



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement is to describe how SN Muire An Port Mór promotes sustainability and climate action in all areas of school life. It outlines our commitment to protecting the environment, fostering social inclusion, and preparing our pupils to become thoughtful, active global citizens. This Policy aligns with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate and the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030. It serves as a guiding framework to ensure that every decision and action within our school community contributes meaningfully to a sustainable and just future.

## **Scope**

This Policy applies to all members of our school community – pupils, staff, parents, visitors and the Board of Management. It shapes how we teach, learn, manage resources and engage with our wider community. Sustainability is a shared responsibility and is embedded in every aspect of our school life, from classroom activities to school governance and community partnerships.

## **Vision and Values**

Our vision is that each member of our school community feels secure and fulfilled, enjoying a positive educational experience. We strive to nurture well-adjusted individuals who will succeed in life and contribute positively to society. Our values of excellence in education, care, equality, community and respect underpin all that we do. These values naturally extend to our sustainability work, where we encourage a sense of stewardship, empathy, and responsibility for the world around us.

## **Whole School Approach to Sustainability**

Sustainability at SN Muire An Port Mór is a whole-school endeavour. Our Green Schools Committee and Student Council play a central role in promoting awareness, leading initiatives and inspiring positive action among peers. Staff work collaboratively to integrate sustainability themes across the curriculum, while parents and guardians support and reinforce sustainable habits at home. Every class participates in sustainability learning and actions, ensuring that sustainability is lived, not just taught. Our policies, decisions and daily practices reflect our ongoing commitment to reducing our environmental impact and fostering social and cultural wellbeing.

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### **Environmental Sustainability**

We are deeply committed to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. The school has achieved multiple Green Flags for excellence in areas such as Litter & Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship. In recent years, we have installed solar panels to generate renewable energy and reduce our carbon footprint. Each classroom is equipped with energy monitors, empowering pupils to track and reduce energy consumption in real time. Our school grounds include expanded wildflower areas to promote biodiversity and provide vital habitats for pollinators. We actively manage waste through recycling, composting, and minimising single-use plastics, and we encourage sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling and carpooling where possible. These actions are supported by ongoing education that helps students understand the science and significance of climate action.

### **Social Sustainability**

Social sustainability in our school means nurturing a caring, inclusive and respectful community. We place a strong emphasis on well-being, kindness and empathy. Every child is valued and supported to reach their potential. Through initiatives such as the Student Council, wellbeing programmes, and whole-school projects, we promote participation, collaboration, and voice. Our commitment to equality ensures that all members of our community have access to opportunities and support, while our global citizenship work helps pupils develop awareness of social justice issues locally and globally.

### **Economic Sustainability**

We recognise the importance of managing resources responsibly to ensure long-term sustainability. Our school makes conscious decisions about purchasing, maintenance, and investment, favouring suppliers and products that are environmentally friendly and ethically produced. By reducing waste, reusing materials, and conserving energy, we also achieve financial savings that can be reinvested in teaching and learning. Pupils are encouraged to think critically about consumption, value, and fairness, linking economic decisions with environmental and social outcomes.

### **Cultural Sustainability**

Cultural sustainability at SN Muire An Port Mór involves celebrating diversity, heritage and creativity. We promote understanding and respect for different cultures through the curriculum, school events and community engagement. Pupils learn to appreciate both local traditions and global perspectives, recognising the role of culture in shaping sustainable societies. The arts, language and storytelling are valued as means to connect generations, share values and foster belonging.

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### **Teacher Competence**

Teachers are key facilitators of Education for Sustainable Development. Staff at our school engage in continuous professional learning to strengthen their understanding of sustainability concepts and how to embed them across the curriculum. Collaboration and sharing of best practices are encouraged within the staff team. Teachers make use of a range of resources and supports, including the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) and the Department of Education's ESD Newsletter, to stay informed and inspired in their teaching practice.

### **Student Competence**

Our students are active learners and changemakers. Through participation in Green Schools, science projects, and inquiry-based learning, they develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live sustainably. They learn to question, investigate and propose solutions to real-world challenges, gaining confidence in their ability to make a difference. Leadership opportunities within the Green Schools Committee and Student Council encourage students to take ownership of sustainability initiatives and model responsible behaviour for others.

### **Goals**

Our sustainability goals reflect our ambition to lead by example in the school sector and to empower every member of our community to contribute to a better world. They include:

1. Embedding sustainability education across all curricular areas and school activities.
2. Reducing the school's carbon footprint through renewable energy use, energy monitoring and efficient resource management.
3. Continuing to develop biodiversity-rich areas such as wildflower zones and nature spaces for learning and enjoyment.
4. Promoting well-being, inclusion and equality within our community.
5. Strengthening local and global partnerships that support sustainability and citizenship.
6. Encouraging innovation, creativity and student-led initiatives in sustainability.
7. Engaging in regular self-evaluation to assess progress and inform future planning.

### **Implementation and Review**

The Board of Management is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy Statement and ensuring that sustainability remains a core element of our school ethos. Progress will be monitored through annual reviews involving staff, students, and parents. Feedback will be sought through school surveys, Green Schools reports and community consultations. This Statement will be reviewed every two to three years, or as necessary, to reflect new developments in Education for Sustainable Development,

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the School Sector Climate Action Mandate and the national Climate Action Plan. Through this continuous cycle of reflection and improvement, Scoil Mhuire An Port Mór reaffirms its dedication to building a sustainable future for all.

Signed: *Carol Wemyss*

Date: 25/09/2025

Chairperson, Board of Management