

Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide - Language Policy

Revision: 1

Effective date: 2021-Feb-08

1. Introduction

This document lays out the methods and strategies that the school will utilize to ensure that both the school and natural environment are safe, clean, and sustainable spaces for students to enjoy.

2. Policy Statement

The school is committed to being an environmentally sustainable institution as well as providing a school environment that is built around this commitment. It is the intention of the working group that the following policy will move the school toward a path of environmental sustainability and pass associated values on to students in their care of the school environment and their community.

3. Sustainability

- 3.1. The school has a commitment to reducing its ecological footprint and being an environmentally sustainable institution.
- 3.2. The school has the goal of creating a space that, through the use of renewable energy or other means, is environmentally sustainable and a model in the community.
- 3.3. This means that the school will limit, with the goal of eliminating, all non-essential disposable products.
 - 3.3.1. Examples of essential disposable products are as follows:
 - (a) Disposable non-medical or medical masks
 - (b) All disposable medical and/or first aid products such as bandages
 - (c) Sanitary or cleaning products that cannot be reasonably replaced with a reusable option
 - (d) Some food packaging (e.g. bread bags) that may be necessary to procure in conjunction with food that is bought from a retailer. Disposable packaging sold separately (e.g. Ziplock bags etc.) will not be acquired by the school.

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- 3.3.2. Importantly, children will be encouraged to follow this policy but will not be punished if they bring disposable products to the school, that the school as an institution avoids.
- 3.3.3. Even with regards to essential disposable products, if a suitable reusable, or more sustainable, replacement becomes available the working group will investigate if it would be a suitable product for the school to acquire and act accordingly.
- 3.4. The school will follow all local regulations regarding proper waste disposal.
- 3.5. The school will take additional steps to exceed local regulations where there are opportunities for improvement, or when the working group sees an opportunity to increase sustainability regarding the school's waste management.
 - 3.5.1. In the context of this policy, this means ensuring that all waste is separated and recycled, composted or disposed of appropriately when, or if, it is not required explicitly under local regulations.
 - 3.5.2. This may also mean taking proactive steps to find ways to reuse or recycle objects or items that are not mandated by regulations.
- 3.6. The school will internally reduce administrative waste by having all administrative communication completed through email and other electronic means to reduce paper waste.
 - 3.6.1. Unless a request is made by a parent on the basis of accessibility (e.g. limited or restricted access to the internet).
- 3.7. Policy documents and other governance documents will be distributed via email or other electronic means unless a hardcopy of a specific document is requested.
- 3.8. Paper and paper products will be used with students for learning and craft-related activities. The minimal use of technology and screen-time for students is a goal of the school.
 - 3.8.1. All paper used in the school is to come from at least a partially recycled source, and all paper that can be recycled will be recycled or reused.

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- 3.9. The school will strive to reduce its consumption of goods of all types to what is necessary and engage in sustainable procurement of all goods.
 - 3.9.1. This means that the school will not knowingly procure an excess of any goods.
 - 3.9.2. The school will also take any actions seen to be appropriate in the reduction of its consumption.

4. The Natural Environment

- 4.1. The natural environment is something the school recognizes as being critical for its students' learning, and it is the hope that this section of policy will provide guidance on how the school will have a healthy relationship with nature.
- 4.2. During field trips or community excursions the school will abide by a strict "leave only footprints" policy. Discouraging littering and ensuring that no waste or pollutants are left behind.
- 4.3. The school will ensure that its students are given clear and kind instruction on how they ought to interact with the natural world respectfully and with care.
 - 4.3.1. Volunteers will be briefed on how the students are taught to interact with the environment to ensure that there is a continuity of practice.
- 4.4. The school will participate in community clean-up activities as time allows, to practice what is taught about the importance of the environment.
- 4.5. The school will also engage in its own cleaning days, that students will help to execute, to help keep the school grounds clean and free of litter.
- 4.6. The school will keep a garden to be used as an educational tool for students to interact with and help care for.
- 4.7. The school will encourage outdoor learning and engagement with the natural world in all of its lessons.

5. The Classroom Environment

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- 5.1. The school recognizes that how we treat our living, working and learning spaces is reflective of how we treat all spaces. Therefore, the school maintains a consistent, clean, and sustainable environment within the classroom.
- 5.2. The classroom here refers to all places where children may be learning. Some points may apply to just the school building while others may apply to other locations, such as field trip locations, shared spaces, etc.
- 5.3. The goal of this section is to instil good habits in students relating to taking care of their environment on both a micro and macro level.
- 5.4. Students will be responsible for:
 - 5.4.1. Helping to clean up after activities.
 - 5.4.2. Helping to do some light cleaning (e.g. sweeping up and wiping up tables with water or non-toxic and child safe cleaners).
 - 5.4.3. Respecting the space that they are in, meaning:
 - 5.4.3.1. Being gentle with learning materials
 - 5.4.3.2. Keeping the space clean and ready for others to enjoy.
 - 5.4.4. To dispose of used items in the appropriate places
- 5.5. Any and all classroom waste that is not able to be reused, recycled or composted will be disposed of appropriately.

6. Curriculum and Learning

- 6.1. The school, in its mission of achieving the above goals regarding the environment and sustainability, will incorporate these ideals into the curriculum and educate students on what they mean and what they can do to emulate them.
- 6.2. This will be done in conjunction with other classwork meant to increase the appreciation as well as knowledge that children have of the natural world.

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- 6.3. This will include the use of outdoor spaces as part of the “classroom.”
- 6.4. The school will also, when possible, invite tradition bearers or other relevant experts to visit the class to talk about the importance of the natural environment, what it means to Gaels in Nova Scotia, and how we can protect it.
- 6.5. This environmental education will also include a care of their learning environment (both the classroom and the natural world) by educating students on how to dispose of their waste and the importance of caring for their space. This extends to all toys, objects, plants, etc. that exist in the classroom space.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. It is our hope that the above policy will succeed in the goal of creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly school, as well as a positive environment for our students.
- 7.2. The working group will review the above policies annually or as required to ensure that they are effective in achieving the goals of the policy.

Revision History & Approval

Revision	Date	Approved by
1	2021-Feb-08	Kenneth MacKenzie