

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Glanmire Community College



Mission Statement

Glanmire Community College strives to be a happy, safe, caring and inclusive Christian community that promotes quality teaching and learning in an environment of mutual respect.

Introduction

In support of the Government Climate Action Plan 2021, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) guidelines, Glanmire Community College is committed to lead by example in this ambitious transition which commits Ireland to a legally binding document of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2050 and a reduction of 51% by 2030. We are determined to educate our students towards a more sustainable path, creating a cleaner, greener economy and society, and protect us from the devastating consequences of climate change.

Effective use of this policy will ensure pupils are educated about environmental concerns and the importance of living sustainably to meet their needs but not jeopardise the needs of future generations. We encourage both pupils and staff to think about the environment and how their actions will impact upon their local surroundings, as well as the global environment.

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1. Climate Action Plan 2021

Public sector leading by example - climate action mandate.

Our Targets

- Reduce GHG emissions by 51% in 2030.
- Increase the improvement in energy efficiency in the public sector from the 33% target in 2020 to 50% by 2030
- Put in place a Climate Action Roadmap by the end of 2022

Our Staff and Students

- Establish and resource Green Teams, reporting to senior management, to become integrated drivers of sustainability in every public sector body.
- Nominate a member of the Board of Management as the Climate and Sustainability Champion with responsibility for implementing and reporting on the mandate.
- Incorporate appropriate climate action and sustainability training (technical and behavioural) into learning and development strategies for staff.
- Organise staff workshops (at least annually) to engage on climate issues, including a focus on decreasing the organisation's carbon footprint.

Our Way of Working

- Report GHG emissions and sustainability activities in the annual report.
- Review any paper-based processes, and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach.
- Achieve formal environmental accreditation for public sector bodies, such as ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standard) or ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), with a view to achieving EMAS ISO 14001 (Eco Management and Audit Scheme).

Our Buildings and Transport

- Create bicycle friendly buildings for employees and visitors, by putting bicycle parking in place by 2022 – which is secure, accessible, and simple for cyclists to recognise and use.
- Display an up-to-date Display Energy Certificate in the school building that is open to the public to clearly show energy use.
- Public sector buildings will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023.

2. Green Team

Composition and Selection

The Green Team (Green Schools Committee) should be as representative of the whole school as possible. It should primarily be made up of students (making up the majority of the committee members whenever possible) and could also incorporate a combination of teachers, Senior management or a member of the Board of Management, non-teaching staff (particularly the school caretaker), parents, and any other interested and applicable members of the local community.

Regarding size and operation, it should be remembered that there is no set formula or rules for a successful committee. Often the committee is made up of volunteers from the student body as well as teachers and other interested members of the community. It is important to ensure that the student members of the committee are as representative as possible of the different classes and age groups in the school. This will also ensure greater continuity in the programme over the years.

3. Green Flag School

Glanmire Community College is actively engaged and dedicated to the Green-Schools programme. Green-Schools is Ireland's leading environmental management and education programme for schools promoting long-term, whole-school action for the environment which is a student-led programme with involvement from the wider community. The programme is operated and coordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland) in partnership with local authorities and corporate sponsors.

This school was awarded its Green Flag on litter and waste in 2020. Green Flags are earned and presented under the Green-Schools International environmental education award scheme. The Green-Schools programme (internationally known as "Eco-Schools") promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment.

The aim of Green-Schools is to increase students' awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and in the wider community. A seven-step process sees schools tackling the issues of waste and litter, water, energy, transport and more. Student involvement is a priority, and the award must be re-applied for every two years.

The Green Schools 7 step programme is outlined below:

1. **Green-Schools Committee:** The Green-Schools Committee aims to direct and address all phases of the Green-Schools Programme. It is the driving force of the programme and should ensure that all of the Seven Steps are carried out
2. **Completing Environmental Reviews:** The aim of the review is to identify the initial situation within the school regarding the current environmental theme.
3. **Implementing Action Plans:** The Action Plan aims to identify goals and provide a structured timetable for the reduction of the environmental impacts identified in the review.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring your Green-Schools programme will ensure that progress towards targets is checked, amendments made where necessary and success celebrated.

5. **Curriculum Work:** The aim is to link the theme of Litter and Waste to the Curriculum Work going on in the school.
6. **Informing and Involving:** To spread the Green-Schools message throughout the whole school and the wider community through ongoing publicity and 'Days of Action'.
7. **Green Code:** To state the objectives that demonstrate the school's commitment to environmentally friendly actions.

Green Schools Targets/themes:

- Litter and Waste (2018-2020)
- Water (2021-23)
- Energy
- Travel
- Biodiversity
- Global Citizenship – Litter & Waste
- Global Citizenship – Energy
- Global Citizenship – Marine Environment

4. Safe routes to Schools

Glanmire Community College has been selected for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme which was initiated in 2021 and estimated to be completed in the term 2022/23. The SRTS Programme was developed in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Green-Schools in 2020 as a response to the need to support schools to increase walking and cycling to school.

Aims of the SRTS Programme:

- Improve safety at the school gate by providing 'front of school' treatments to alleviate congestion and improve access;
- Improve access routes to school by improving walking and cycling infrastructure; and
- Increase the number of students who cycle to school by expanding the amount of cycle parking

The school is dedicated to ensuring the successful implementation of this programme and the promotion of a sustainable mobility policy as outlined in the climate action plan 2021. Once this work is completed the green team will be responsible for the promotion of walking and cycling to school with a safer and more accessible infrastructure at school exit and entry points.

5. Sustainable Development Goals

Ireland's National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2014-2020) aims to ensure that our education system contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the 'what'), the key dispositions and skills (the 'how') and the values (the 'why') that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future.

The Department of Education is committed to contributing to the national effort to implement the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and sees Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as key to achieving these. Over the lifetime of this Statement of Strategy the department will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" through the SDG National Implementation Plan.

Glanmire Community College is committed to embedding the SDGs into curriculum planning across all departments throughout the school with particular focus on the Junior Cycle framework principles with explicit ESD relevance. We aim to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding in biodiversity and sustainability, by embedding the topics within many areas of our curriculum. Individual department curriculums will outline how the topics are embedded into the school's curriculum and reviewed by subject coordinators and the greens school coordinator annually.

6. Building energy

Glanmire Community College has completed the Energy in Education training course with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), which included a mentoring programme with an energy advisor and underwent an energy assessment to develop and implement an energy saving plan for the School.

Energy efficiency measures undertaken on schools are unique, primarily due to the occupancy hours and nature of use. Typically, 60-70% of energy consumption in a school is expended on heating demand, with 30-40% on electrical demand (lighting and services).

The school is dedicated to improve energy rating of the school building based on the recommended energy efficiency measures below:

- Insulate the building - including cavity wall insulation, dry lining, external insulation, attic insulation, roof insulation, and air-tightness.
- Implement building fabric measures - including doors and windows.
- Upgrade mechanical systems - including boiler replacement, zoning of heating systems, heating controls within each classroom, pipe insulation, boiler controls and water conservation.
- Install a Building Management System (BMS).
- Upgrade the electrics - primarily lighting system upgrades (classrooms to T5 or LED, common areas to LED).

7. Circular Economy measures and Green Public Procurement

Green Public Procurement (GPP) is a process where public authorities seek to source goods, services or works with a reduced environmental impact. The Government of Ireland's annual public sector purchasing accounts for 10% to 12% of Ireland's GDP, a large part of economic activity and demand.

This provides Ireland's public sector with significant influence to stimulate the provision of more resource-efficient, less polluting goods, services and works within the marketplace.

The public sector has a responsibility to promote green procurement, in order to support Ireland's environmental and wider sustainable development objectives. GPP is recognised internationally as an effective means for public administrations to manage the balance between cost effectiveness and sustainable development. Citizens need to be sure that what is purchased on their behalf has

minimal harmful effects on the environment and society. At the same time, these goods, services and works must represent both short-term and long-term value for money.

The Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy is Ireland's first national circular economy strategy. The Strategy is a key addition to the Government's drive to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and to get on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as per commitments in the Programme for Government and the Climate Act 2021.

Meeting climate targets requires a transformation in the way we produce and use goods. The transition away from fossil fuels and energy efficiency measures can only address 55% of our emissions. The remaining 45% comes from making things.

Glanmire Community College will adopt a circular economy strategy to promote positive environmental, economic and social impacts, through procurement measures and school planning. We will devote time to ensuring product procurement is done in the most sustainable way, and ensure that produce bought is cost efficient and sourced from within Ireland and locally sourced where possible.

8. Recycling & Waste Management

The school understands that, under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 littering is a criminal offense. It also understands that fines may be incurred where individuals deliberately litter the premises.

