SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

MAY 2026

St. Brendan's Community School

St. Brendan's Community School Mission Statement

"Our aim is to create a caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being."

Scope

The following policy applies to our Whole School Community. We encourage the active involvement of all stakeholders in developing a coherent approach to this important aspect of school development. The policy is aligned with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate 2025

Rationale

This policy is guided by several key considerations.

A clean, safe and environmentally responsible school environment supports the wellbeing of students, staff and the wider school community. Climate change presents significant challenges, and schools have an important role to play in reducing emissions, increasing the use of renewable energy and promoting sustainable practices.

The school is also required to comply with Irish and EU climate legislation, including the School Sector Climate Action Mandate 2025. In addition, responsible management of resources such as energy, water and materials helps reduce operational costs and supports good stewardship of school resources.

Promoting sustainability also encourages a sense of pride and responsibility within the school community, helping students and staff to develop environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Establish a Climate Action and Sustainability Team within the school.
- Support national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Integrate sustainability and environmental awareness into the curriculum where appropriate.
- Promote Reduce–Reuse–Recycle practices across the school community.
- Minimise the environmental impact of school activities and operations.

Policy Implementation

St. Brendan's Community School will implement this policy through the following actions:

Student Voice
Students will be provided with opportunities to participate in and contribute to sustainability initiatives within the school. Their views will be considered in the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainability policies and activities.

Governance
The school will prepare an annual Climate Action Progress Report and will report annual energy usage through the Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system as required.

Energy Conservation
The school will continue to improve energy efficiency through measures such as LED lighting upgrades, smart energy controls, ICT energy-saving measures and the use of Solar PV systems.

Raising Awareness
The school will promote sustainable development and awareness of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 13: Climate Action, across relevant subject areas.

Heating and Decarbonisation
Where possible, the school will seek to improve insulation and energy efficiency throughout the campus in order to reduce heating requirements and overall energy consumption.

Recycling and Waste Management
The school will maintain effective recycling practices and seek to reduce paper use through increased digitisation. Opportunities to expand composting initiatives will also be explored.

Transport
Students, staff and families will be encouraged to use sustainable transport options where possible, including walking, cycling, public transport and carpooling.

Procurement
The school will follow green public procurement principles when purchasing goods and services where feasible.

Biodiversity
The school will seek to enhance biodiversity on the school grounds through planting initiatives and the development of green spaces.

Subject Department Planning
Subject departments will incorporate sustainability themes and environmental awareness into their planning where appropriate.

Achieving Objectives

In order to achieve the objectives of this policy, the school will:

- Involve caretaking staff in sustainability initiatives across the school.
- Continue to participate in programmes such as Green Schools, which provide practical supports for climate action and environmental awareness.
- Engage with Education for Sustainable Development initiatives such as ECO UNESCO, WorldWise Global Schools, and the Take 1 Programme.
- Promote reuse and recycling practices across the school and highlight environmental themes through assemblies and school activities.
- Raise awareness of sustainability initiatives through the school newsletter, website and social media platforms.
- Strengthen environmental education within both curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Encourage students to participate in environmental competitions and exhibitions such as the Young Environmentalist Awards.
- Communicate achievements and progress in sustainability to students, staff and parents.
- Apply environmentally responsible criteria, including energy efficiency, in any future building or refurbishment projects.
- Continue to expand the use of Solar PV panels where possible.
- Where paper must be purchased for printing and photocopying, aim to procure 100% recycled paper where feasible.
- Ensure that food service contracts include measures to reduce food waste, with a focus on prevention and proper segregation.
- Work towards progressively reducing and eliminating single-use items within the school and at school events.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated through the following indicators:

- The maintenance of a clean, litter-free school environment.
- The achievement of additional Green Schools Flags where possible.
- Reduced expenditure on electricity, heating fuel, water and waste disposal.

Ratification, Implementation and Review

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 28/5/26
- This policy has been made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. It is also published on the School Website and the School App. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron upon request.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every two years. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. The review will also be published on the School Website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: Mary Loughnane

Joan Hogan

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 28/5/26

Signed:

John Kennedy

Principal/Secretary of Board of Management

Date: 28/5/26

Date of next review: _____