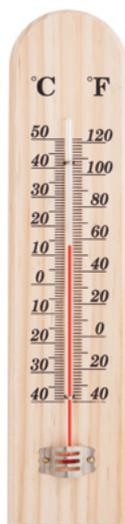


Eco-Schools Northern Ireland



HANDBOOK

A complete guide to implementing
the Eco-Schools programme



KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL



ECO-SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTIONS

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

**KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL**

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is an environmental charity dedicated to making Northern Ireland a cleaner and more pleasant place in which to live through running campaigns, surveys and other initiatives. It also operates the international environmental education programmes - Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment and Blue Flag Beaches as well as the Clean Coast Programme and Green Coast and Seaside Awards for clean beaches in Northern Ireland.

It produces information on the cleanliness of Northern Ireland that is used to direct resources to tackle the most prominent environmental quality issues.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is best known for its campaigns and public information on litter and has also campaigned on a number of other anti-social behaviour issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and neighbourhood noise.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful endorses the government's wider aim to deliver sustainable development. This work falls into three main areas: campaigning to get public action, the delivery of programmes to enable partners to deliver action in the community and the production of research and survey results to measure the quality of the local environment.

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland



Eco-Schools is the world's largest environmental education programme. It is a pupil-led initiative with the aim to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of a school. Eco-Schools endeavours to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible attitudes and

commitment, both at home and in the wider community. Its participatory approach and combination of learning and action make it an ideal way for schools to embark on a meaningful path to improving the environments of schools and their local communities, and of influencing the lives of young people, school staff, families, local authorities, NGOs, and all other bodies involved in this vitally important area of work.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs



Eco-Schools Northern Ireland is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The overall aims are to protect and conserve Northern Ireland's natural heritage and built environment, to control pollution and to promote the wider appreciation of the environment and best environmental practices.

The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)



FEE is a non-government, non-profit organisation promoting sustainable development through environmental education. FEE is mainly active through five environmental education programmes: Blue Flag, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment, Learning about Forests and Green Key. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is a full member of FEE and National Operator of FEE Programmes in Northern Ireland (Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment and Blue Flag).

Live Here Love Here



Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, is calling on everyone across Northern Ireland to show their support for Live Here Love Here, a campaign which has been created to encourage the public to embrace their civic pride and take personal responsibility towards the environment and their local community by creating positive change through Clean Ups, Green Ups and Spruce Ups.

CONTACTS

Eco-Schools, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Bridge House, 2 Paulett Avenue, Belfast BT5 4HD

Telephone 028 9073 6920 **Email** eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org **Website** www.eco-schoolsni.org

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This Eco-Schools Handbook provides information on the practical implementation of the Eco-Schools programme in Northern Ireland. The Handbook is divided into 3 main sections:

Section 1 looks at the main aims, objectives and themes of the Eco-Schools programme, examines both international and national aspects of the programme and how the programme may benefit your school.

Section 2 looks at the seven steps involved in implementing the programme, and also provides examples for each step from schools in Northern Ireland.

Section 3 provides information on how and when awards should be applied for and renewed. Important additional elements regarding the Green flag assessment are also provided along with detailed criteria to be met to achieve awards.

Appendices includes templates to support with the implementation of the programme and results from research.

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WHAT IS ECO-SCHOOLS?

Most young people care deeply about environmental issues, and wish to make a positive change in the environment around them. The Eco-Schools programme provides an ideal way for fostering environmental awareness in the entire school in a way that links to many curriculum subjects.

The programme is based on the EU EMAS (Eco-Management and Auditing System) approach and encompasses four principle aspects:

Eco-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 your school. The Eco-Schools programme is run by FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education). Eco-Schools operates in nearly 60 countries world-wide sharing the same methodology and concept, and is identified by the Eco-Schools logo and Green Flag.

Eco-Schools is holistic. It aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of a school. This should include the students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, as well as the local authority, the media and local businesses. Eco-Schools endeavours to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible attitudes and commitment, both at home and in the wider community. Its participatory approach and combination of learning and action make it an ideal way for schools to embark on a meaningful path to improving the environments of schools and their local communities, and of influencing the lives of young people, school staff, families, local authorities, NGOs, and all other bodies involved in this vitally important area of work.

DOWNPATRICK NURSERY SCHOOL have successfully maintained Green Flag status since they were awarded the world's first Green Flag on 15 June 1994.



Eco-Schools is both a programme and an award scheme. Any school using the guidelines given in this handbook can adapt the programme to their needs. The Eco-Schools Green Flag, awarded to schools with high achievement in their programme, is an internationally recognised and respected eco-label for environmental education and performance. While the Green Flag award will be given to schools that complete all the essential elements of the Eco-Schools programme, it should be remembered that the programme is flexible, and that different schools will find different routes to achieving Eco-Schools status.

