

# Sustainability Policy Statement

Comeragh College, Carrick-on-Suir 72400V



All public service bodies are required under the Climate Action Plan to adhere to the Public Service Climate Action Mandate – and to develop Climate Action Roadmaps setting out how they will deliver on their energy efficiency and emission reduction targets.

Schools now have a separate Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement. The School Sector Climate Action Mandate can be read in full here: [gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development – ESD to 2030 also informs the content of the following Sustainability Policy Statement template.

ESD aims to ensure that “by 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”. (Sustainable Development Goal 4.7)

The following has been prepared as part the School Sector Climate Action Mandate, and in keeping with the principles and themes of ESD to 2030 and has been accepted by the Board of Management of our school.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement is to outline how our school promotes sustainability and climate action, through our actions and activities. Sustainability can be defined as the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future.

## Scope

Sustainability is a community issue and applies to all students, teachers and employees of our school. Parents and guardians should note, and where possible, promote, the Statement. The Board of Management of the school will ensure that decisions made in respect of the school align with the Statement.

## Vision, mission and values

Our school's vision is: A clean and safe environment for all to enjoy and thrive in. This vision includes personal wellbeing, strong mental health, and a healthy and safe environment to grow in. This will be linked with the 17 international sustainability goals.

Our school's mission is: To contribute to a safe and clean environment for those who will come after us. *Start small, grow tall.*

Our schools' values are safety, wellbeing, preservation and enhancement of the individual and the environment. Our values are entwined and closely affiliated with the 5 pillars of the TETB ethos, and the 17 international sustainability goals.

We, in Comeragh College, aim to implement a 3year strategy to achieve these aims.

## Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- Our school has adopted this Sustainability Policy Statement. It clearly details the aims and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in our school, its relationship to the vision and mission of the school.
- Our school recognises Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, and this is co-ordinated effectively in our school.
- Opportunities are identified to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects.
- All our school policies are aligned to the principles of sustainable development.
- Resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability are adequate and sufficient at all levels.
- Our school carries out regular self-evaluation of our teaching practices around sustainable development.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network ([www.ISSN.ie](http://www.ISSN.ie))

- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD Newsletter  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/a1d6e-education-for-sustainable-development-newsletter/>

## Environmental sustainability

Green-Schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues from the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of their school.

Our school is part of the Green Schools Programme. We are working towards a Green Flag in 2025.

Our school has a Green Team comprising staff and students whose role is to maintain and expand our green school's contribution to the local, national and international community. This includes sustainability and will occur through both education and action. We have a modern building with sustainable water and electrical facilities. We have a recycling programme for school waste. We have a developing school curriculum including Green Schools, Horticulture, Climate action as well as a diverse cross-curricular curriculum to support these programmes. The aim of the school is to include outdoor classrooms and education practises within the scope of our 3-year plan.

- We will be introducing a newer and expanded curriculum into the TY programme for 2024-2025 school year. This will consist of Green Schools programmes, Climatology, Horticulture.
- Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme's curriculum linked energy Resources, pupil Workshops and teacher CPD  
[Schools | Community Energy | SEAI](https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/)<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/>
- Our school engages with the [SEAI Energy in Education](#) resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption. We have a BAM run school who monitor usage and output for energy usage. [if possible, the school indicate their reduction in energy use and any relevant energy reduction targets.]
- Our school engages with Junkuture, GS initiatives, CPD days for staff around sustainable development. We are also part of the TETB cycle to work scheme.
- Our school engages with the Take 1 Programme and its resources in the area of sustainable development
- Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible.
- Our school has comprehensive policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste, food waste, single use plastics, minimal energy consumption.

- Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment. e.g. water fountains and bottle refilling stations for staff and pupils and the reuse and recycling of class materials when and where possible.
- Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places.
- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. We have several school gardens, Polytunnel areas, raised beds and a wildlife area for plants and animals on the school grounds. Science, Geography and TY / LCA subjects and modules include outdoor activities and excursions to local and national locations whenever feasible
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity. We have bug hotels, wildlife areas and no mow areas in specific areas within the schools site boundary.
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking and cycling to school. We have shelters and park areas for bicycles and e-scooters. We encourage walking activities and safe environmental transport to the school whenever possible. There are safe crossing points and areas for students to use. Bus stops and pickup areas are well marked and supervised.
- Our school engages with the Safe Routes to School programme: <https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>
- Our school engages with programmes that support and promote environmental education. Organisations such as the Local Lions Club, ISSU, Clean Coasts Ireland, the local civic offices and national programmes are liaised with, or any other programmes working in this field.

## Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos recognises the importance of and is sensitive to issues surrounding gender equity.
- Our students are provided with opportunities to develop and use their skills to participate in the solving of community problems at local level.
- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community.
- Our school engages with Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/> or other programmes working in this area.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.
- All school staff are provided with the training around conflict resolution, to support and affect positive student behaviour.

## Economic Sustainability

- A non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources is modelled in our school's allocation of its resources.
- Students are involved in the decision-making process on resource allocation within our school. The CC Student Council and Green Schools classes are involved with and facilitate litter pick days and promote environmentally friendly actions throughout the school year
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills. These include TY Mini-Company, LCA programmes and TY action days and activities throughout the year. Enterprise days, school markets and activities are facilitated throughout the school year
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.
- Our school buildings are maintained to a high standard, with best practise around sustainability in mind.
- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy

## Cultural Sustainability

- Our school ethos aims to foster students' self-esteem, along with a mutual regard and respect for fellow students, and positive social interaction and relationships.
- Our school ethos, in tandem with the curriculum, strives to prepare students for life in an increasingly multicultural society.
- Our school demonstrates a commitment to community engagement and encourages the community's involvement with the school.
- Our school has an active role in supporting cultural diversity both within the school itself, and in the wider school community.

## Teacher Competence

- Our teachers are supported in building their own capacity around ESD. e.g. ESD CPD, GCE CPD, engagement with the Take 1 programme and other providers of CPD programmes working in this area. Information is provided to staff and students on activity related programmes run by TETB and related educational and environmental groups. Staff attend CPD days and training in this area of ESD when possible.
- The personal knowledge and experience of staff, at both personal and professional levels is also a valuable resource.

## Student Competence

- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects e.g. BTYSE, YEA, or other such initiatives – including GS initiatives, Junkature entries and litter pick days throughout the academic year
- Our school has a Student Council/ Sustainability Committee/ Green Team who are involved in decisions about successes and future plans for Comeragh College leading into the future of ESD. Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects e.g. Tidy Towns Comhairle nan Oig, Lions Club initiatives & other local community organisations working in this area
- Our schools are involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community

## Goals

We have several goals in here in Comeragh College, each aligned with the national GS initiative and local environmental programmes. We hope to achieve some or all of these in our school 3-year plan.

- ✓ Achieve a Green Flag for our school by 2025
- ✓ Lower energy consumption and waste
- ✓ Increase biodiversity in our school area
- ✓ Increase outdoor education for pupils and staff

Following a review of the ‘Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool for Schools’ completed by students the following three areas were identified as the main areas for improvement going forward in the school three-year plan:

### Areas for Improvement:

1. Introduce recycling and sustainability into the school curriculum. This is being carried out in conjunction with school management. TY modules on GS, ESD and Climatology will be included in the curriculum. First year and TY years will work jointly in promoting and developing a ESD and GS ethos amongst the school populus. The topic is also being addressed via cross-curricular activities and content.
2. Develop school resources. A “green zone” will be established consisting of outside classrooms / polytunnels, planting beds and green areas. These will be used for activities and teaching purposes.
3. Staff and student training and CPD days in ESD, Green Schools and Environmental Awareness. Guest speakers will be invited to seminars and

training in the area will be provided for both pupils and staff. We need a whole school approach to this.

### Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on May 1st, 2024. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every year. We will run a programme of self-audit within the school to gauge our progress and to re-assess our aims and goals where needed.