



SINGLE USE PLASTIC FREE SCHOOL POLICY

Introduction:

This policy is designed to ensure that Galway Educate Together Secondary School supports the work of parents and guardians in relation to encouraging our students to live responsibly. This policy was formulated in consultation with staff, students, parents and guardians and Board of Management of GETSS as well as by seeking advice from other Single Use Plastic Free schools and a local representative.

We believe that a change in our current attitude to, and use of, single use plastic is indisputably valuable and warranted. We seek a cultural change based on education and encouragement.

We will not use words such as 'rules', or 'banned', when implementing this policy initiative. We believe that this will be the more sustainable and rewarding approach in the long term.

Aims and Objectives:

- Encourage the use of alternatives to single use plastics such as re-usable water bottles, lunch boxes, beeswax wraps. Discourage single-use plastic bottles in the hopes of eradicating it in our school.
- Consult with stakeholders.
- Encourage positive practices in relation to this at home also by raising awareness and education
- Encourage the use of our brown bin for organic waste. When accommodation is more suitable, we hope to move towards composting on site.
- Continue efforts with recycling – specifically correct sorting and education. Facilitate and encourage washing out of re-usable containers, and cleaning recyclable containers for recycling.
- Educational initiatives to equip students with the knowledge and motivation to reduce plastic waste. Teach The 7 Rs of Sustainability: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle, Rot.
- Establish cross-curricular links to promote sustainability at a whole-school level which will include Global Citizenship Education and support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Use our social media platforms to raise awareness.
- Carry out regular audits, and educational drives, to continuously re-enforce and embed the culture of GETSS being Plastic-Free.
- Encourage the removal of various single-use plastics in our school:
 1. Cling film
 2. Tinfoil
 3. Plastic bottles
 4. Coffee cups, and other disposable cups
 5. Plastic Cutlery
 6. Efforts in home-economics, e.g. avoiding cling-film
 7. Efforts to embed our policy in purchasing decisions across departments
 8. Efforts to reduce plastic packaging when making purchasing decisions
 9. Encouraging students to make improvements at home; educate family
 10. Keep evolving the policy as we learn more

Action Plan

- The promotion of a Plastic Free GETSS will be addressed through all subjects at both Junior and Senior Cycle including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Ethical Education, Science, Home Economics, CSPE, Geography, Life Skills and Physical Education (PE) at regular intervals. All subject departments are asked to make choices around purchases, equipment and practices that are in line with our Single Use Plastic Free Policy.
- All new students, parents and guardians and staff will be made aware of the issues around Single Use Plastics and our policy and practice in relation to this.
- Ongoing Promotion of Plastic Free GETSS will be achieved through the use of visual displays throughout the school and via our Social Media channels as well as through our curriculum.
- Information on Plastic Free practices will be available on the school website, social media and in the school journal.
- Visitors and guest speakers will be invited to offer their expertise on the subject from time to time.
- Consultation with the Green Team and Student Council will take place on an ongoing basis to monitor the effectiveness of the policy to further develop and promote a Plastic Free GETSS.
- Food and beverages provided by the school or available to purchase at the school will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that it is in alignment with the Single Use Plastic Free Policy. Paper bags and compostable cups will be provided if needed.
- All students and staff will be encouraged to bring single use plastic free lunches and refreshments.
- Water fountains are not an option at the moment in our temporary accommodation, but these will be installed as soon as possible. All students are asked to use a reusable bottle.

- All members of the school community have had the opportunity to be part of the consultation process and every effort will be made to keep all members of the school community up to date with developments with regards to the policy and practice in this area.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed regularly, at least every two years. It will consider any legislative changes, new policy and strategy documents either in the school or from the Department of Education and Skills, changes in school facilities and feedback from parents, students and staff.

The review will be carried out by the Green Team which is made up of both students and teachers in consultation with students, staff, parents and guardians and Board of Management.

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