Eco-Schools is a long-term programme.

The Eco-Schools highest award takes the form of a Green Flag. This can be flown outside school or displayed in the foyer. However, it is important to remember that the programme is one of continual reduction of the school's environmental impact. Therefore, the Green Flag award requires renewal every two years.

For more information about the international programme, visit:

FAIR HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

improved the school's energy rating from an E to a C with their energy action plans.



International and National Aspects of Eco-Schools

International Eco-Schools

Eco-Schools began in 1994 and is now the world largest pupil-led environmental education programme. The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is the international umbrella organisation, which coordinates the international management of the Eco-Schools programme. It delegates authority to nominated national organisations, such as Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, who run their own individualised Eco-Schools Programmes within their designated area and who report back to FEE. More details can be found on the international Eco-Schools website.

Eco-Schools is operated in 60 countries worldwide engaging around 15 million pupils. Eco-Schools is referred to by a number of different names in member countries e.g. Eco-Scholen in Belgium, Eco-Schools in the UK including Northern Ireland, and Umweltshule in Germany. Green-Schools is the name used in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Republic of Ireland.

One of the most exciting aspects of Eco-Schools that is currently being developed is its potential to generate national and international links between schools via international

Eco-Schools. School linking is an ideal way to broaden children's appreciation of other countries and different lifestyles. You might like to correspond with a school in Northern Ireland or in one of the other participating countries. If you are interested in this aspect of the programme please contact Eco-Schools Northern Ireland for further details. Further information is also available on the international website. In addition to support for schools at a national level, schools can benefit from the international dimension in the following ways:

- Newsletters with information on Eco-Schools throughout the world; and innovative projects and activities by schools themselves, interesting initiatives, new contacts, etc.
- Website with updates, news, school activities, contacts etc.
- Involvement in joint initiatives being developed by FEE and Eco-Schools together with other organisations or programmes.
- Showcasing on an international level work completed by Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland.



ST CLARE'S CONVENT PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWRY, weigh up global and local water issues with help from Trocaire, Eco-Schools and an international visitor. (Back) Rosie Murray, Trócaire Education Officer; Tiwonge Tasha Kumwenda, Governance and Human Rights Programmes Officer Malawi.

More details can be found on the international Eco-Schools website

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland is operated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

In order for Eco-Schools to operate within Northern Ireland many organisations play a key role:

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

The environmental charity responsible for the management of the Eco-Schools programme including registration of schools, distribution of certificates and Green Flags, production of the Eco-Schools Newsletter, production of materials for Northern Ireland's schools, and the organisation of Green Flag assessments.

DAERA

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs operates under the direction and control of the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The Minister determines the Department's policies, programmes and priorities in the context of the Executive's Programmes and Budgetary allocations. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs financially supports the Eco-Schools programme.

Delivery Partners

The Eco-Schools programme in Northern Ireland is delivered with the support of our numerous delivery partners who offer a wide variety of support to schools ranging from visits to schools, educational materials and waste collections. There is an up to date list of all the delivery partners with contact details on the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland website.

Education Authority

The Education Authority in Northern Ireland supports the Eco-Schools programme. Eco-Schools is the preferred Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme.

Local Councils

Local councils provide both financial assistance and support to schools. Many authorities have recycling and biodiversity officers (job titles may vary) who visit schools and support the Eco-Schools programme. An up-to-date list of officers can be obtained from the delivery partner section of the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland website.

Schools

The pupils and staff of Eco-Schools are making a real impact on their local environment and educating the wider community about environmental issues. Many schools support other schools in the programme by providing Best Practice and Case Studies about their own experiences on the Eco-Schools Programme.

Assessors

All of our Assessors are volunteers. We are always recruiting new Assessors. All we require is a commitment to assess at least two schools a year in your local area and we will offer full training. We welcome volunteers from the environmental and educational field. It is also an excellent opportunity for teachers to view best practice in other schools.

Benefits and Requirements of the Eco-Schools Programme

Eco-Schools offers your school opportunities to:

- Raise achievement, enhance learning and thinking skills
- Encourage active citizenship
- Gain access to a network of local delivery partners
- Gain a prestigious award – Bronze, Silver and the internationally recognized Green Flag
- Gain local and national publicity
- Make financial savings
- Reduce waste and litter
- Improve the school environment
- Reduce energy and water consumption levels
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Involve the local community
- Develop national and global links

It requires:

- The support of the Principal and Governors
- The willingness to involve children in decision-making and action at every stage
- Active involvement of staff and support from parents and the local community
- The willingness to take action to instigate long-term change

TOP TIP: Eco-Schools is the preferred Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme of the Northern Ireland Education Authority. For this reason, schools should reference **'Eco-Schools Programme'** in the School Development Plan rather than informal terms e.g. 'Eco-Club', etc.

Eco-Schools topics

The Eco-Schools Programme is focused around ten key environmental topics. You do not need to address all ten topics. One major and two minor topics are required to achieve the Green Flag.



LITTER

Examine the impact of litter on the environment and explore practical means for reducing and minimising the amount of litter around the school and local community. (Litter is waste in the wrong place i.e. on the ground.)



HEALTHY LIVING

Consider the many health factors, mental as well as physical, that influence the ability of students to fulfil their potential and encourages schools to put in place a sustainable plan for becoming a healthy school environment.



WASTE - RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Examine the impact of waste on the environment and explore practical means for reducing, reusing and recycling. When studying the waste topic think about resource efficiency i.e. focus on waste prevention first, reduce and reuse, followed by increased recycling.



BIODIVERSITY

Pupils take action to improve the diversity of wildlife and plants within the school grounds and local community by enhancing the environment. Pupils learn about and value their native wildlife.



ENERGY

All members of the school work together to increase pupil's awareness of energy issues and to improve energy efficiency within the school, from simple measures like switching off equipment, to more long term goals like renewable energy sources.



SCHOOL GROUNDS/ OUTDOOR LEARNING

Improve the school grounds to create a more stimulating environment and useful teaching resource. This topic encourages the school to facilitate outdoor learning for pupils.



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Enable pupils to understand the local and global impact of their way of living. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of the decisions they make through study of other countries.



WATER

Address the importance of water, both locally and globally, and raise awareness of how simple actions can substantially cut down water use in school and home.



CLIMATE CHANGE

What impacts are we having through our lifestyles, and how can we influence the situation both locally and globally? Pupils can make the link to positive effects of their own environmental actions to minimising Climate Change.



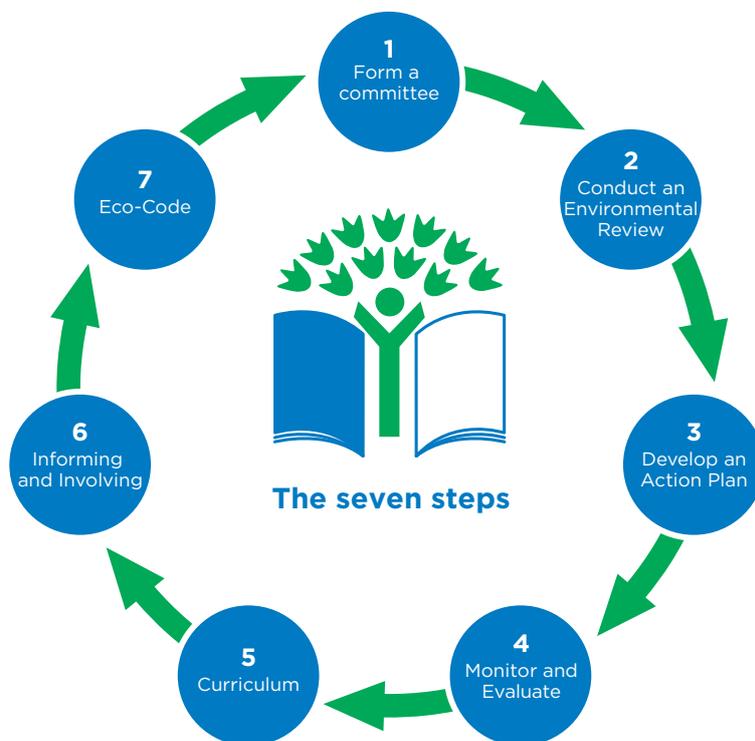
TRANSPORT

Pupils, staff and parents work together to raise awareness of transport issues around the school and come up with practical solutions that will make a real difference to pupils' everyday lives.

Find more information and ideas on the 10 topics on our website

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME: THE SEVEN STEPS

The aim of the Eco-Schools programme is to move from environmental awareness in the curriculum to environmental action in the school and wider community.



As with any environmental management system, a structure is required to help it run smoothly.

This process is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate any school and each should be implemented to the best of the schools ability at that point in time. The nature of the seven steps also allows for the programme to be continually updated as the environmental status and requirements of the school change.

The seven steps of the Eco-Schools Programme

1. Eco-Schools Committee

The Committee directs the school's involvement in the programme. Ideally the committee includes pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, management and parents.

