

Bunclody Community College



Sustainability Policy Statement



Introduction

Bunclody Community College is a state, co-educational, multid denominational school schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



Bunclody Community College strives to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school community are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveler community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Bunclody Community College provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Bunclody Community College promotes a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In Bunclody Community College, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

Scope of this policy

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement, 'Bunclody Community College *Sustainability Policy Statement*' is to outline how our school promotes sustainability and climate action, through our actions and activities.

Definition of Sustainability

We in BCC define sustainability for students and staff as '*the ability to live our lives today in a way that protects the lives of future generations*'.

Scope

Sustainability is a community issue and applies to all students, teachers and employees of our school.

Climate Action Mandate

This policy is informed by the government's School Sector Climate Action Mandate.
gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate (www.gov.ie)

We aim to

- raise awareness and promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including Goal 13 – (Climate Action) through the range of curricular subjects
- integrate where feasible elements of the 17 SDGs into school life, e.g., food waste, bio-diversity, water consumption, recycling, reusing, transport to and from school, inclusive practices which give voice and agency to all students and the promotion and development of sustainable economics.
- Our school recognises the SEAI target to reduce Greenhouse gases in the school sector by 50% by 2030.

Vision, mission and values

Bunclody Community College Mission Statement

"We endeavour to provide a quality education to all our students in a caring, disciplined and respectful environment. We aim to prepare students for life and responsible citizenship and motivate them towards the achievement of their full potential".

Bunclody Community College Sustainability Policy Statement

"In keeping with the values of our mission statement, we aim to continue to promote the holistic development of our students by including values that respect nature in our school and the global environment. An environment that is based on the principle of mutual respect will be enhanced by practices that further a sustainable future for all.

We aim to promote personal and academic excellence in such a way that has due regard for environmental, social and economic sustainability. In doing so, we aim to make sustainable development a key aspect of personal and social responsibility for all members of our school community."

Whole School Approach to Sustainability

- This Sustainability Policy 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 through, newsletter notices and posters, and the adoption of sustainability as an aspect of curriculum planning in all subjects.
- 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 in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (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/>

Aims of the policy

- To create and maintain a culture of sustainability within the school community.
- To enable students to live as informed and caring members of Local, National, European and Global Communities.
- To encourage staff and students to be more mindful and responsible of their litter & waste, water use, and energy use throughout the school and at home.
- To create a school-wide learning environment where students learn about the impact of their waste, and their water and energy consumption.
- To foster an environment where students learn lifelong skills about reducing their waste and living more sustainably.
- To create a collaborative environment where students and staff work together to reduce the school's waste .

The Three Pillars of Sustainability;

1. Environmental Sustainability

- Our school has achieved a Green Flag for Recycling.
- Our school has engaged with the SEAI Teacher CPD programme and was selected for a follow-up SEAI audit of energy use in the school.
- Our school engages with the SEAI Energy in Education resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report (M&R) energy consumption.
- Our school has comprehensive policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste, food waste, single-use plastics, energy, and biodiversity.

Water Conservation

- Taps have been replaced with push taps, and an audit has been carried out to check for leaks.

Waste

Brown bins have been introduced in both staff canteens and Home Economics rooms.

- The number of plastic water bottles has been significantly reduced with the introduction of three filtered water stations for the student population.
- Plastic cutlery is no longer used in the school canteen.
- Teachers are encouraged to minimise the use of photocopying.
- Recycling bins are available throughout the school for plastic, paper, and cardboard.
- Every effort is made to separate materials (e.g. metal and wood) before disposing of waste in skips.
- Teachers and staff are encouraged to recycle materials and reduce waste where possible.

using flowerpots for planting seeds.

Recycling wood to make shelves and flower containers.

Building a compost bin

Recycling grape containers for sowing seeds.

- Bottle collection

Energy

- T8 fluorescent light bulbs in the old school have been replaced with energy-saving LED lights (following recommendations from the SEAI audit).
 - We have light sensors in some area of the school
- Staff are reminded to shut down electrical equipment at the end of the day.
 - Staff are encouraged to turn off lights in classrooms and corridors when possible.
 - Photocopiers and computers have been set to low-energy mode when not in use.
 - Notices have been placed on all exit doors to remind staff and students to keep doors closed.
- Battery collection
- Installation of solar panels.

Biodiversity

- We have planted native trees on our school grounds.
 - We have 'wild' areas where the grass is not cut to promote biodiversity.
 - The amount of weed killer used has been significantly reduced in recent years.
 - We have erected nest boxes for swifts, birds which are on the red list of endangered species.
 - Biodiversity is addressed in Horticulture/Environmental class in 4th year and across the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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 within classes, through school displays and announcements, on social media, and through presentations to staff.
- Our school engages with Junk Kouture, Green Schools initiatives, and CPD for staff around sustainable development.
 - 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 locations within the school's site boundary.
 - Building a bug motel
 - Sowing flowers and Veg
 - Sowing trees and hedging
 - Use of polytunnel to sow fruit and vegetables.
 - Applying for and sowing trees.

2. Social Sustainability

- Our school ethos strives to prepare students for life as citizens of a global community by teaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals across the curriculum and in Environmental Studies in 4th year. The SDGs and our Sustainability Definition are displayed in corridors and classrooms.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated. We have a strong level of support through the SEN department and our ASD unit. There is a high level of integration of students from the ASD unit in mainstream classes and activities. We provide physical access and accommodation for students who require this support, e.g., wheelchair users.
- Regular teaching training on differentiated learning aims to provide the best learning experiences for students of all abilities.
- Teachers are provided with training in the area of conflict resolution in order to support and affect positive student behaviour.
- Regular CPD provides teachers with the teaching skills that promote active and collaborative learning and a positive and enjoyable learning environment.
- Positive behaviours in all areas of school life are recognised and celebrated through awards day. We have a Positive Behaviour Committee awarding students with high points.
- 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.
- We practice a fair and equal, non-competitive ethos of co-operation and sharing of resources in our school.
- Students are involved in the decision-making process, where appropriate, on resource allocation within our school through our school's Student Council.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills in 4th year (Enterprise mini company) and in LCA classes (Enterprise-VPG).
- Our school buildings are maintained to as high a standard as possible, within limited resources, and with best practise in the area of sustainability in mind.
- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy in Business class.
- 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, Green Schools and Horticulture/environmental classes are involved with and facilitate litter pick days and promote environmentally friendly actions throughout the school year.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles.

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.
- Our school was awarded a Champion School of Sanctuary.

Teacher competence

- Our teachers are provided with information on available CPD in the area of sustainability. All relevant information received from the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (www.ISSN.ie) and the quarterly ESD Newsletter are shared with staff.
- 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

- Through regular staff training we prioritise the practice of peer to peer and cooperative learning activities in class
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects, e.g., the Gaisce and Meitheal programmes, LCA programmes, through Curriculum based assessments in CSPE where they do community/civic project work.
- Our school has a Student Council who are involved in a range of school decisions and activities including, equal and inclusive practices, the raising of student queries and issues and community links with other local school councils.
- All 4th year students have the opportunity to participate in local community action on sustainability projects:-
 - Tidy Towns
 - performances in the local care home
 - sports coaching with local primary schools. Geal programme. Future leaders
 - Horticulture in FDYS

- Our schools are involved in project based learning around real-life problems in the local community such as in-school and community based fund raising for local charities, e.g., *St. Vincent de Paul*.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects e.g. BTYSE, 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 Og, other local community organisations working in this area
- Our schools are involved in project-based learning around real-life problems in the local community

Cross Curriculum

Units of learning to include elements of sustainability and the SDG's in relative subjects (particular focus on: Geography, English, CSPE, SPHE, Ag Science). New Junior Cycle Curriculum includes sustainability modules in Geography (Climate change, Coasts, Rivers, Tertiary Economic Activities, Energy), CSPE (SDG, responsible citizenship, society), SPHE (sustainable living, minding myself, diet and lifestyle

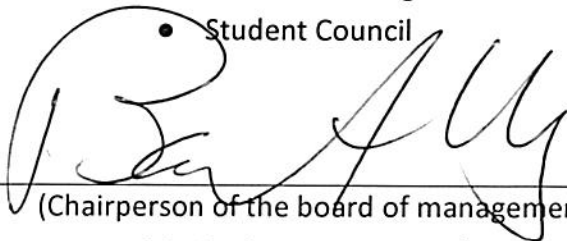
Each year group from 1st through to 6h Year experiences elements of sustainability throughout the majority of their subject choices.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy. They are responsible for the implementation of the above initiatives:

- Teaching staff
- Students
- Green School Committee
- Groundskeeper
- Parents/guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Student Council

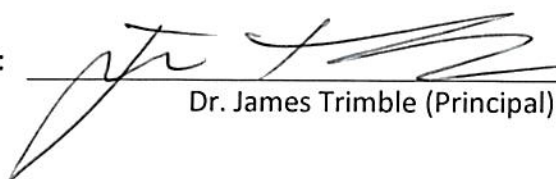
Signed:


(Chairperson of the board of management)
Ms. Barbara Anne Murphy

Date:

June 4th 2026

Signed:


Dr. James Trimble (Principal)

Date:

04/06/2026