Every member of the school community has a duty to dispose of waste properly. Specifically, individuals are responsible for:

- Putting litter in a bin.
- Using the appropriate recycling bins.
- Using resources thoughtfully.
- Reusing resources where possible.
- Assisting the caretakers, cleaners and green schools committee with the cleanliness of the premises.

Glanmire Community College appoint a green schools committee consisting of staff members and pupils, who are responsible for:

- Promoting awareness of anti-littering throughout the school
- Monitoring the school's anti-littering procedures.
- Listening and responding to questions from the school committee.

- The school raises awareness of anti-littering amongst pupils and staff through dedicated class tutorials, curriculum planning, staff training days and additional resources, such as the school website, notice boards and social media channels.

Glanmire Community College will reduce the amount of waste we produce by:

- Printing and photocopying, when necessary, should be done on both sides of paper whenever possible.
- Only print documents when it is essential and use digital versions anywhere possible such as google classroom and shared drives.
- Communication is carried out through digital media platforms only; emails for staff; parents updates through the school website; text messaging; social media channels; google classroom for teaching & Learning; and VSware for reporting.
- Composting all food waste in designated recycling stations throughout the school building - with a target of reducing food waste quantities by 51% before 2030.
- Making sure that all waste office equipment is correctly disposed of via re-use or recycling schemes.
- Where possible, laminating frequently used documents, protecting them from damage and prolonging their use.
- Pupils/staff are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles into school, and avail of the installed digital water dispensers
- Any disposable plastic bottles brought into school will be recycled or reused with a plan to eliminate single use plastics entirely from the school.
- There are clearly labeled recycling stations located throughout the school for recycling, food waste and general waste.
- The school will clearly display the correct procedure for recycling and waste management with a target of increasing recycling by 70% by 2030.
- Green school committee members will partake and organise daily/weekly litter picking around the school grounds as well as litter picking in the local community in collaboration with local today towns and local authorities.

10. E-Books

Glanmire community College is dedicated to providing electronic versions of textbooks where possible in place of a physical hardcopy version. Some subject departments have opted to only use digital versions of textbooks starting in the academic year 2022/2023. This process will be

monitored and reviewed for a further increase in uptake across all departments. The advantages of using eBooks are listed below:

- Learning Is Improved by Using Technology
- Differentiated Learning
- Easy Accessibility
- Storage Convenience
- Reduce school bag size and weight.
- Easy To Sync with Audiobooks
- Ease Of Searching
- Economical
- Environmentally Friendly
- Beneficial For Those Who Have Trouble Reading
- Accommodates Remote Learning

Action Plan Timeline

Actions	Achievement Milestone	Persons Responsible
51% Reduction in Green House Gas Emissions of School Building	2022-2030	Green Team Plant & Facilities Coordinator School Management
Improve building energy efficiency from 30% target in 2020 to 50%	2030	Green Team Plant & Facilities Coordinator School Management
Climate & Sustainability training workshops for all staff	September – December 2022 (Ongoing thereafter)	Green Team School Management
Bicycle Friendly Parking with improved access	Summer 2022	An- Taisce Green Team Coordinator
School Building Energy Certificate on public display	September 2022	SEAI Accredited Engineer Plant & Facilities Coordinator Green Team
Establish a Green Team, Staff & Students	Completed in 2019	Green Team Leader
Select a Board of management Representative as Climate & Sustainability Champion	March 2022	Board of Management
Achieve Litter & Waste Green flag	September 2021	Green Team
Achieve Water Conservation Green flag	March-April 2023	Green Team

Complete safe Routes to School Construction development & Works (Safe Cycle & Walking Access)	2022-2023	Green Team Leader An Taisce School Management
UN Sustainable Development Goals incorporated into school curriculum across all departments	September 2022 Onwards	Green Team School Management Subject coordinators
Recycling & Waste training workshops staff & Students	April – May 2022	Student Green schools Committee Green Team
Reduce School Food waste by 51%	2030	Green Team Caretaking Staff All Staff
Increase recycling by 70%	2030	Green Team Caretaking Staff All Staff
Install a building Management System to manage building energy	2022-2023	Plant & Facilities coordinator Green Team School Management
Implement Pilot Scheme for introducing Ebooks	September 2022	Graphics & Wood technology coordinators Green Team Book Loan Scheme coordinator

Policy Ratification

The implementation of this Environmental Sustainability Policy will be monitored periodically by members of the Green Schools Committee and Senior Management. This policy will be reviewed periodically by representatives of the Board of Management, staff, students and parents of the College.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (School Principal)

Date: _____

Date of Next Review: _____