2. Environmental Review

The Committee assesses the school's current performance in the 10 topic areas.

3. Action Plan

An Action Plan is formed from the results of the Review outlining the actions and goals to be achieved each year. Specific measurable targets are advised where possible.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress towards targets are measured and reviewed by pupils. Adjustments are made where necessary and success celebrated.

5. Curriculum Work

Your Eco-Schools work should enhance and compliment your curriculum work and vice versa. Materials are provided that give ideas on how to integrate environmental issues into lessons.

6. Informing and Involving

A publicity programme keeps the whole school and wider community involved and informed through a notice board, displays, assemblies, website and media coverage etc.

7. Eco Code

Outlines the objectives that demonstrate the school's commitment to environmentally friendly actions. This can take the form of a poem, song, rap, art design etc. that best encourages whole school engagement.

STEP
1

Eco-Schools Committee

The Eco-Committee directs and address all phases of the Eco-Schools programme. It is the driving force of the programme and should ensure that the other elements are carried out

Composition and Selection

Ideally, the 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, the Principal 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. You may also wish to co-opt a local environmentalist or a Local Council representative.

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 your programme over the years. In some cases schools will go through a full election process with manifestos, election speeches, canvassing, election posters, and ballots in order to fill the various positions on the committee.

The committee may take different forms depending on the age and ability of the students. A formal committee has worked well even with young students but less formal committees are fine if they achieve the same purpose. However informal it is, the committee should be representative of all and should keep records of meetings held and decisions made.

The purpose of this committee is:

- To ensure the six other Eco-Schools steps are successfully adopted and implemented.
- To give students responsibility and to make them recognise that their ideas are valued.
- To ensure the views of all members of the school community are heard and acted on where possible.
- To ensure the continuity of the project.
- To link with school management and the local community.

In summary, your committee should:

- **Be as representative of the whole school as possible.**
- **Have regular meetings to successfully keep up-to-date with the development of your Eco-Schools programme.**
- **Record the minutes of each meeting.**
- **Disseminate the points and decisions of each meeting to the school when relevant.**



FORGE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, showed that the younger pupils could successfully form part of the Eco-Committee. Their committee is made from two representatives from each of the classes of the school from P1 to P7. It also includes the Building Supervisor, the school Secretary and a parent and PTA member. The younger pupils, although limited in their contribution, learn how to act in a committee. They become more confident and it encourages communication between the years, building respect and a caring attitude. Knowledge is passed down the school using peer-to-peer learning. Older pupils can instruct the younger pupils on how the committee runs, leaving the teachers free. The younger pupils will become excellent committee members in the following years.

TOP TIP: To get things started on the right track it might be a good idea to invite your Local Council Environmental Awareness Officer where possible to one of your meetings to give advice and help you to get your Eco-Schools programme underway successfully.

STEP
2

Environmental Review

The Environmental Review identifies the current situation within the school regarding the 10 environmental topics under investigation (e.g. litter, waste, energy etc.).

If we envisage the Eco-Schools programme as using a map to undertake a successful road trip, the review enables us to locate our starting point on the map. Once you know where you are starting from, you can then set realistic targets and measure your success. The review process also helps to raise awareness of the programme throughout the school, whereby results of the review can be publicised by means of a notice board, school newsletter, through assembly or public announcements. It is important that the students are involved in the review process and the review covers each of area of environmental impact i.e. the ten topics.

By thoroughly checking all potential environmental impacts of the school for the topic under investigation, the environmental review will:

- Give a clear view of the range of the school's impacts.
- Ensure that no significant areas are overlooked.
- Identify areas where little or no improvement is needed.
- Help students and the rest of the school community understand the impacts.
- Help to prioritise the actions to be taken.

In summary, your environmental review should:

- Give a good indication of which areas of the 10 topics you may wish to consider for your Eco-Schools work.
- Be undertaken by the students when and where possible.



Northern Ireland Eco-Schools Programme Environmental Review Materials

At Bronze level, a school can compile and carry out its own assessment and the results do not have to be recorded. This type of review is termed a Simple Environmental review.

At Silver and Green Flag level, a school has to complete a Full Environmental review whereby the results must be documented each year.

TOP TIP: Your Environmental review should be carried out once a year and cover all 10 topic areas. It should help you select which topics you would like to work on and cover in your Action Plan. It is also a great way for your Eco-Committee to get to grips with what is happening in the school. It can be a good idea to split the review up among your Eco-Committee by topics for them to investigate in pairs or small groups.

Simple and Full Environmental Review templates are available on the Eco-Schools website.

STEP 3 Action Plan

The Action Plan identifies goals and provides a structured timetable for the reduction of the environmental impacts identified in the Environmental Review.

The Action Plan is the core of the Eco-Schools programme. It is a timetabled series of specific goals for improvement over a fixed time scale. Quantifiable targets should be set where possible e.g. 50% reduction in waste in 6 months, 100% recycling of cans sold in 8 months, 10% reduction on electricity consumption from previous year, etc. Using our map and road-trip analogy, the action plan is our route planner, giving the finer details on how we aim to reach our destination. It should always be developed from the results of the Environmental Review. The sample Action Plan excerpt given describes the actions taken by a school to achieve their goal (i.e. recycle all cans sold in the school by July of that year) in a clearly defined step by step process.

The Action Plan should, if possible, be linked to curriculum work and have realistic and achievable goals. These goals should be specific and quantifiable, where possible, with proposed completion dates that will show real success. Success increases confidence and builds enthusiasm for setting subsequent targets for your Eco-Schools programme. **Do not be tempted to be too ambitious at first as failure is very demotivating.**

It is crucial to work out how you will Monitor and Evaluate your progress and this should be integrated into your Action Plan. Try to involve all the committee members in the development of the Action Plan, and as much of the school as possible in its implementation.

In summary, your Action Plan should:

- Be developed from the results of your Environmental Review.
- Contain realistic and quantifiable goals and targets.
- Be in table format.
- Identify actions, persons or groups responsible, and the time frame for completion.
- Be displayed on your Eco-Schools notice board.
- Be regularly monitored, and updated if and when necessary.

Sample Action Plan excerpt

Goal: Recycle all cans sold in school by July Steps: By Jan 50% recycled: by April 75% recycled		
Action	Person / Group Responsible	Timing
<i>Find someone to take the cans</i>	Eco-Coordinator	September
Devise way of monitoring can numbers	P5 Maths	October
<i>Survey pupils to find best place for recycling bins</i>	P6 English / Maths	October
Site bins	Caretaker	November
<i>Publicise scheme to all pupils and staff</i>	P6 English / PDP	November
Calculate percentage recycled, display results on notice board	P7 Maths	January
<i>Decide on remedial action if targets not reached</i>	Eco-Committee	January

TOP TIP: The Action Plan is not a review of the work that has already been carried out, but a list of future targets and goals of your programme and a detailed description of the actions to be implemented (and by whom) within specific time frames in order to achieve those goals and targets.

An **Action Plan template** is available on the Eco-Schools website.

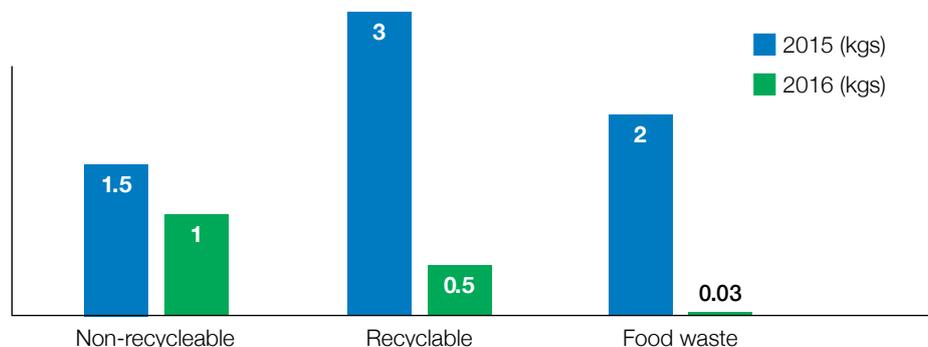
Example of an Action Template [Extract Only] adapted from Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt

Topic	Action	Target / Measure	Timescale / Deadline	Responsibility	Actual result achieved / Date
General	Reinforce awareness of Eco-Schools at Assemblies. Launch an Eco-Code poster competition to all pupils Present Eco-Code winner and runners up with awards. Invite guests and the local Press. Display winning Eco-Code in all rooms. Maintain links with Eco – Schools St Mary's Grammar and St Pius X College.	Regular reminders at weekly Assemblies. Eco-code made into mouse mats and posters. Special presentation with invited guests and local Press at whole school event. Eco-Codes clearly displayed. Regular contact re Science Fairs.	Ongoing Feb 2016 March 2016 April 2016 Ongoing	P Donnelly M Diamond C McGuckin MUDC Representative All staff, Eco-Committee St Mary's/St Pius X Staff	March 2016 April 2016
	Energy	Yr 5-7 monitor energy efficient classrooms daily. Notices placed in school building as reminders to switch off lights at break, lunch and home time. Notices placed on all computers to 'