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1.0: Scope

This policy applies to students, teachers, and employees of St Colman's College. It should also be noted by parents.

2.0: Relationship to the Mission of St Colman's College

"Colaiste Cholmain, a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for boys only, aims to be a Christian community which respects all members of staff and nurtures each and every student to achieve maximum potential and to develop the whole person within a caring and respectful community."

Environmental responsibility is essential to the Mission of the College as the "*respectful community*" requires it. The Catholic pursuit of a social justice are of great relevance to environmental responsibility, not least as it is the poor of the world who suffer the consequences of environmental degradation most.

3.0: Green Flag

St Colman's College was awarded its first Green Flag in 2007. Green Flags are earned and presented under the Green-Schools international environmental education award scheme.

The Green- Schools programme (internationally known as "Eco - Schools") promotes and acknowledges long - term, whole school action for the environment. In Ireland, Green-Schools is run by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland) in partnership with local authorities and corporate sponsors. It started in Ireland in 1997 and has grown each year. Currently well over a half of all Irish schools are participating, and over 2,000 schools have been awarded flags (www.greenschoolsireland.org).

The aim of Green- Schools is to increase students' awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and in the wider community. A seven-step process (similar to the EMS/ISO 14001 certification/EU EMAS (Eco-Management Audit Scheme)) sees schools tackling the issues of waste and litter, then energy, water and transport and

more. Student involvement is a priority, and the award must be re-applied for every two years.

4.0: Need for the Policy

An environmental policy is necessary for the following reasons:

1. *Care of the person* (cura personalis):

    a. A clean and healthy working environment and respect for the wider environment are necessary for the personal development of each individual associated with the school.

    b. High standards in caring for the environment enrich the carer as well as protect the environment.

2. *Care for God's Creation*: The College community has a responsibility to care for creation through our role as active Christians; there is a clear link between faith and care for the environment.

3. Environmental problems: the College must be aware of, and respond to, unprecedented environmental challenges:

    a. the rapid use of fossil fuels and resultant global warming,

    b. future oil shortages,

    c. the scarcity of clean water,

    d. the creation and disposal of rubbish,

    e. protection of plant and animal species and ecosystems, and related issues.

4. Sustainable development: development that meets the needs of the present generation should not jeopardise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Ireland is committed to this principal, and signed up for Agenda 21 (the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992), and the Department of Environment has a Sustainable Development Strategy. We in St Colman's College support the concept of sustainable development;

5. Legal Requirements: the College must comply with the letter and the spirit of relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, directives and regulations.

6. Economic reasons: the conservation and wise use of electricity, heating fuel, water and other resources, and the minimisation of waste, will save the College money.

7. College pride: to give the College community pride in its physical surroundings and approach to environmental issues. The sports grounds should be litter-free to reflect well on the school.

5.0: Policy Objectives Through this policy St Colman's College intends:

1. To promote environmental awareness and conservation amongst the College community, and to encourage it to actively participate in solving environmental issues affecting the school.

2. To encourage staff and students to examine and interpret the environment through the subject areas of the curriculum, and to be aware of it through co-curricular activities.

3. To provide students and staff with an appropriate environmental education so that they acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment both locally and globally.

4. To promote the concept of "reduce, re -use, re- cycle" amongst students and staff.

5. To reduce any waste of energy and resources amongst students and staff, and thereby reduce the Community's ecological and carbon footprint.

6. To ensure that visitors to the College) respect the College environment and leave a minimal environmental impact.

6.0: Policy Implementation

The College will endeavour to implement this policy by means of the following:

1. Green Flag activities: by using the Action Plan as a practical means of involving students and staff, and by monitoring its goals on a regular basis. The re-award of the Flag depends on the implementation of the Action Plan.

2. Legal compliance: by complying with relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives.

3. Energy conservation: by striving to reduce College use of electricity (for example, switch off lights when not in use, use automatic sensor switches, programming computers to switch off a fixed time after log out).

4. Heating/lighting: by adjusting the heating systems to avoid overheating, and reducing heat loss through doors and windows. By increasing energy efficiency through upgraded insulation, efficient ventilation, automatically closing doors, thermostats on radiators, maintaining the efficiency of boiler, and ensuring the heating system is efficient. By using energy-efficient light bulbs and lighting systems.

5. Renewable Energy Sources: by seeking ways to increase the College's use of renewable energy sources such as photovoltaic cells, solar thermal panels and the possibility of using a Combined Heat and Power system in the future.

6. Recycling and Conservation: by recycling efficiently.

   a. The College currently recycles paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, glass, mobile phones, chargers and batteries, printer toner, electrical/computer equipment, and where possible stage materials and building waste.

   b. By conserving paper: College policy is to print on both sides of paper. The use of electronic whiteboards and other electronic media is helping reduce the use of paper.

   c. Many important College policies are now shared via the College website rather than in paper form. Teachers' notes and homework can be made increasingly accessible via the virtual learning environment (Moodle) in future, as appropriate, and more homework can be done on-line.

   d. The use of "schooltext" messages to parents' mobile phones has greatly reduced the need to print and send notes home in schoolbags.

7. Waste Management: by segregating waste appropriately, and disposing of each type of waste correctly. Litter control is an integral part of this: students must be encouraged to be responsible and keep classrooms clean.

8. Water Conservation: continued introduction of dual-flush cisterns which save water; installation of low- volume shower heads; Sports Grounds: By keeping the sports grounds litter-free, and recycling waste from them.

9. Transport: by reducing transport-related carbon emissions by encouraging the use of public transport.

10. School Trips: College students and staff travel extensively on school trips and for sports activities. Carbon emissions should be taken into consideration, and the most environmentally – friendly method of travel used where possible; the use of carbon offsets should be considered.

11. Purchasing Policy: the College should consider the environmental aspects of the acquisition, use and disposal of goods and services, when these are purchased. For example, switching to recycled paper; purchasing Fair Trade goods; when purchasing food, take "food miles" into account and use local suppliers where possible; for cleaning materials and chemicals, use green detergents where possible; for timber, consider environmentally-responsible sources.

12. Surroundings: by encouraging students to grow trees/plants/flowers to enhance their environment.

7.0: Achieving Objectives

To achieve the objectives of this policy St Colman's College will:

1. Fully involve the Caretaker;

2. Ensure that those who create a mess clear it up when possible

3. Continue the College's Green -Schools involvement.

4. Create the post of Environmental Officer with concessionary hours if feasible.

5. Give re-use and recycling a high profile and include environmental issues in school assemblies.

6. Promote awareness through the School Newsletter, the school website, Principal's newsletters and the school magazine.

7. Increase environmental education across the curriculum and in co-curricular activities.

8. Encourage participation in environmental competitions, exhibitions, seminars and lectures, for example through the SEAI "One Good Idea Project".

9. Inform students, staff and parents of achievements in this area.

10. Ensure that "green" criteria, including energy efficiency, are used and promoted in any new buildings/ re-builds/restoration work.

8.0: Evaluation

This effectiveness of this policy can be judged from the following indicators:

1. A litter-free, clean school environment.
2. The retention of the Green Flag and the obtaining of further Green Flags
3. Reduced bills for electricity, heating fuel, and water and for waste disposal.
4. Policy reviews will be organised by the Board of Management on a regular basis, involving the, the Caretaker, the Green Committee and the Student Council.