



**OUR
LADY'S
SCHOOL**
TERENURE



Sustainability & Environmental Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Date: 3rd March 2025

Signature: *Mary White*
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

<i>Commenced: September 2024</i>
<i>Date of last Review: 3rd March 2025</i>
<i>Review due: 2027</i>

Our Policy

Sustainability - “sustainability is about meeting the needs of the now without compromising the needs of the future”.

Introductory Statement

This policy document is the result of the collaboration of the Green Schools Committee, together with the students, staff and Board of Management of Our Lady’s School.

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Our Lady’s School relating to sustainability. Its purpose is to help the school community, including staff, students, parents, guardians and other relevant parties to understand the approach of the school towards protecting the environment. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

Rationale

Our Lady’s School 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 lead the community by demonstrating good practice in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

Aims of the policy

- To create and maintain a culture of sustainability within the school community.
- To enable students to live as informed and caring members of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- To encourage staff and students to be more mindful and responsible of their litter & waste, water use, and energy use throughout the school and at home.
- To create a school-wide learning environment where students learn about the impact of their waste, and their water and energy consumption.
- To foster an environment where students learn lifelong skills about reducing their waste and living more sustainably.
- To create a collaborative environment where students and staff work together to reduce the school’s waste .

Strategy Overview 2025-27

1. Water

Obtain our next flag from An Taisce - Blue water flag. Encourage students and staff to monitor their water use at school and at home. Incorporate our local community and our local water treatment plant into our action plan to educate and inform all members of the school community.

2. Litter and Waste

Maintain all of the initiatives that were set in place by the Green Schools Committee in the last two years (2022-24) in obtaining our Litter and Waste Green Flag. These include: *“To minimise rubbish and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis. Students to take responsibility for disposing of food scraps, paper and rubbish in the appropriate manner”.*

Continue monitoring the school’s bin collection weight for recycling and general waste. Continue to host No Waste Wednesday days twice a month.

3. Energy

Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school.

Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.

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

4. Cross-curriculum

New TY Module ‘Sustainability’ to be rolled out from September 2025, to encourage students to engage and interact with their school and wider local community.

Update units of learning to include elements of sustainability and the SDG’s in relative subjects (particular focus on: Geography, English, CSPE, SPHE, Biology). New Junior Cycle Curriculum includes sustainability modules in Geography (Climate change, Coasts, Rivers, Tertiary Economic Activities, Energy), CSPE (SDG, responsible citizenship, society), SPHE (sustainable living, minding myself, diet and lifestyle). In the next academic year (2025/26, a note on all schemes will encourage departments to include elements of sustainability within their curriculum).

Ensure each year group from 1st through to 6h Year experiences elements of sustainability throughout the majority of their subject choices.

5. Biodiversity

Focus on maintaining our outdoor garden spaces and reconsider the open space we have available since the construction of the dome.

6. APII Post designation to sustainability

New APII post designated to Sustainability in the school community. Staff member to be assigned this role and to oversee the Green School, Committee, Water Ambassador Programme, Eco Ambassadors, and staff sustainability committee.

Implementation

1. Water

The Green Schools Committee have begun their two year process of obtaining the blue water flag for water sustainability

- Committee has been formed
- School's water sources have been audited
- Send a whole-school survey to the school community to gather data about the school's knowledge of water use
- Use this data to inform our action plan
- Put in place different initiatives to reduce water waste in the school
- Take weekly water metre readings to measure the amount water the school consumes
- Water Ambassador programme → 4 students were selected to complete Water Ambassador training. These students will help to create our school's water action plan
- Year 2 of programme (Academic year 2025-2026: Submit application to An Taisce for assessment and external visit)

2. Litter and Waste

- Bins have been removed from classrooms
- Additional general waste and recycling bins have been placed in corridors
- Food waste bin added to canteen and staff room
- Two large Return Deposit bins have been placed in the school (upper and lower GPA). Funds collected to be donated to the Charity Committee
- Eco Ambassador Programme has rolled out (academic year 2024-2025). Students held an election, one representative per class. Eco Ambassador awarded a badge and receives the leadership role of advocating for their base class to use the correct corridor bins and to adhere to cleaning rota
- Eco ambassador badges to be collected at end of each academic year

3. Energy

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

4. Cross-Curriculum

- New TY sustainability module has been rolled out (started in academic year 2024/2025)
- Module is in rotation, each TY student will sit the module for a period of six weeks. Students will collaborate with the Green Schools Committee to promote different initiatives throughout the year. Sustainability class will focus on upholding the standards of our litter and waste flag.
- Students will learn about the SDGs. They will pick one SDG and focus on creating an initiative that promotes and implements that SDG throughout the school.

5. Biodiversity

- Involve students and members of our school community in planting and maintaining our gardens.
- Improve our outdoor natural environment, by planting native trees or native plants and wildflowers that encourage and support the insect population, such as bees and butterflies. This will be focused in the areas surrounding the dome. Some open spaces surrounding the canteen still remain with flower beds and patches. Students from the sustainability class and the Green Schools Committee will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of these areas.
- Students will work with the Agricultural Science department and the Science / Biology department to ensure these spaces are planted with species that can be used throughout these curricula.
- Provide varied living conditions in the school garden (insect hotels, hedges, walls, grassy areas and trees) to offer potential food and shelter to our natural biodiversity
- Support our native birds (particularly during the winter months) by providing bird

feeders and trees in the school garden.

6. APII for Sustainability at OLS

- The postholder is responsible for running and organising the following school-wide initiatives:
Green Schools Committee
Water Ambassador Training Programme
Eco Ambassadors
- The postholder is also responsible for ensuring consistent and valuable engagement with external organisations. These include:
The ISSN (Irish School of Sustainability Network)
ESD Network (Education for Sustainable Development Network)
SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland)
- The postholder is responsible for ensuring whole-school commitment and involvement in the initiatives outlined above
- The postholder is responsible for measuring the success criteria of the implementation of this policy along with gathering feedback from the school community.

Other Initiatives

Activities such as the following are currently running within the school:

- A sustainability audit has been completed rating the school's level of sustainability. The results from this audit have informed all of the above implementations.
- Printing credits have been introduced. Each staff member has a code and a limit of pages they can print on a monthly basis. (900 sheets). This has greatly reduced the amount of paper being used by staff.
- Text/Email: Parents will be texted or sent school information via email or the school app where possible instead of sending out individual letters. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.
- Mobility: The school community is working on improving mobility. Children are encouraged to walk, cycle or to school.
- Competitions and Initiatives: Students and teachers regularly take part in environmental and sustainability competitions such as the Young Scientist.

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 amenities.

- The school will participate in an annual audit of their sustainability practices. Comparing and contrasting these results will inform the school community of the impact of the implementations listed above.
- Students and staff are surveyed annually in relation to their opinions regarding sustainability at OLS.

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy. They are responsible for the implementation of the above initiatives:

- Teaching staff
- Students
- Green School Committee
- APL Post Holder for Sustainability
- Groundskeeper
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Student Council

Implementation Date

This policy was implemented on 01/09/2024

Timetable for Review: 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.

Ratification & Communication: The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in 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 the school app.

It will be available for viewing on the school website.

Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations (UN) members in 2015, created 17 world Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim of these global goals is "peace and prosperity for people and the planet" – while tackling climate change and working to preserve oceans and forests. The SDGs highlight the connections between the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development. Sustainability is at the center of the SDGs, as the term sustainable development implies.

The policy outlined above is centred around the following primary SDGs:

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Goal 15: Life on Land

Appendices

APII - Assistant Principal

OLS - Our Lady's School

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals