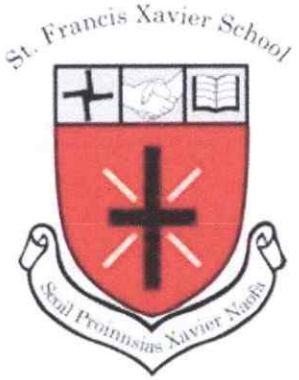

Sustainability Policy

St. Francis Xavier Senior School,

Roselawn,

Dublin 15.

Introductory Statement

Our school has been central to the Dublin 15 community for over 45 years, educating generations of families in the area. This community has grown and changed over the years but has always been a great supporter of the school. In 2022/2023 we set up a new Green Schools Committee in our school with a representative from each class and we work closely together to make our schools a more sustainable place to work and learn. We are currently working towards our first Green Flag for Litter and Waste.

'Promoting long-term, whole-school action for the environment Green-Schools is a student-led programme with involvement from the wider community. The programme is operated and coordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland).

Green-Schools' mission is to protect planet Earth – our shared home to which we all belong.'

Green Schools Website, February 2023

Rationale

St. Francis Xavier Senior School aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practises in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into many areas of the curriculum, instilling a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment and participating in Green Schools. We will aim to lead the community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

Aims

Through the introduction of this policy, we hope

- To become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and manmade environments.
- To develop an understanding of conservation e.g., Recycling, energy and water.
- To develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment.
- To promote alternative methods of transport to and from school E.g., cycling, scooting, and walking to school.
- 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.
- To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- To acquire open, critical, and responsible attitudes towards the environment.
- Through explanation, investigation, and hands on experiences the children will acquire skills to help care for our environment immediately and have a long-term impact.
- To understand the actions that people can have on the environment.
- To increase students' awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and wider community. A seven-step process in Green Schools sees schools tackling the issues of waste and litter, then energy, water, transport, global citizenship, biodiversity and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the seven steps take a minimum of two years.

Litter/Waste Activities

- All classrooms and the staff room have recycling bins, a general waste bin and a compost bin. Recycling and compost bins are emptied by the Green Schools Committee with the help of Brian, our Caretaker every Friday or more frequently if required.
- All classrooms have a compost bin for fruit / vegetable peels and pencil sharpening.
- Battery recycling boxes are available in every classroom and at the office.
- HP Cartridges Recycling Box in the school for recycling ink cartridges.
- Electrical items such as old laptops are collected by Recycle IT.
- Staff to be aware of environmental impact of photocopying and to only photocopy what is needed and to use double-sided copying where possible.
- Children to reuse paper where possible for art projects.
- Children to engage in recycled / "junk art" style projects periodically.
- Teachers to use resources from ReCreate Warehouse in art lessons. ReCreate is a national social enterprise that takes end of line and surplus stock from businesses and makes them available as arts materials. Our school have an account with them.
- The school will participate in the National Spring Clean in March / April each year. This is organised by An Taisce and is Ireland's premier anti-litter campaign. Each year all the classes will clean up various areas such as around the school grounds.
- The school will engage with Blanchardstown Tidy Towns for Litter Picks.

- The school will continue to engage with Fingal County Council who have supported us in purchasing new recycling bins.
- Collaboration with Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun for workshops and class visits on recycling and upcycling.

Energy Saving Activities

- Lights and heat to be turned off when not needed/not in use – members of the Green Schools' Committee go around the school to monitor lights and interactive whiteboards during lunches and breaktimes.
- Computers and whiteboards to be placed on standby when not in use / during breaks.
- Staff only to photocopy what they need.
- Keep outside doors and windows shut when appropriate to save heat, and therefore energy.
- We will continue to engage with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and they will come to our school to deliver workshops annually.

Water-Saving Activities

- Ensure taps are not left on when not in use.
- We have water butts to harvest rainwater for use in the school garden.
- Establish a team of "Leak Detectives" to ensure no water is wasted.
- Investigate the possibility of getting new filter taps for throughout the school.
- Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE.
- Participate in Water Saving Competitions which are run by An Taisce and Green Schools.

