

Colaiste Muire
Tuar Mhic Eadaigh
Co Maigh Eo

Environmental Policy

Scope

This policy applies to students, teachers, and employees of Colaiste Muire. It should be noted by parents.

Mission statement relevance

In Coláiste Muire we aim to develop the full potential of every student in a learning environment where fairness, understanding, success and discipline are pursued.

This policy is based in the school's fundamental aim to foster in students an attitude and appreciation of learning to serve them for life. Students are encouraged to strive for excellence at the level of their full potential.

Coláiste Muire encourages students to abide by the principle:

“Treat others as you yourself would like to be treated”

In doing this, we hope that all our students learn to assume responsibility for their own behaviour, tolerate and value diversity, respect themselves and each other and become responsible contributors to society. Valuing and respecting the environment in which we exist is paramount to the success of our mission statement.

Green Flag

The aim of Green-Schools is to increase students' awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and in the wider community. A seven-step process (similar to the EMS/ISO 14001 certification/EU EMAS (Eco-Management Audit Scheme)) sees schools tackling the issues of waste and litter, then energy, water and transport and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the award must be re-applied for every two years

Colaiste Muire aims to participate in the Green Flag schools programme. Green Flags are earned and presented under the Green-Schools international environmental education award scheme. The Green-Schools programme (internationally known as “Eco-Schools”) promotes and acknowledges longterm, whole school action for the environment. In Ireland, Green-Schools is run by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (The National Trust

for Ireland) in partnership with local authorities and corporate sponsors. It started in Ireland since 1997 and has grown each year. Currently well over a half of all Irish schools are participating, and over 2,000 schools have been awarded flags (www.greenschoolsireland.org).

Need for the Policy

An environmental policy is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Care of the person (*cura personalis*): a clean and healthy working environment and respect for the wider environment are necessary for the personal development of each individual associated with the school. High standards in caring for the environment enrich the carer as well as protect the environment;
2. Care for God's Creation: The school community has a responsibility to care for creation through our role as active Christians; there is a clear link between faith and care for the environment;
3. Environmental problems: the school must be aware of, and respond to, unprecedented environmental challenges: the rapid use of fossil fuels and resultant global warming, future oil shortages, the scarcity of clean water, the creation and disposal of rubbish, protection of plant and animal species and ecosystems, and related issues.
4. Sustainable development: development that meets the needs of the present generation should not jeopardise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Ireland is committed to this principal, and signed up for Agenda 21 (the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992), and the Department of Environment has a Sustainable Development Strategy. We in Colaiste Muire support the concept of sustainable development;
5. Legal Requirements: The school must comply with the letter and the spirit of relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, directives and regulations;
6. Economic reasons: the conservation and wise use of electricity, heating fuel, water and other resources, and the minimisation of waste, will save the Colaiste money.

Policy Objectives

Through this policy Colaiste Muire intends:

- to promote environmental awareness and conservation amongst the school community, and to encourage it to actively participate in solving environmental issues affecting the school;

- to encourage staff and students to examine and interpret the environment through the subject areas of the curriculum, and to be aware of it through co-curricular activities;
- to provide students and staff with an appropriate environmental education so that they acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment both locally and globally;
- to promote the concept of “reduce, re-use, recycle” amongst students and staff;
- to reduce any waste of energy and resources amongst students and staff, and thereby reduce the schools ecological and carbon footprint;
- to ensure that visitors to the Colaiste respect the school environment and leave a minimal environmental impact.

Policy Implementation

The Colaiste will endeavour to implement this policy by means of the following.

- **Green Flag activities:** by using the Action Plan as a practical means of involving students and staff, and by monitoring its goals on a regular basis. The award of the Flag depends on the implementation of the Action Plan.
- **Legal compliance:** by complying with relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives.
- **Energy conservation:** by striving to reduce the schools use of electricity (for example, switch off lights when not in use, use automatic sensor switches, programming computers to switch off a fixed time after log out).
- **Heating/lighting:** by adjusting the heating systems to avoid overheating, and reducing heat loss through doors and windows. By increasing energy efficiency through upgraded insulation, efficient ventilation and maintaining the efficiency of boiler. By using energy-efficient light bulbs and lighting systems.
- **Renewable Energy Sources:** by seeking ways to increase the school’s use of renewable energy sources and the possibility of using a Combined Heat and Power system in the future.
- **Recycling and Conservation:** by recycling efficiently. The School currently recycles paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, glass, mobile phones, chargers and batteries, printer toner, electrical/computer equipment, and where possible stage materials and building waste. By conserving paper: School policy is to print on both sides of paper. The use of electronic whiteboards and other electronic media is helping reduce the use of paper. Many important School policies are now shared via the School website rather than in paper form. Teachers’ notes and homework can be made increasingly accessible via the school server in future, as appropriate, and more homework can be done on-line. The use of text messages to parents’ mobile phones has greatly reduced the need to print and send notes home in schoolbags.

- **Waste Management:** by segregating waste appropriately, and disposing of each type of waste correctly. Litter control is an integral part of this: students must be encouraged to be responsible and keep classrooms clean. The College strives to ensure that all bins are clearly marked Recycle / General Waste.
- **Water Conservation:** the introduction of dual-flush cisterns which save water; storage of rainwater to use for irrigation of any ecology projects and for outdoor and indoor plants;
- **Sports Grounds:** by keeping the sports grounds litter-free, and recycling waste from them.
- **Transport:** by reducing transport-related carbon emissions by; facilitating parents to organise private lift schemes; and making it possible for parents to car pool for sports activities by making available names and phone numbers of parents living in their area.
- **School Trips:** School students and staff travel extensively on school trips and for sports activities. Carbon emissions should be taken into consideration, and the most environmentally-friendly method of travel used where possible; the use of carbon offsets should be considered.
- **Purchasing Policy:** the College should consider the environmental aspects of the acquisition, use and disposal of goods and services, when these are purchased. For example, switching to recycled paper; purchasing Fair Trade goods; when purchasing food, take "food miles" into account and use local suppliers where possible; for cleaning materials and chemicals, use green detergents where possible; for timber, consider environmentally-responsible sources.

Achieving Objectives

To achieve the objectives of this policy Colaiste Muire will:

- fully involve the Maintenance Department;
- ensure that those who create a mess clear it up when possible;
- Start the schools Green-Schools involvement;
- give re-use and recycling a high profile and include environmental issues in school assemblies;
- promote awareness through the Newsletter and the school website.
- increase environmental education across the curriculum and in co-curricular activities;
- encourage participation in environmental competitions, exhibitions, seminars and lectures, for example through the Young Scientists;
- inform students, staff and parents of achievements in this area
- ensure that "green" criteria, including energy efficiency, are used and promoted in any new buildings/ re-builds/restoration work.

Evaluation

This effectiveness of this policy can be judged from the following indicators:

- a litter-free, clean school environment;
- The acquiring of the Green Flag.;
- reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, and water and for waste disposal.
- Policy reviews will be organised by the Board of Management on a regular basis, involving the school Administration, the Maintenance Department, the Green Committee and the Student Council.

This policy was agreed on the date noted below.

Signed: Gearóidín Ní Ghruinéil **Date:** 5-10-21
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Gráinne Ní Fhlannabhra **Date:** 5-10-21
Principal

