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TIPS FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- CREATING A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY -

IRISH SCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

LAOS 2022 – LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school prioritises and promotes, as a core value, a commitment to sustainable development; the school community collectively develops and implements practices and policies to embed principles of sustainability in the school's daily routines.



To address the climate and biodiversity crises we need to mobilise mindsets. The most important and impactful first step on the journey to an ethos of sustainability is creating a space for conversation and directing people to small significant actions we can take. The values of leaders flow down through any organisation. What you model and say as a principal or deputy principal trickles down into the mindsets of your staff team, students and the wider community. Showing visible leadership in sustainability demonstrates to your school community that you care.

SHORT TERM:

LITTLE TIME AND ENERGY TO IMPLEMENT WITH BIG IMPACT ON MINDSET

1 Intercom or assembly announcements

Ask teachers and students to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by shutting down computers, and projectors, turn off switches at the socket, and switch off lights before they leave the building. Have a poster in the classroom or journal.

2 Register your school for the FREE week long [Climate and Nature Summit 2022](#), 7th -11th Nov, during COP27.

Check out this short video to see how the [Primary Climate & Nature Summit](#) OR the [Post-Primary Climate and Nature Summit](#) will work.

3 Take part in the Irish School's Sustainability Network '[5 minutes of Sustainability](#)' Initiative

Once a month create space for a whole school conversation for 5 mins. Each video outlines 1 action we can take, an explanation of why we would take the action, and the impact.

4 Alert your staff to CPD on sustainability..

...offered by [Global Action Plan Ireland](#), [Worldwise Global Schools](#), [Education Support Centres Ireland \(ESCI\)](#), and [The Irish Schools Sustainability Network](#). Check out [Bitesize Biodiversity](#), 15 min CPD on Mondays for teachers to bring nature into their classroom.

MEDIUM TERM:

MODERATE TIME TO IMPLEMENT, SOME ACTIONS HAVE A FINANCIAL COST

5 Assign responsibility for sustainability

Assign responsibility for sustainability in your school, a member of the board of management, a member of the senior leadership team, a member from each department and appoint an overall lead for sustainability who is given time within the school week to set up systems and build the confidence of your staff and students. Suggest that they join the [Irish Schools Sustainability Network](#) for support if they need it.

6 Assess your curriculum offer for sustainability

→ Primary Schools: Start from where you are currently at and acknowledge work already being done. If you are engaging with external programmes, such as Green-Schools, ensure it is embedded within the Plean Scoile (S.E.S.E) and that as many classes as possible are involved. Similarly, if you have resources, such as an outdoor classroom or school garden, link this to the Plean Scoile. Essentially, all programmes, resources and school developments such as gardens should be embedded in curriculum if they are to be fully utilised to the benefit of all pupils.

→ Secondary Schools: Avail of programmes that are already out there that will supplement or support your current offer:

- Junior Cycle [short course on Climate Action](#).
- Run a TY [short course - Education for Sustainability, Rewrite Climate](#)
- Wellbeing - [FREE 8 Week Environmental Influencer Programme](#) for Wellbeing
- Ensure there is a "Green-Schools Update" scheduled into every staff meeting



7 Get up to speed on climate and nature

Take the [AimHi Earth 4hr Climate and Nature Course](#). Listen to podcasts such as the [Outrage and Optimism podcast](#) or the [Climate Alarm Clock Podcast](#) on your way to work. Encourage and facilitate your staff to do the same.

8 Form a principal and deputy principal climate and biodiversity action group

ESCI have a climate action group, the ISSN is a grassroots movement of teachers and students, there are youth movements, Fridays for Future. There is no senior leadership action group. Working together we can lobby for change and resources.

We believe that education is about preparing our students for the future. Climate and nature education should be woven into the fabric of school life from primary through to secondary school.

LONG-TERM:

HIGH TIME DEMAND TO IMPLEMENT,
SOME ACTIONS HAVE A FINANCIAL
COST

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Create a sustainability policy for your school

Create a sustainability policy for your school that examines your whole school curriculum, the outdoors, the building, procurement, catering, waste management and travel. Come up with a long-term sustainability action plan based on your policy document

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The importance of climate and nature education

Dedicate a whole school inservice day to ensure your staff understand the magnitude and scale of the emergency, the urgency needed for action, the importance of climate and nature education and the school's strategy to effect change.

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Evaluate all work

Evaluate all work carried out to explore its impact on staff and student knowledge, attitudes, & behaviour. It could be a focus for the next cycle of SSE.