**Knockconan NS Sustainability Policy**

This document is intended to help the school community, including staff, parents, guardians and other relevant parties to understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

## Rationale

Knockconsan NS aims to become a sustainable school by 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 good practice in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

## Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes:

* 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 life style 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.

# Procedures and Guidelines

*How to reduce the school’s ecological footprint…*

## 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.

**Waste**

* 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.

## Biodiversity

* To utilise our green areas to their full extent and continue to develop them.
* To develop the school grounds as a learning resource in themselves in terms of the environment and biodiversity.

## Water

* To reduce the water consumption within the school.
* To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
* To monitor water usage and report wastage.

*Implementation*

The school will continuously participate in Green Schools and work towards obtaining

Green Flags. The whole school community will be involved in the work of the Green Schools Committee through regular updates at assembly, the school newsletter and on school notice boards.

## Energy

* Promote a ‘switch off and save’ rule for technological equipment, lighting and heating/cooling particularly when leaving the classroom to go the yard and hall.
* Students to engage in units of work relating to energy in SESE.
* 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 delivers an annual report with energy saving plans to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

## Waste

* Students are consistently reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner.
* Food waste is disposed daily and transferred to the correct bin.
* Paper into recycling bins.
* Use recycled paper for printer/photocopier where possible
* Promote the reuse of paper in classrooms, staffroom and office.
* Recycling bins provided in all classrooms, staff rooms and the school office. Recycling bins have clear bags. Waste bins are also provided and have black bags. Children and staff are encouraged to dispose of their waste correctly, for example to wash out yoghurt cartons before placing in the recycling bin.

## Biodiversity

* Consult local community members on ways to improve our garden (e.g. Where to plant, what to plant).
* Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our gardens
* Improve our outdoor natural environment, by planting native trees
* Plant native plants and wild flowers that encourage and support the insect population, such as bees and butterflies
* Use natural materials that reduce the impact on the environment
* Provide varied living conditions in the school garden and atria (insect hotels, hedges, pond, 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.
* The school has engaged an ecologist to develop a BIODIVERSITY PLAN for the area.

## Water

* Remind students and staff regularly the importance of turning off the tap when water is flowing.
* Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE and Learn Together.
* Caretaker to regularly monitor water usage and report wastage.
* The school harvests rainwater using tanks that are underneath the basketball courts.

# Other Initiatives

## Awards/Competitions

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

We are currently working as a whole school towards obtaining the Green Flag for Global Citizenship (Litter and Waste).

We take part in the National Tidy Towns Competition as Ballyoisin Tidy Towns and has entered the competition since 2019.

## Recycling

*Recycling Paper Recycling Bins*

A recycling bin for paper is placed in the staffroom, office and in each classroom to ensure that any waste paper will be recycled.

*Litter Bins -General Rubbish*

A general litter bin is also placed in each classroom to cater for the disposal of normal classroom waste i.e. left over pieces of food, floor dirt, old crayons etc. and this is emptied on a daily basis.

## Lunchboxes

It is encouraged that whatever comes in the child's lunchbox goes home in the lunchbox - i.e. a yoghurt pot, a wrapper as it dramatically cuts down on the schools waste. Pupils are encouraged to use a reusable drinks container daily.

## Re-Use

Children are encouraged to take their waste home with them so as to cut down on the volume that the school actually produces.

Staff will keep recyclable items for art materials and Aistear i.e. cardboard rolls, cardboard, paper, tinfoil, recycled bottle tops.

## Text-A-Parent

Parents will be texted or sent school information by email or through the school web site instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This cuts down considerably on the amount of paper being used by the school.

## Clothing Drive

The Parent Association have regularly held clothing drives to recycle clothing and fundraise for the school.

## School Pond

A school wildlife garden including a pond has been set up where children will plant trees and perennials to promote wildlife.

## Green Flag

The school has been awarded its five Green Flags so far, Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel and Biodiversity

The school is now focusing on its sixth Green Flag with the theme of Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste. It is the aim of the school to continue working on renewing the previous themes while simultaneously working on efforts for the new flag.

## 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 S.E.S.E., S.P.H.E. and the 'Ethics and the Environment' strand of the Curriculum.

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.
* Children will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability in the SESE curriculum.

## Roles and Responsibility

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

* Teaching staff
* Parents/guardians
* Principal
* Board of Management
* Students

**Implementation Date**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on ………………….

## 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 in at 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 available to all staff on Google Drive.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** CHAIRPERSON of the BOM

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

PRINCIPAL

# Reference Section

Green School’s website: greenschoolsireland.org

SESE Curriculum

SPHE Curriculum

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website: https://www.seai.ie/