



ISSU
IRISH SECOND-LEVEL
STUDENTS' UNION

Student Council Sustainability Plan Template

*A template you can bring back to your
Student Council*

Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)

The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) is the national representative body for second-level school students in the Republic of Ireland. The ISSU aims to work towards an education system in which the views, opinions and contributions of students are respected and in which students are recognised as an official partner in creating an education that is centered around and caters best for students.

Content by: Kate Devitt, Lucais Hill, Josh McCormack, Rafal Pavlak-Chiaradia, Ava White, Lauren Coffey, Saidhbhe Concannon, Anjelica Foley, Máirín Harding, Aideen Hannath, Heather Doyle and Jamie Mac Giolla Bháin.

Project leads: Jamie Mac Giolla Bháin (ISSU Sustainability Officer 2022/23).

Designed by: Aoibhín Ní Gleasáin (ISSU Communications Officer 2022/23) and Leo Galvin.

The ISSU wishes to give credit to St. Dominic's College, Cabra for allowing us to use their 'Sustainable Environment Policy' policy as a framework to develop this template policy.

First published by Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU), February 2023

Contact the ISSU:

Address: ISSU 10th Floor, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1, D01 F9K2

Phone: 01 443 4461

Website: www.issu.ie

Email: sustainability@issu.ie

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and TikTok: @issu4u

For more Sustainability Resources and information, check out <https://linktr.ee/issusustainability>

Introduction

Our school is committed to being a sustainable and green institution for all. [Insert school name here] is committed to ensuring that sustainability is at the forefront of our learning and teaching experience.

[Insert school name here] aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into all areas of the curriculum, instilling a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment and participating in Green Schools and other similar activities.

Whole-School Objectives

[school name] will endeavour to implement this policy by means of the following:

- Green Flag activities: the school community will continually monitor its goals to ensure the Green Flag award is achieved/maintained.
- Legal compliance: we will comply with relevant Irish and EU environmental laws, regulations and directives.
- Energy conservation: it will strive to reduce the use of electricity e.g. by switching off lights when not in use and using automatic sensor switches.
- Heating/lighting: energy efficiency is increased by continually upgrading the maintenance work of the school, e.g. the installation of a new boiler with a timer control panel and maintaining the efficiency of other boilers in the school. Energy-efficient light bulbs and lighting systems may be installed throughout the whole school to promote energy efficiency.

- **Renewable Energy Sources:** by seeking ways to increase the schools use of renewable energy sources in the future; the schools' energy supplier is Electric Ireland who are committed to increase renewables to 50% of generation capacity (generating 40% electricity) by 2030.
- **Recycling and Conservation:** [school name] pledges to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, batteries, used garden bulks and compost. Recycle bins are to be available in the staffroom and classrooms throughout the school and proper recycling and waste disposal practices are to be put in place, as per the 'Waste Management' section underneath.
- **By conserving paper:** [school name] endeavours to print only when necessary. When it is deemed necessary, we will print in a sustainable fashion. This may include printing on both sides of paper. The use of whiteboards and other electronic media will be utilised to reduce the use of paper both inside and outside of the classroom. Many important school policies shall be shared via the school website rather than in paper form. Teachers' notes and homework can be made increasingly accessible via Google Classroom/Microsoft Teams in future, as appropriate, and more homework can be done online. The use of text messages to parents' mobile phones and emails will greatly reduce the need to print and send notes home in schoolbags.
- **Upcycling and Reuse of products:** The library may use second-hand books and tries to use local suppliers. Books are covered so they last longer. When retiring the books, the librarian endeavours to reuse them for other activities, e.g. Art Department projects.

- **Waste Management:** Waste is to be segregated appropriately, and disposal of each type of waste is to be done correctly. Litter control is an integral part of this: students and staff are encouraged to be responsible and keep classrooms clean. The use of a classroom cleaning rota will support this. The school strives to ensure that all bins are clearly marked Recycle/General Waste. Litter pickers are to be made available for use by teachers with class groups if and when they are needed.
- **Water Conservation:** Water is conserved by the use of push taps in the toilets in the school building and by washing a full load in the washing machines/dishwashers. Leftover water in used water bottles may be used for watering house plants. The school may install water fountains to allow students to refill their reusable bottles.
- **Transport:** Reduction in transport-related carbon emissions is promoted by encouraging the use of public transport and cycling/walking. The school is to have a bicycle rack on the school grounds for use. Staff and students may avail of a Bike to Work/School Scheme.
- **School Trips:** [school name] students and staff may make use of local amenities which are within walking distance and use public transport when necessary. The school community appreciates its local environment when planning school trips, e.g. The Phoenix Park, Dublin Zoo, Glasnevin Cemetery etc. The PE Department uses local suitable areas as a nearby facility for activities.

- Catering supplies: The school is to use wooden biodegradable cutlery for catering events, e.g. after school study, staff events, in the canteen.
- Biodiversity: An area in the school grounds is to be dedicated to become a wildflower meadow. It is to be a wildflower regeneration area. It is to be maintained by staff and students. This will encourage biodiversity in the school grounds and attract bees, birds and butterflies.
- Energy-rated appliances: Appliances in the staffroom and practical classes e.g. dishwasher, fridge have a high energy efficiency rating. The school will consider the energy rating when purchasing.
- Wellbeing of all: The grounds can be enjoyed by all, for example through outdoor spaces designated for staff and students to use during lunch. The campus is further developed for the betterment and enjoyment of all by the flower beds and walled garden maintained by staff and students.

Pledge to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development

[school name] will aim to lead the community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity and in upholding the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



People

Within our school community we will strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 1-5, in order to promote healthy, happy, safe and fulfilling lives in a sustainable manner.

In order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1, No Poverty, [school name] will aim to reduce the cost of going to school, by encouraging teachers & staff to avail of online resources, to reduce the amount of books to be paid for and wasted, providing basic necessities that students would need, such as period products in bathrooms, and general first aid that anyone can avail of.

[school name] will work to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, Zero Hunger by promoting school catering that makes minimal waste, for example banning single-use cups, cutlery and dinnerware. Our school will also strive to provide low-cost and nutritious food that caters to all students and staff. We will also disclose the nutritious information of the food to further educate our students. Finally, we will ensure that nobody goes hungry, and minimal food wastage is created.

In order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 3, Good Health and Wellbeing, [school name] will promote healthy lifestyles in order to reduce stress in schools and keep students physically fit. We will strive to have an inclusive Physical Education curriculum, which aims to get everybody active to the best of their ability. We will aim also to have extracurriculars that improve mental well being. We will ensure that everyone feels safe not just in our school environment, but also at home; We will make sure that our students feel safe when coming forward with any matter. When they do come forward with any such matter, we will deal with them appropriately, and make sure that our student will receive the proper support.

[school name] will continue to make Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, a top priority. We will strive to accommodate all learning styles in order to ensure that all students are receiving the best education possible. We will ensure that students receive any extra help/accommodations necessary, in order for them to excel. Finally, we will make sure that students are in a safe and secure environment, so they can get the most out of their school experience.

[school name] pledges to have Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality, at the forefront of our minds as we continue to progress towards 100% equality for all. We will strive towards making our school a comfortable space for people of all sexualities, genders, age and ethnicities. Our school aims to be a space where people feel free and encouraged to express themselves without fear of judgement or discrimination.

Prosperity

[School name] is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by encouraging the use of energy efficient appliances, renewable energy sources, job opportunities, innovation and entrepreneurship, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities and communities. By doing so, we aim to create a more sustainable school environment and foster healthy, happy, safe and fulfilling lives for our school community.

To encourage development on Sustainable Development Goal 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, [school name] will endeavour to create job opportunities for our school community by encouraging the development of small businesses and cooperatives. We will also work to ensure that our school community has access to decent work and economic growth opportunities.

To advance work on Sustainable Development Goal 9, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, [school name] strives to create an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. We will also work to ensure that our school community has access to the necessary infrastructure and resources to support their businesses and initiatives.

To stimulate progress on Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities, [school name] will reduce inequalities in our school community by providing access to resources and opportunities for all students. We will also work to ensure that our school community is aware of the importance of reducing inequalities.

To promote Sustainable Development Goal 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, [school name] will work to create a sustainable school environment by encouraging the use of green technologies and sustainable practices. We will also work to ensure that our school community is aware of the importance of sustainable cities and communities.

[school name] pledges to support and strive towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production. We recognise the impact of our consumption and production patterns on the environment and the need for a more sustainable and equitable future. We will take actions to reduce waste and increase efficiency, such as raising awareness about the importance of responsible consumption and production among our community. [school name] will also promote sustainable production methods and support businesses that align with this goal, and work towards creating a more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations. [school name] commits to being responsible consumers and producers, and to work towards a world where resources are used in a sustainable and equitable manner.

