michael Secondary School commits to:

1. Achieving and maintaining our Green Flag for Litter and Waste by June 2026
2. Reducing our energy consumption by 10% through energy efficiency measures and behavioural change
3. Establishing a fully operational school garden and outdoor learning space by February 2026
4. Ensuring 100% of teaching staff complete ESD professional development by June 2027
5. Achieving 80% student participation in at least one sustainability-related activity or project per year
6. Developing partnerships with three local community organisations to support sustainability projects
7. Implementing a book reuse programme by September 2027

Implementation and Review

This Statement was implemented on 27/11/2025. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed annually, with a comprehensive review every two years.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Green Team and school leadership, with progress reported to the Board of Management and shared with the school community through newsletters, the school website, and parent meetings.

Adopted by the Board of Management of Mount Saint Michael Secondary School

Approved by the Board of Management on 27/11/25

Signed:

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Jerry O'Sullivan

Secretary of the Board of Management/Principal: S. Murray