

Comeragh College Leading in Sustainability

May Day Celebrations

In the words of the former Secretary General of the United Nations – Kofi Anann, **“If we are to go on living together on this Earth, we must all be responsible for it”**. This is as relevant now as when it was over 20 years ago.

Climate change, global warming, social injustice, and inequality are in constant discussion now - as they should be.

In Comeragh College we envision to contribute to an increased knowledge and understanding of global justice issues and increased engagement and action by students as active global citizens. As part of our long-term plan, the school has its own set of commitments: to develop in our students an awareness and increasing concern for climate change, global warming, social injustice, and the inequality that is felt by a large percentage of the world’s population. This is a major part of the CSPE plan.



For the past seven years, Comeragh College has secured funding to support the ‘planting’ of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) themes across both junior and senior cycle curricula. What this means is that World Wise Global Schools Initiative (WWGS) is supporting numerous projects within the school. Comeragh College was awarded ‘A Citizen’s Passport’ by World Wise Global Schools for demonstrating an emerging engagement with Global Citizenship Education. This means that Comeragh College has shown an increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing interdependent and unequal world in which we all live. It also indicates that our school is on the way to making Global Citizenship Education more visible in the school through supporting and engaging in actions that transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect our lives at personal, community, national

and international levels. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Global Citizenship Education is thought through various subjects across our curriculums and our transition year students are timetabled a designated class for GCE.



As part of our mission to establish GCE within our school, students have the opportunity to take part in Model United Nations as part of our extra-curricular activities. Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is an educational/academic activity in which students can learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations. Students research global issues in the world and work together as delegates of countries and NGOs to resolve these issues. Over the four years, transition year and fifth year students have taken part in MUN conferences. Our delegates explore issues over the course of the four days that include the question of promoting safe working conditions, ensuring the rehabilitation of drug users into society, reduction of pollution in oceans, protection of user data online and the prevention of domestic violence, to name a few. Our first- and second-year students also have an opportunity to represent the school as honourable delegates in Junior MUN. MUN events allows students to develop their knowledge in global issues and allows them to generate the knowledge and skills to debate, discuss, amend, resolve, and lobby with fellow delegates on important world issues. Over the course of the year, students discuss pressing world issues and generate resolutions to help solve these issues. MUN allow them to collaborate with each other and gain a better understanding of the world.



Apart from Education, respect, fairness, and equality are crucial to the happiness and success of the members of our school community. Our school provides

opportunities for all students to reach their potential with school supports under the wellbeing framework.

Our staff and students work hard every year to become better citizens in the world today. In doing so, our school has conducted various initiatives and projects in line with WWGS to make our school more efficient and sustainable.



This past year has been no different. We had our first “Inclusion Week” on March 14th - 16th.

We celebrated the diversity of the whole school community. Preparations for inclusion week started in February. And all SPHE classes had lessons that highlighted the importance of being inclusive. The angle was “LiveAndLetLive”. The committee met every Thursday at lunchtime- Junior and Senior groups to plan and prepare for the big event. Coffee cart, selfie frames, bunting, balloons and games galore!! Comeragh College was a sea of colour and pride xx

This was a week where students took a stand against homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying. This week was an opportunity to make sure that Comeragh College students all feel safe and supported. The entire school community gathered for our guest speakers Stefano and Gerard Sweetman. The rainbow flag has been flying with pride even since.



“Inclusion is not tolerance; it is unquestioned acceptance” (Kesar Patel)

A book rental scheme has always been used in Comeragh College. This has been an important feature that supports our students and their families throughout the school year. To maximise the life of each book, they are covered with a hard laminate and extremely durable cover called “Tuff Covering”. This gives the books 2 - 3 lifetimes and as a result cuts down on carbon emissions, paper waste and is more cost efficient. As a result, extra money is available to support students educationally, emotionally, and socially.

Microsoft Teams and VSware have been used from 2016 onwards for recording rolls, reporting, connecting with parents and students. The financial savings from Teams and VSware, has meant the money that would have otherwise been spent on sending reports can now be used elsewhere to supporting services and student initiatives within the school. Online reporting has also contributed to a decrease in paper usage which lessens the schools carbon footprint.



As part of our WWGS project from 2019-2020, new drinking water fountains were installed in the last two years with a total of 6 in the school which allow students to refill their water bottles. The aim of this project was to reduce plastic waste in our school. It is preferred that students do not use any single use plastic bottles. This year the school has presented students with a reusable metal thermos flask that can be used to keep soup warm or to keep water/juice cold.

Hot lunches are supplied for just 2 euro in the school canteen. A fob system is in place, so students do not need to use cash. A second food counter has been installed in the First- and Second-year area to ease delivery of lunches to the younger students.

“Nobody goes hungry in Comeragh College”.



Sustainability continues with our A 1 energy rated building, and we are so lucky to have one of the most eco-friendly schools in County Tipperary. Comeragh College is engaged in a PPP (Private Partnership Program) initiative and is managed by BAM Construction. **Eco-friendly** products continue to be used throughout the building. During the construction of the current school “**Water Harvesting**” was installed. Today our toilets are flushed with collected rainwater. In the past 12 months (April `21 – April `22) a total of 2,226 m³ of rainwater was harvested and our solar panels provided 6,350 KWh.

The Transition Year students (`22) embarked on a Sustainability project where they designed and made sustainable furniture made from recycled materials. No money was spent on this project as all materials used came from the excess cardboard that had been used to transport the schoolbooks and what could be gathered from leftovers in some practical classes. Glue was the only additional material used. In the past the TY's took part in the “Junk Kouture” fashion competition. These projects allow students to get creative and develop their knowledge on sustainability.



Legs made from glued corrugated cardboard, cut into cubes and reassembled to create the stacked effect



Coffee table with collage imaged on top



Bedside locker with drawer

Daily, we stream TED talk videos and informative videos in the general-purpose area on GCE topics such as “Bhutan, (Asian country), and its efforts to retain its carbon negativity”. Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland 1990 – 1997, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 1997-2002) now leads a

foundation devoted to climate change. Her Ted Talks and speeches advocating for change are streamed also.

Our school has engaged with many more initiatives and activities throughout the years that have and will continue to equip students with critical thinking skills and instil personal values such as empathy and solidarity, to help them contribute to creating a more just and equal world.

We have included photos that will highlight some of the efforts that our students and school community continue to do to help us reach the “**Sustainable Development Goals**” in our own unique way.

We are here to dream together, to work together, to fight climate change together, to protect our planet and our people together. Because the reality is we are in it together.