

### **Environmental Sustainability Statement – January 2023**

As a school in the Catholic tradition, St. Paul's Secondary School is conscious of our moral duty and responsibility to care for the environment. This duty is an extension of the urgent need to take concrete action on the issue of environmental sustainability, as evidenced by a wealth of scientific data available. In St. Paul's efforts toward environmental sustainability are grouped in three categories

- (i) Established practises
- (ii) Projects we are actively pursuing
- (iii) Aspirational

#### **(i) Established Practises**

In 2021 the school was awarded Green Flag status, which is currently the leading environmental sustainability project in Ireland. As part of our on-going commitment to maintaining our Green school status, the co-ordinator and committee constantly review and encourage students and staff in this regard. Some of the main activities include:

- Re-cycling of paper
  - Re-cycling of plastic bottles
  - Harvesting and re-use of rainwater for planters
  - Composting of appropriate materials from Home Economics kitchen and Staffroom
  - Re-cycling of aluminium coffee capsules
  - Water fountains to reduce the number of single use plastic bottles
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- **Projects we are actively pursuing**
  - (i) The majority of staff and students come to school using either bus or car. A small number of our overall school population cycle or walk to school. To encourage those who cycle, bike shelters are now in place to provide a safe and a dry place to store their bicycles. It is hoped that the provision of this facility might encourage others to use their bicycles in their daily commute.

(ii)

At present the school community are attempting to conserve our energy consumption. The steps we are taking include encouraging staff (in particular) to turn off lights when rooms are not in use, to close windows to conserve heat and to unplug devices at the end of each day. The use of the heating system is a matter that is also reviewed on a regular basis with clear periods where its use is not required / or at a minimum where the use of the heating system is reduced. Periods include end of August to end of October and from Easter to end of school term.

The cost effectiveness of these measures is difficult to monitor with the fluctuation in energy prices. Their effectiveness can therefore only be measured anecdotally at present.

The Green Schools Committee is currently working towards the School's Water flag for 2024 which focuses on raising awareness on the school community's water use and ways to conserve water.

Activities and awareness raising campaigns completed by the committee to date include:

- PowerPoint presentation on water conservation which was given by committee members
- Water themed quiz for Junior years
- Poster competition on the theme of Local Water Actions for Global Change.
- Participated in the Walk for Water event to raise awareness on water poverty
- 3 students accepted into the the Water Ambassador Programme.
- Designing school crested water bottles to reduce single use plastic bottles.
- Undergoing leak tests and ensuring water appliances are in working order to reduce water wastage.
- Frequent litter picking around school grounds
- Applied for trees through the Native Woodland Trust and will be planting them on school grounds.
- TY students attend Brigits Gardens exploring a range of sustainable development issues through collaboration and team work activities with their peers.
- Gardening- students grow a variety of plants in our school garden. They also plant garlic and carrots which are frequently used in Sr Mays cooking classes. Students also collect seeds which are then replanted to minimise on purchasing seeds.

**(iii) Aspirational**

- With the increase in the use of electric cars, the possibility of the installation of charging points and the financial implications of their installation will be examined in the future.
- In addition, the possibility of the introduction of biodegradable cleaning products will also be examined. The cost implications of these measures will again have to be taken into consideration.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_