

Education for Sustainability Development

Policy Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan



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.

Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement is to:

- Outline how our school promotes education for sustainable development (ESD), through our actions and activities;
- Identify and celebrate areas of best practice that are embedded within school culture;
- Set targets to continue making progress towards all elements of ESD in Loreto, Balbriggan.

The 17 United Nations sustainable development goals guide our work as they are a blueprint to achieve a better and a more sustainable future for all. The goals help us to understand what ESD is and their aim is to create a better, fairer world by addressing the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate breakdown, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

We use Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 as one of our guiding principles to embed ESD into our daily practices here in Loreto, Balbriggan:

“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”.

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 integrate sustainability into a balanced and stimulating curriculum, complemented by extensive co-curricular programmes. We aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make environmentally responsible choices. Through fostering a supportive environment, we empower our students to grow into confident, capable individuals who are prepared to contribute positively to a more sustainable and equitable society

Our school's mission is that here in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan we are a Catholic girls' secondary school. In the spirit of Mary Ward we aim to develop all the abilities of our students in order that they realise their full potential and use their talents for the service of others. We also aim to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem in a happy atmosphere and structured environment. The school community, collaborating together in mutual respect, strives for holistic excellence.

Our school's values are truth, justice, freedom, sincerity and joy. Through this work, we aim to equip our students with the tools to lead full and meaningful lives, grounded in integrity and compassion, and open to giving of themselves in the service of others and the stewardship of a more sustainable and equitable future.

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- Our school has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement. It 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 recognises Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, and this is coordinated effectively in our school.
- Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects.
- All our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development.
- Resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability are adequate and sufficient at all levels.
- Our school carries out regular self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter
<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/a1d6e-education-for-sustainable-development-newsletter/>

Environmental Sustainability

- Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme which offers a well-defined, controllable way for our school to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of our school.
- Our school was awarded a Green Flag for the themes of Litter and Waste, Energy, and most recently on the theme of Water in 2024.
- We are actively working towards achieving our flag in the theme of Travel with a goal time frame of 2026.

- Our school has a Green Team comprising two staff and students from across all year groups whose role is to promote sustainability in the school through upholding our work on previous themes and rolling out new initiatives for progression in the programme.
- Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme's curriculum linked pupil workshops and teacher CPD.
- Our school has a comprehensive recycling strategy implemented in all classrooms and staffroom.
- Our school has a comprehensive strategy in place in respect of water conservation with push taps and dual flush systems.
- Food waste is monitored through the use of compost bins in all home economics kitchens and the staffroom which are used to feed our school wormery.
- Energy efficiency has been improved through the transition and retrofitting of LED lights throughout the school and the fitting of solar panels.
- Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places.
- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning through our school garden and TY Horticulture module.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity (eg: wormery, polytunnel, raised beds, sensory garden)
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling and utilising public transport links to school.
- Our school engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education such as Take 1, Green Schools, WorldWide Global Schools, Globe and the Rewrite Programme.

Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity. We have a diversity team who work to create an Intercultural Week each year. We are a School of Sanctuary. Bringing awareness to SDG5 + SDG10.
- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at a local level. Our school works with the local tidy towns, nursing homes and creates school links with other schools in the local area.

- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community. Our foundress embedded the values of justice and freedom into our school ethos and we strive to uphold them today.
- Our school engages with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/> or other programmes working in this area.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated. Our SEN team works to facilitate all students.
- All school staff are provided with the training in the area of conflict resolution, in order to support and affect positive student behaviour. Our form classes participate in restorative practice. We have designated Anti-Bullying Harassment Officers who are available to the staff.

Economic Sustainability

- A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school's allocation of its resources; Shared drives and departmental work.
- Students are involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school; Student council involvement, attend committee meetings as stakeholders, make speeches and are involved on committees.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills; Market Day, TY Mini-Company + Student Enterprise Competition.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles; Health Promotion Week + St. Vincent De Paul Christmas Drive.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practice in the area of sustainability in mind; Solar Panels, Recycling Strategies etc.

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; The Wall of Smiles.
- Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare students for life in an increasingly multicultural society; Diversity Committee, Intercultural Day, Think Languages Day, Language clubs, and the School of Sanctuary Program.

- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement, and encourages the community's involvement with the school; Community Links module - Moorehall Lodge Nursing Home and Tidy Towns, Rumbek Day, School Link module, the school garden and Horticulture module.
- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community; Intercultural Day, Welcome Wall.

Teacher Competence

- Our Teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD. Some members of staff have taken part in the Take 1 Programme.

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 oriented projects; Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, SciFest, Green Schools, Inter-Loreto Network JPIC projects, Trócaire Game Changers, Certified Irish Angus Schools Competition,
- Our school has a Student Council, Green Schools Committee and Horticulture groups.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects by working with local groups such as the Tidy Towns through the Community Links Module. This encourages them to learn about real-life problems within the school community.

Goals

- Staff refresher on ESD
- Improve Earth Day - Larger scale
- Sustainability in Form Classes as part of the form class programmes.
- Review/Update Subject Plans
- Achieve the Travel Flag
- Review the Re-turn Bins scheme
- Implement a review on recycling + waste
- Develop the compost waste disposal
- Look into ink recycling
- Outdoor learning space

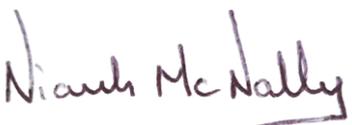
Implementation and review

This Statement was sent for review by the Board of Management in October 2025.

To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every year.

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 01/12/25

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary, Board of Management

Date: 01/12/25