



**Sustainability Policy**  
*Updated January 2024*  
*Ratified by BoM Feb 6th 2024*

Through the implementation of this policy it is envisaged that actions undertaken by all members of the school community will lead to a socially responsible working and learning environment. This policy supports the ethos of our school.

**Objectives:**

- Promote Green School and WorldWide Global Schools initiatives in our school community.
- To engage the support of parents, students and staff in a wide understanding of the impact of our individual actions on the environment, locally, nationally and globally.
- To promote high standards of care for our school, local community and the wider world.
- To encourage behavioural changes, increase participation in and communication of environmental responsibility.
- To strive towards buying local where possible in order to meet fiscal responsibilities, and lower associated carbon footprint.

St. Louis Secondary School will endeavour to implement this policy by means of the following:

- **Legal compliance:** it will comply with relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives (ESD 2030) (Looking at Our Schools 2022).
- **Green Flag:** the school community will work to ensure that the green schools flag is maintained.

- **WorldWide Global School activities:** Many teaching staff will continue to deliver and support Global Citizenship Education in the school. The aim is to not only retain the current 'Diplomatic Passport' but through advanced engagement, work towards the 'Special Passport' category.
- **Sustainable Development Goals:** teaching staff will aim to incorporate the sustainable development goals in their department plans. They will identify to the students when topics are covered to encourage active participation with the 17 goals across the curriculum. The St. Louis Network (through Sr Finola) will further support the schools engagement with the goals by emphasising one goal per year as a priority.
- **Conservation of Energy:** School management and staff will strive to reduce the use of electricity e.g. by switching off desktop computers, projectors and lights at the end of each day. All lights will work with automatic detectors and turn off automatically after a predetermined period of time (standardised throughout the school building). Staff are encouraged to turn off lights once the room is empty.
- **Heating/lighting:** Maintenance of school infrastructure; boilers and light systems throughout the school will ensure the school is as energy efficient. Replacement of 233 windows will ensure heat is retained and no draft from outside impacts on room temperature. An annual report is completed each year on the use of energy (SEAI).
- **Electricity usage:** the schools' energy supplier is Electric Ireland. The school will aim to use energy consuming equipment during off peak times to reduce overall costs and decrease pressure on the local grid.
- **Recycling and Conservation:** St. Louis Secondary School has installed recycling stations on each corridor of the school. All classroom bins have been removed and waste is disposed of in the bins on each corridor (Sept 2023). These stations divide waste into; general waste, dry mixed recyclable and paper. Several stations also have a funnel for liquids. Colour coding of waste and slot lids are in place to make the process more easily understood. External recycling bins provide the same recycling system outdoors around the school grounds (Dec 2023). Large robust individual recycling bins and general waste bins have been installed in all practical rooms to support recycling to a greater extent (Dec 2023). All recycling waste is bagged in compostable green bags and placed in the large outdoor green recycling bin. Oxigen Environmental is the company that disposes of all school waste (general and recycling).
- **Cleaning products:** All cleaning products used in the school are now eco friendly and product data sheets are kept on file in the school office (Oct 2023).
- **Waste tissue paper:** All tissue paper found in the bathrooms is biodegradable. Students are encouraged to use hand dryers provided to dry hands instead of using tissue paper.

- **Conserving paper:** All main contact with the school community is being conducted through the new St.Louis Dundalk app via Unique Schools. Permission forms and letters to parents are now electronic. As a result of the implementation of this digital technology the School has significantly reduced postal communication. The school email supports communication with/ between staff and students. Teacher notes and presentations are regularly shared on Google Classroom with students, this change in practice has limited the amount of printing required. The school will promote double sided printing of any documentation/ resources. Regular maintenance of projectors ensures a high image quality resulting in the need for less paper resources. CTI are contracted to maintain and repair equipment (visiting every 2 weeks). There is a designated email address for digital technology matters and APII responsible for this.
- **Upcycling and Reuse of products:**The school encourages the donation of books, this seeks to support the accelerated reader programme and the book club. Through developing local connections in the community, the school will continue to accept unwanted fabric and other materials from shops and local suppliers. The School encourages subject departments (dependent on individual course content) to consider participating in a book rental programme for 5th and 6th years. We welcome the donation of uniforms and books from graduating students.
- **Single Use Plastics:** the school has introduced branded reusable keep cups for all students (1st-6th year). Staff have also been provided with one cup each. These cups are to be used for any hot drinks and for getting soup from the canteen at break. Incoming first years 2024/2025 have also received these reusable cups. Students are encouraged to have a reusable water bottle with them. Water bottle filling stations are located on the ground floor of the main school building and in Dealga. There is a clear increase (year on year) in staff and students using these facilities since installation. Plates have been purchased for the canteen for students who forget their usable lunch-boxes. The school has purchased additional cutlery, plates and ceramic cups for school based events - eliminating the use of the plastic/ paper alternatives. Funding from 'Education For Sustainable Development' (ESD) has been received and is being used to support the above (Dec 2023).
- **Water Conservation:** the school has two water ambassadors who have undertaken training and workshops in water conservation. Through various engagements, these students seek to highlight water conservation in the school and wider community (e.g. local primary schools). Regular water checks are conducted by the caretaker and taps in the bathrooms are changed regularly.
- **Transport:** staff and students are actively encouraged to walk/ cycle to school. 'Safe Routes to School' (programme developed by the National Transport Authority & Greens

School) funding will seek to support those cycling to the school through the introduction of cycle lanes. The school has a bike shed at the student entrance (Fatima gate).

- **School Trips:** St. Louis Secondary School students and staff visit Dundalk town by foot regularly for workshops/ talks/ etc - reducing our carbon footprint for local journeys. Departments are encouraged to use the internal calendar to plan transportation to long distance locations (circa +1 hour) with the whole school in mind. Depending on the numbers travelling two or more groups may be in a position to share the one bus.
- **Biodiversity:** An area in the school grounds is in the process of becoming a wildflower meadow (Take 1 Programme). The seed itself is being sourced locally to ensure the wildflower planted is native to Ireland (using any other seed would be counterproductive to the schools aim to help biodiversity). It will be maintained by staff and students. Signs of native Irish flowers and mammals will be installed around the school grounds in Feb 2024 to encourage visual literacy (signs will name flower/mammal in English and Irish) (funded through Creative Schools funding 2022/2023).
- **School grown produce:** The school is promoting the growing of fruit and vegetables and has the facilities to allow various stakeholders to seed and plant different varieties in the polytunnel. A variety of herbs are also grown on-site. These will be offered to students to bring home and teachers to do the same (or use in the classroom, where applicable).
- **External Partners:** the school will continue to engage/ work with external partners to support the implementation of all sections of this policy.

## Identified needs

- Sustainability incorporated into curricular areas.
- Budgets for departments and the sourcing of sustainable products.
- Polytunnel and the maintaining and use of this (with support from CE scheme).