



St Kieran's College
Secondary School
Kilkenny

Sustainability Policy Statement

School Philosophy and Mission Statement

St Kieran's College, as Ireland's oldest all-boys Catholic Secondary School, continues its founding aim of the pursuit of real excellence in education and formation, in the light of the Gospel, so as to allow all our students to realise the fullness of their potential.

Academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally our students are encouraged to strive for all that is possible in the relentless pursuit of perfecting their individual gifts and talents.

In so doing they bring to life the joy intended by our motto, "Hiems Transiit", for themselves, those they love and the community where they will live, serve and lead.

Background

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 \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2022-06-27-school-sector-climate-action-mandate/)

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 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 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

The vision for the college is clearly focused on providing students with high-quality educational experiences and outcomes.

This mission directly links to Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 16 (Strong (and inclusive) Institution).

Our school's values are a recognition of personal worth and dignity, a commitment to truth, self-discipline, and responsibility, an appreciation for striving to do one's best, a willingness to collaborate with others, with respect and tolerance for different perspectives. These values can be directly linked to SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) and 11 (sustainable communities)

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.
 - 1) Establishing a Transition Year Environmental and Sustainability Studies class to promote and increase awareness of sustainable practices in the school community, local community and at home.
 - 2) The Art department will be involved in decorating reusable plant containers for our school garden and decorating our sustainability noticeboard.
 - 3) The Woodwork department will be involved in supplying tools and modifying recyclable or environmentally-friendly material to make furniture for our outdoor class.
 - 4) The Business department will be involved in identifying some local organizations that work in the sustainability/environmental area to establish connections
 - 5) Implementing the Take1 Programme involves cooperating with all JC subject departments to identify and promote learning outcomes relating to sustainability during Take1 week or May Day.
- 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 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/>

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. Our school have been awarded a flag for the following themes; Litter and Waste, Energy, Water. We are currently in the process of working towards a flag in relation to Travel. Our school has a Green Team comprising staff and students.
- Our school engages with SEAI Education & Youth Programme's curriculum linked energy Resources, pupil Workshops and teacher CPD. e.g. Teachers have engaged in Take1 Programme training (October/March 2025) and Teach Nature CPD day in Árd Scoil na Mara (April 2025). <https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/schools>
- Our school engages with the [SEAI Energy in Education](#) resources and energy management tools in order to monitor and report energy consumption. This is carried out in our Environmental and Sustainability Studies TY Programme.
- Our school engages with the Take1 Programme in the area of Sustainable Development and Environmental Education.
- Our school has a comprehensive and cohesive recycling policy in place, and uses recycled and recyclable materials whenever possible. We have installed multiple bottle return bins around the school in the year 2024/25, with proceeds going towards both charities and Transition Year activities.
- Our school resources are procured and utilised taking into consideration their impact on the environment.
- Our school environment clearly displays information on sustainability and sustainable practices in prominent and accessible places. Third year posters have been on display since October 2024 around the halls of the school to increase awareness in conjunction with JC Science syllabus.
- Our school actively promotes and fosters an attitude of care and responsibility towards the natural environment.
- Our school promotes and facilitates outdoor learning. A polycarbonate greenhouse was ordered and apple trees planted to begin the formation of our school garden.
- Our school promotes and facilitates biodiversity. A biodiversity strip will be installed in our school garden with a meadow and wildflowers.
- Our school promotes sustainable transport including where possible, promoting walking and cycling within the school through our Active Schools (walkway) and Mobility Management initiatives:
- Mobility Management: A Walkability Audit was carried out in March 2025 by the Green Schools team to assess whether modifications or changes could be made within the grounds of the school and promotion of safe areas around the surrounding area to drop students off to promote and encourage an incentive to walk to school. Results and findings will be notified to the Board of Management and parents when received.
- Green Schools Mobility survey is a 5-year longitudinal survey monitoring staff and students and will be made available to Kilkenny County Council.

<https://greenschoolsireland.org/saferoutestoschool/>

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. Outreach Training programme where a group of Transition Years are trained to assist basic training for primary school children in a 'Cycle Champions' programme.
- 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. (A grant will be applied for to go towards the installation of a polycarbonate greenhouse for our garden and a hall display to increase awareness of SDGs and Sustainability in April 2025)
- 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 in the area of conflict resolution, in order 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. E.g. Student Council involvement, Active Schools whole school survey.
- Students are provided with opportunities to learn small business skills. E.g. Young Entrepreneur programme.
- Our school's fund-raising activities reflect and actively demonstrate ethical and sustainable principles. E.g. Use of bottle return bins implemented in 2024/25.
- 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

- 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 in the area of ESD. Emails with CPD opportunities are sent to relevant staff and on a sustainability noticeboard.

Student Competence

- Our students are encouraged and supported to participate in peer to peer learning activities. May Day and Take1 week as part of the Take1 Programme facilitates awareness and implementation of SDGs in all subjects.
- Our students are encouraged and supported to undertake action orientated projects e.g. Young Scientist competition, Young Social Innovators.
- Our school has a Student Council, Sustainability Team and Green Schools Team who are involved in decisions about student voice, staff engagement and Green School initiatives to ensure a whole school approach to Sustainability is adopted.
- Our students are encouraged to volunteer for local community action on sustainability projects. An active, cooperative relationship exists with our school, Kilkenny County Council and other local organisations to ensure students in Transition Year, the Green Schools team and otherwise are given opportunities to help in their locality through initiatives such as Enrichment.
- Our schools are involved in project based learning around real-life problems in the local community. Engaging in the Bórd na Móna post-primary schools recycling competition gives students a broad area to create awareness and solutions to upcycling materials.

Goals

- Our school are introducing and establishing an Environmental and Sustainability Studies class in Transition Year in 2025/26.
- Our school aims to achieve a Green Schools Flag for Travel by 2026.
- We aim to establish an outdoor classroom with a polycarbonate greenhouse, school garden and biodiversity strip in 2025/26 to promote lifelong sustainable habits for all within the school community.

Implementation and review

This Statement was implemented on 21/5/25. To ensure our school strives to improve its work within sustainability and climate action, the Statement will be reviewed annually.