Transport

- Set up a Walking/Cycling Bus in collaboration with Fingal County Council in the school year 23/24.
- Pupils are encouraged to walk, cycle, scoot or use public transport to school where possible. Car-pooling where practicable is also encouraged.
- 6th Class take part in the Cycle Safety Programme every year to encourage and promote safe and healthy cycling. This is done in collaboration with Fingal County Council.
- Apply for new bike racks for our school yard.

School Garden / Biodiversity

- A school garden has been established, which can be enjoyed by the children and staff alike.
- The focus has been on creating a haven for wildlife and insects and we will endeavour to promote biodiversity by using environmentally safe products and methods in our garden.
- Our own school compost is used when available.
- Children participate in soil/composting workshops with Brian, the School Caretaker.

- We have an Insect Hotel 'Bugingham Palace' which has been donated by Mulhuddart Mens' Sheds.
- All classes participate in planting activities with Brian, the School Caretaker.
- National Tree Week – Plant a Native Tree annually.
- In 2023/2024 we will start supporting our native birds (particularly during the winter months) by providing bird feeders and trees in the school garden.

Other Initiatives

We are currently working as a whole school towards obtaining a Green Flag for Litter and Waste.

Recycling
A recycling bin is placed in the staffroom and in each classroom.

A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste i.e., floor dirt, old crayons etc.

Compost Bins
The classrooms and staffroom are equipped with compost bins and emptied each week.

Lunchboxes It is encouraged that whatever comes in the child's lunchbox goes home in the lunchbox.

Pupils are encouraged to use a reusable drinks container daily.

Aladdin Schools
Parents will be sent school information on Aladdin instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.

Clothing Drive
The Student Council hold clothing drives to recycle clothing and fundraise for the school.

Mobility
The school community is working on improving mobility. Children are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school. We are working closely with Fingal County Council to set up a Walking/Cycling Bus and Cycling Lessons for students in SONAS.

School Garden
A school garden has been set up where children have planted flowers throughout the year.

Green Flag
We are starting at the 1st Green Flag for Litter and Waste and have made significant progress since re-joining the Green Schools Programme again.

Curriculum

A cross curricular approach will be taken to the teaching of sustainability.

Environmental / Green issues are key elements of both S.E.S.E., S.P.H.E. and religion.

Many aspects of environmental awareness will be taught in the form of explicit lessons which will complement the Green-Schools activities taking place throughout the school in relation to litter, energy, and water. The themes can be integrated into many different subjects.

The following are some examples of where the Green Schools programme can be linked to curricular work:

SPHE - promotion of personal development and wellbeing, citizenship and social / personal responsibility, communication / co-operation with others.

Art - creation of posters, signs, logos, mascots, Green Schools Art Competitions.

Information Technology –carrying out research, use of interactive websites, sending emails / letters in relation to environmental issues, doing surveys, raising awareness through school blogs / website / emails / newsletter etc.

English –Debates, poetry, essays, Green Code, signs, newsletter, letters.

Drama – role plays

Geography – The water cycle, the water treatment process, rivers, lakes, oceans of Ireland and the world, climate change and global warming, using maps, coordinates, symbols, and keys.

Science – pollution, properties of water, water quality sampling, water experiments, living things – growing flowers.

Maths – charts and graphs measuring volume, capacity, interpreting surveys.

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- Continuous participation in the Green Schools programme and the aspiration to be awarded further Green Schools' flags.
- A litter-free, clean school environment.
- Continuous improvement, development, and use of the school gardens.
- Children will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability in SESE.

Roles and Responsibility

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

- Principal and Staff
- Students
- Green Schools' Committee
- Board of Management
- Parents' Association

Implementation Date

This policy was implemented on 20th September 2023

Timetable for Review

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

Ratification & Communication

The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting during which it was formally ratified.

Notification that the policy is available for viewing will be communicated to the parents in the next School Communication via Aladdin. It will be available for viewing on the school website and a copy will be sent to all staff by email.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management *Principal*

Date: 20/9/23