

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál – Sustainability Policy Statement

Tyrconnell Rd, Inchicore, Dublin 8 – Roll No. 17083B

Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement (“the Statement”) is to outline how Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (SMGS) promotes sustainability, climate action, social inclusion, and responsible resource use through our school’s policies, practices, and curriculum.

Scope

This Statement applies to all students, staff, the Board of Management, and partners in our school community. We ask that parents, guardians, and external partners support and reflect these sustainability aims. All decisions and actions by the Board, staff, and committees should align with our sustainability and inclusion vision.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision: To cultivate a school community that lives and breathes sustainability, inclusion, and justice — producing lifelong agents of change who care for people and planet.

Our Mission: To embed sustainable, inclusive, and ethical practices in every aspect of school life, from travel to waste, from pedagogy to procurement, and to empower pupils to act for positive change locally and globally.

Our Values: Care, Respect, Responsibility, Equity, Inclusion, Compassion, Community, Global Citizenship.

Whole School Approach to Sustainability & Inclusion

We embed sustainability and inclusion across the curriculum via ESD, intercultural education, SEL, and cross-curricular projects.

All school policies and everyday practices must reflect our commitment to sustainable development and social justice.

A Sanctuary Schools / Schools of Sanctuary framework is integrated into our school’s work — we commit to 'Learn, Action, Share' principles to become ever more inclusive and welcoming.

We maintain a Green Team / Sustainability Committee comprising staff, pupils, and sometimes parents, to lead monitoring, innovation, and review of environmental and inclusion initiatives.

Environmental Sustainability

- SMGS has earned five Green School Flags and aims to relaunch the Green Schools programme, seeking a 6th Green Flag in coming years.
- Solar panels have been installed on our roof, reducing electricity costs and carbon emissions.
- We have revised our heating schedule to reduce energy use and to lower our carbon footprint.
- Each classroom has filtered water taps to promote the use of reusable bottles, thus reducing plastic waste.
- A bike shed supports cycling and scooting. Active travel is promoted through WOW, SOW, and COW initiatives.
- All 6th class pupils undertake a six-week Cycle Safety Training Course to build confidence and skills for safe cycling.
- Road safety education is taught annually in September as part of SPHE.
- Recycling is supported in each classroom with compost bins and green bins. Pupils are taught to bring home, rinse, and recycle packaging.
- Leftovers from lunches are now scraped into a food waste bin, collected by our food provider and composted.
- Excess paper is reused (e.g. for junk art) and teachers have a monthly photocopy limit, are encouraged to print double-sided, and reduce waste.
- Upcycling projects, Trash Couture, and a book swap (on World Book Day) promote creativity, reuse, and the circular economy.
- Uniform swaps each June decrease waste and encourage reuse.
- The school garden, facilitated by a local organic gardener, allows pupils from 1st class upward to grow fruit and vegetables.
- The school engages with SEAI Energy in Education to monitor and reduce energy consumption.
- Our IT teacher ensures that all new laptops and equipment are purchased from GreenIT.ie to support sustainable technology sourcing.

Social Sustainability & Inclusion

- As a DEIS Band 2 school, equity, inclusion, and social justice are central to our work.
- Through Sanctuary Schools, we commit to being a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all pupils.
- Pupils in 1st and 2nd class take part annually in Picker Pals, developing responsibility and care for their local environment.
- We took part in the 'Let's Talk About Palestine' initiative, run by Teachers for Palestine, as part of our commitment to global justice.
- The Junior Entrepreneur Programme in 5th and 6th classes encourages socially and environmentally conscious enterprise.

- Through inclusive events and policies (e.g. swaps, shared projects), we foster community, empathy, and mutual support.
- Since 2023, Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál has had an active Student Council. Each year, pupils from 1st class upwards elect two class representatives through a democratic voting process.
- The council meets once a month to discuss ideas and issues raised by their peers and to suggest improvements to school life.
- A number of whole-school changes have been implemented since its establishment, reflecting the voices and agency of our pupils.

Economic Sustainability

- Initiatives such as book swaps, uniform swaps, and upcycling promote the circular economy and reduce costs.
- Resource efficiency is emphasized: photocopy limits, reuse of materials, and responsible procurement.
- In technology purchases, we favour ethical suppliers such as GreenIT.ie to reduce e-waste and encourage sustainable electronics sourcing.
- Our food provider's use of reusable containers and cutlery, along with composting of leftover food, reduces waste and supports circular systems.

Cultural Sustainability

- We nurture a school culture that celebrates diversity, difference, and mutual respect.
- Through our Sanctuary work, we foreground intercultural awareness and empathy.
- Arts-based sustainability projects (Trash Couture, upcycling, garden art) allow pupils to express cultural identity, creativity, and ecological values.
- School events involve parents, the local community, and celebrate traditions in sustainable, inclusive ways.

Teacher & Staff Competence

- Staff are supported in continuous professional development (CPD) in ESD, intercultural education, and inclusive practice.
- Sharing of resources, collaboration, and reflective evaluation are integral to building staff competency.
- We review sustainability and inclusion practices regularly via the Green Team, staff meetings, and self-evaluation cycles.

Student Competence & Agency

- Pupils take leadership roles (Green Team, litter pickers, Sanctuary ambassadors, Picker Pals) to develop agency and ownership.
- Through project-based learning—garden, upcycling, enterprise, swaps—students link their learning to real-world action.

- The Student Council provides pupils with an authentic platform to participate in school decision-making.
- Council representatives model leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills, ensuring pupils play an active role in shaping the culture and policies of the school.
- Students share their learning with families and community (e.g. via events, presentations, digital portfolios).

Goals (2025-2028)

- Relaunch the Green Schools programme and achieve our 6th Green Flag by 2028.
- Deepen integration of Sanctuary Schools principles across curricula and school culture.
- Expand Picker Pals participation and environmental stewardship outreach across all classes.
- Continue to reduce energy consumption by an additional 10-15% through monitoring, awareness, and infrastructure changes.
- Ensure all new ICT purchases are from ethical, sustainable vendors such as GreenIT.ie.
- Embed regular global justice and equity initiatives (e.g. Palestine awareness, refugee education) into the school calendar.
- Increase student leadership in sustainability and inclusion actions, including sharing our work with the broader community network.

Implementation & Review

This Statement was implemented on [Insert Date]. It will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, the Green Team, and the Sanctuary Committee, with input from pupils, parents, and staff. Adjustments will be made as needed to ensure continuous growth, relevance, and impact.