



St. Columba's College

Sustainability Policy Statement & Framework

2026-2027

Person Responsible for updating policy: The Foundation Manager

Background

Schools in Ireland have a Climate Action Mandate under which they are required to adopt a Sustainability Policy Statement - see [here](#).

Overall School Sector Targets, as set out in the mandate, are to reduce energy related greenhouse gas emissions by 51% and to improve energy efficiency in the overall school sector by 50% by 2030.

This work is guided by the School Sector Climate Action Roadmap [here](#) and supported by the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030, which provides a Sustainability Policy Statement template.



Purpose of our Sustainability Policy Statement

The purpose of the Sustainability Policy Statement is to outline how our school promotes sustainability and climate action, through our strategic decisions, daily operations and educational activities.

The Estate and Sustainability Committee (“the Committee”) are the owners of this policy which has been approved by the Board of Management (“the BoM”) at St. Columba’s College.

Engagement with the wider stakeholder group will include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents
- Local community

Definition of Sustainability at St. Columba’s College

To cultivate a sustainability mindset so that the whole College can thrive and develop without depleting the natural resources essential for future generations.

Scope

Sustainability at St Columba’s College is a whole-community responsibility, applying to all stakeholders listed above. The BoM and the Fellows will ensure that governance and decision-making align with the Statement.

The Framework will act as a roadmap, providing structure, context, and direction. Given the breadth of the agenda, the approach will be phased, realistic, and capacity-building, focusing initially on practical, achievable steps that collectively drive long-term impact.

Proposed Framework Focus Areas

1. Energy
2. Water
3. Waste
4. Biodiversity



What is included in the roadmap:

1. Conduct a Sustainability Audit

To inform meaningful target-setting, baseline measurement is required. While energy-use monitoring exists, further monitoring will include:

- Water consumption
- Waste and food waste
- Biodiversity indicators

2. Set Clear Objectives and Vision

The Committee will define the College's sustainability vision and objectives, to include:

- Reducing materials and behaviours with negative environmental impact
- Conserving energy and water
- Reducing fossil fuel consumption
- Minimising waste through reduce/re-use/recycle
- Enhancing biodiversity across the estate

For each framework area, we will set:

- Scope/goals/targets
- Ownership (role holders)
- Monitoring and reporting processes and frequency

Sustainability Areas and Responsibilities

1. Environmental Sustainability

Owner: Committee plus designated SLT.

Goals:

- Reduce operating costs through efficient energy use
- Conserve water and reduce its environmental impact
- Reduce overall waste production (with Green team/ Pupil Council and Baxter Storey for food waste)
- Maximise recycling (staff-led)
- Reduce unnecessary purchasing (Bursar and Baxter Storey)
- Enhance biodiversity through active estate management and PA lead



2. Financial Sustainability

Owner: Finance Committee

Goals:

- Ensure energy-efficiency investments have reasonable payback periods
- Invest in green technologies (solar, heat pumps, battery storage)
- Leverage SEAI and other funding supports
- Continue to promote a sustainable College as a Foundation pillar
- Diversify revenue streams (facility rental, selling excess energy)
- Make data-driven sustainability-aligned investment decisions

3. Educational Sustainability

Owner: Warden and SLT

Goals:

- Embed sustainability across teaching, learning, and school culture
- Recognise Education for Sustainable Development as a cross-curricular theme
- Align policies with sustainable development principles when they are reviewed
- Provide sufficient teaching resources to assist the teaching of sustainability
- Join the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN)
- Establish a Green Team through the Pupil Council to help deliver the sustainability roadmap
- Renew Green Flag status in the 2026–2027 academic year (last achieved in 2019)
- Utilise our mentor within the local Sustainable Energy Committee for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown

Specific Projects

Energy & Water Efficiency – Operational

Owner: E&S Committee

- Update lighting register; schedule LED upgrades (classrooms / dorms / multi-purpose rooms) under Summer Works
- Fit water-saving taps/showers during bathroom upgrades
- Review pressurised system pump pressures
- Assess feasibility of installing water meters on DHW feeds for improved monitoring



Energy & Water – Student-led Projects

Owner: Pupils, incl. TY

- Use data to identify when heating is required
- Propose electricity and heating reduction measures
- Deploy WiFi temperature sensors to identify inefficiencies
- Build awareness of hot water consumption patterns
- Explore ways to gather water-usage data (showers, comparisons across dorms)
- Recommend behavioural actions (shorter showers, turning off taps, etc.)

Capital Projects

Owner: The Fellows

- Convert Kennedy Building into two classrooms, including an Innovation Centre / Sustainability Hub and Armstrong Building
- Install secondary glazing in listed buildings
- Review insulation and building fabric, supported by energy-use data
- Identify phased sustainable heating options with best ROI
- Install additional solar + battery storage for Sports Hall and Hockey Lights
- Commission study on additional solar arrays and potential integration with heat pumps and evening lighting loads
- Implement building-level thermostat and radiator-valve control technologies
- Investigate wind turbine feasibility
- Investigate district heating solutions, including income opportunities.