



## Sustainability Policy Statement

### Introduction:

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 of 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 Ballinode Community College.

### Purpose:

The purpose of this Sustainability Policy Statement (“the Statement”) is to outline how Ballinode Community College 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 Ballinode Community College. 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 to cultivate a nurturing environment where every student is empowered to excel academically, socially and personally, fostering a lifelong love for learning and a commitment to making positive contributions to society. Our school's mission is to provide a safe healthy environment in which all students are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Ballinode Community College is an ETB school so therefore our values are deeply rooted in excellence in education, care, equality, community and respect. We strive to uphold these core principles in all aspects of school life, ensuring that every member of our community feels valued, supported and respected. Furthermore, at Ballinode Community College, we are committed to realising our school's vision by integrating sustainable development principles into every aspect of our educational practices. Our commitment aligns closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). With our core values of care, equality, community, excellence in education, and respect as our guiding principles, we strive to empower our students to become informed global citizens capable of shaping a sustainable future.

### **Whole School Approach to Sustainability:**

- Ballinode Community College 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 is beginning to recognise Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme, and we aim for this to be co-ordinated effectively in our school.
- Opportunities to introduce and address sustainability in the classroom, across all subjects will be introduced and increased.
- All our school policies are aligned to some of the principles of sustainable development.
- We have begun to compile resources to assist in the teaching of sustainability and we aim to develop these to ensure they are sufficient at all levels and are relevant to our curriculum.
- Our school will endeavour to carry out self-evaluation of our teaching practices in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school is a member of the Irish Schools Sustainability Network.
- Our school keeps up to date with developments in ESD including by being registered for the quarterly ESD 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 and have been awarded a green flag in the area of litter and waste. We are currently working towards achieving a green flag award for water.
- Our school engaged with Junk Kouture in the area of sustainable development.
- Our school has a recycling policy in place which we aim to expand it to make it more comprehensive and cohesive. We use some recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible but aim to increase this to a higher level aiming to ensure our resources are produced and utilised taking into consideration their impact of the environment.
- Our school endeavours to have policies in place in respect of water conservation, waste and recycling practices and energy.
- Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment, for example, water fountains and bottle refilling stations for staff and students and the reuse and recycling of class materials when and where possible.
- We are currently developing and improving our information displays on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places.
- Our school promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
- Our school endeavours to have a small, enclosed area that is used for outdoor learning. In the future we would like to promote and facilitates more outdoor learning for the wider school population. 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 on our grounds. Students have made and decorated bird boxes. We also have trees and pollinator friendly planted areas.
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, walking, cycling and scotting to school. The school have installed covered bicycle and e-scooter racks and also encourage students to make use of public transport and reduce our carbon footprint.
- Our school engages with the SEAI Energy in Education resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption. Our school has implemented

strategies to recycle and conserve various materials with designated bins across the school and to conserve paper by adopting digital communication platforms/electronic documentation to reduce paper consumption.

- Our school also engages with programmes that support and promote Environmental education, for example, ECO UNESCO and Junk Kouture. We are aiming to engage with the World Wise Global Schools programme next year.

#### **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 community. We would like to expand on this to prepare them to be part of a global community.
- Our school engages with ECO UNESCO on the YEA programme and Education for Sustainability climate literacy programme. We hope to include Global Citizenship Education programmes such as World Wise Global Schools or other programmes working in this area in the near future.
- The needs of all students in recognition of differentiated physical or learning abilities, are taken into consideration and accommodated.

#### **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, for example, 'Clothes Swap' and 'Junk Kouture', through our democratic ethos and student council. The 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 through organising and coordinating the Bake sales during the year and other fundraising events, the TY mini company, Junk Kouture and LCA programmes. 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 in the area of sustainability in mind.
- Our school educates on, and promotes the principles of, a circular economy.

### **Cultural Sustainability:**

- Ballinode Community College welcomes children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds in an environment that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live.
- 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. In recent years more students of different nationalities have enrolled in our school. Our student council are involved in raising awareness of diversity within the school.

### **Teacher Competence:**

- Our teachers are supported in building their own capacity in the area of ESD.
- It is hoped that staff competent in this area would share their expertise with other members of staff and facilitation of this would be encouraged.

### **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, as well as Gaisce and the TY Enterprise programme.
- Our school has a Student Council and a Green Schools Committee who have an active voice in the development of our school and are involved in decisions about litter and waste management, energy usage and water conservation in our school.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects, for example, Comhairle nan Oig and Sligo Tidy Towns which involves cleaning up the area around the school and local community as well as a local beach clean.

**Goals:**

The self-assessment tool questionnaire highlighted specific areas where immediate focus was needed and so we have included these areas in our goals below.

We would also like to achieve our Green Flag for Water by 2027.

**Whole School:**

- Adopting a whole school approach to sustainability using this policy.
- Encourage more cross-curricular connections with ESD.
- Include the principles of sustainable development in our school policies.

**Environmental Sustainability:**

- Create prominent and accessible displays on information on sustainability and sustainable practices in our school.
- Engage with the SEAI's education and youth programme.
- Review and improve our procurement practices to ensure consideration of their impact on the environment.
- Expand our outdoor learning possibilities with a dedicated area on the grounds.

**Social Sustainability:**

- Engage with Global Citizenship education programme like World Wise Global Schools.

**Economic Sustainability:**

- Aim to improve the circular economy of our school with particular emphasis on the uniform.

**Teacher Competence:**

- Increase awareness of sustainability within our current curriculum.
- Expand and highlight resources for all subjects to encourage and improve on embedding sustainability in our teaching practice.

**Student Competence:**

- Increase the global aspect of our students' actions linking to more international projects/programmes.

**Implementation and Review:**

This statement was implemented on 27/05/2026. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed every 2 years. 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.

This policy was presented to the Board of Management on 27th May 2026 for ratification at their next meeting in June 2026.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairperson of the BOM*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Principal*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_