



Oatlands College Sustainability and Environmental Policy

This document is intended to provide details of the Oatlands College policies in relation to sustainability and the environment. Its purpose is to help the school community, including staff, students, parents, guardians and other relevant parties to understand the environment and the schools approach to its protection.

This policy was written in December 2021.

The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended every 2-3 years in line with the new themes for our Green School Flags. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

Introductory statement

This policy document is the result of the collaboration of the Green Schools Committee, together with the Board of Management.

Rationale

Oatlands College aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into many areas of the curriculum, establishing a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment and participating in Green Schools. We will aim to be a leader in the community by demonstrating good practice in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Sustainability and caring for the environment are central to the ethos of Oatlands College and the ethos of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust and is embedded into our curriculum from 1st- 6th year across various subject areas.

Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes:

- i. To become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments.
- ii. To develop an understanding of conservation e.g., Recycling, energy and water.
- iii. To develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment.
- iv. To promote alternative methods of transport to and from school e.g., cycling, scooting and walking to school.
- v. 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 lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision making.
- vi. To enable students to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- vii. To acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
- viii. Through explanation, investigation and hands on experiences, our students will acquire skills to help care for our environment have a positive long-term impact.
- ix. To understand the actions that people can have on the environment.

Procedures and guidelines

How to reduce the school's ecological footprint.

1. Energy

Aim: Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school and use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.

Action: Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy- efficient school through participation in Green Schools.

2. Waste

Aim: To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.

Action: Students to take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper and rubbish in the appropriate manner.

3. Water

Aim: To reduce the water consumption within the school.

Action: To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible and to monitor water usage and report wastage.

Implementation

The school will continuously participate in the Green Schools Programme - working towards Green Flags. Furthermore, every Junior Cycle class will participate in regular CSPE and Environmental lessons. Additional subjects such as Global Development Studies, Geography, Religion, Science, etc. will lend themselves to the promotion and implementation of our policy. The whole school community will be involved and made aware of the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates via the Green Schools Notice Board and the Schools Twitter account.

Energy

1. Promote a 'switch off and save' rule for technological equipment, lighting and heating/cooling, particularly when leaving the classroom.
2. Members of the Green Schools Committee will act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used to conserve energy.
3. The school maintains contact with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to work on Energy reports in line with our Solar Panel installation.

Waste

1. Students are consistently reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner.
2. Food waste is disposed daily and transferred to the correct bin. (Paper into recycling bins in each classroom, etc.)
3. Use recycled paper for printer/photocopier where possible
4. Avoiding giving handouts and photocopies, where possible, with year groups that have iPads.
5. Recycling bins provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office.
6. TY students carry out weekly litter picks around the school grounds.

Water

1. Remind students and staff regularly about the importance of turning off the tap when water is flowing and to make use of reusable water bottles.
2. CSPE or TY classes to carry out beach clean in the locality.
3. Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE and Learn Together.
4. Caretaker to regularly monitor water usage and report wastage.
5. The school harvests rainwater using water butts that are on the school grounds

Other Initiatives

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

- Different Bins: A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office and in each classroom to ensure that all wastepaper will be recycled. A general litterbin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste i.e., left over pieces of food, floor dirt etc. and this is emptied daily.
- Staff will keep recyclable items for art materials and i.e., cardboard rolls, cardboard, paper, tinfoil, recycled bottle tops.
- Text-A-Parent: Parents will be texted or sent school information where possible instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.
- Bags for Life: The Parent Council hold annual clothing recycling schemes

- Mobility: The school community is working on improving mobility. Students are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.
- Green Flag: The school was awarded its first, second and third Green Flag for the themes of Litter and Waste, Energy, and Water. The school is now focusing on its fourth Green Flag under the theme of Travel. It is the aim of the school to continue working on renewing the previous themes while simultaneously working on efforts for the new flag.
- Competitions and Initiatives: Students and teachers regularly take part in environmental and sustainability competitions such as the Young Environmentalist and The Young Scientist. Oatlands College will also carry out an annual Environmental week with various competitions and awareness raising to get the school community involved.
- 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 C.S.P.E., S.P.H.E., Environmental Studies, Religion, Science and Geography. The school community will work together to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world-views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living by teaching sustainability. A cross-curricular approach will be taken to the teaching of sustainability.

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 the SESE and Learn Together curriculum.

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

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

The policy will be available for viewing on the school website.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 24th October 2022.