By promoting these Sustainable Development Goals, we hope to create a more sustainable school environment and to ensure that our school community has access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Planet

[school name] will strive to do our part to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals encompassed by the 'Planet' category in a bid to ensure that not only is our planet a great and biodiverse landscape, but our school grounds and local communities also.

[school name] aims to provide a comprehensive framework to achieve the five climate action-related Sustainable Development Goals by promoting sustainable practices and reducing our negative impact on the environment, while improving the quality of life for all. By taking a holistic approach to these goals, [school name] can ensure a sustainable future for our planet and its inhabitants as well as our students, staff and all of those in our school community. By doing this, we will foster a sense of responsibility for the long term care of the planet and commitment to promoting the sustainable use of resources through personal lifestyle changes as well as participation in collective environmental decision making. We understand the impact our actions have on the environment with a view towards minimising the negative impacts of the school on the environment.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 6, Clean Water and Sanitation, [school name] recognises the importance of access to safe and clean water for all and the impact it has on health, education, and overall well-being. We pledge to take actions to conserve and protect water resources, such as reducing water waste and promoting efficient use, and raise awareness of the issue among our community. [school name] will also advocate for improved sanitation facilities and practices, and work towards creating a cleaner and healthier environment for ourselves and future generations. With this pledge, we commit to being responsible stewards of our water resources and to work towards a world where everyone has access to clean water and sanitation.

[school name] commits to Sustainable Development Goal 7, Affordable and Clean Energy by monitoring and reporting school energy use to the SEAI in line with the Climate Action Plan 2021. [school name] will write a school energy statement with the commitment of school leadership to display the statement annually in an easy to understand format to students/parents teachers and commit to undertaking an annual effectiveness review of the energy statement. We will explore all viable options to make our school as energy efficient as possible.

To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 13, Climate Action, [school name] will actively aspire towards reducing the school's carbon emissions in line with the National Climate Action Plan, 2021, therefore contributing on a local level towards the agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. [school name] will encourage the use of alternative methods of transport for travelling to and from the school among school staff and students in line with sustainable public infrastructure practices. We will also develop and instil an understanding of our role as caretakers of the classroom and school environment in our school community.

In our quest to engage Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water, [school name] understands the critical role that oceans and marine life play in maintaining a healthy planet, and the impact that human activities have on their health and preservation. We will take actions to reduce our impact on the waterways where possible, such as reducing plastic waste and reducing our carbon footprint, and raise awareness about the importance of marine conservation among our community. [school name] will also learn about and promote sustainable fishing practices, and work towards protecting and preserving marine ecosystems and the species that depend on them.

We commit to being responsible stewards of the world's oceans and to work towards a future where marine life and ecosystems are protected and thrive.

[school name] recognises the importance of preserving and protecting our natural habitats, biodiversity, and wildlife for future generations as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 15, Life On Land. We commit to educating ourselves and others about the importance of sustainable land use and conservation. [school name] will endeavour to protect and restore our local ecosystems by participating in community clean-up and tree-planting efforts. Our school community will support sustainable agriculture and forestry through informed purchasing decisions. We recognise that achieving this goal will require ongoing effort and commitment from all of us, [school name] is committed to doing our part in ensuring a sustainable future for life on land.

Peace & Partnership

In this section we touch on how the goals must be met in an intersectional mind frame realising sustainability is not only individual action but also requires systemic action to achieve a truly sustainable world.

To further progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, [school name] will be a safe environment for students to voice their opinions. This means students will have clubs or committees that make them feel heard and included in the changes to the school. It is essential that every school has an active and democratically elected student council so students have a platform to voice their thoughts to school management and also enable them to be active citizens within the school community.

To advocate for development on Sustainable Development Goal 17, Partnership for the Goals, students, teachers, principals, clubs and committees in [school name] all will work together to ensure a fully sustainable school environment. This means students and school management will be in constant communication and clubs such as greenschools and the student council will work together on campaigns and projects. This is essential for schools to function sustainably and ensure an intersectional approach to combating the climate crisis.

By promoting these goals we are working towards a more sustainable and intersectionality focused school community. These goals can be easily promoted in school as they are mainly just a change in mindset ensuring there is more communication between different stakeholders in the school.

Working with the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)

[school name] will endeavour to work with the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) as the national representative body for second-level students nationwide on sustainable development-related projects and opportunities that become available. More information can be found at <https://linktr.ee/issusustainability>

Footnote

Drafted by the [Insert school name here] Student Council [month, year] and adopted by the Board of Management [month, year]. Based on a resource from the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU), published February 2023.



ISSU
IRISH SECOND-LEVEL
STUDENTS' UNION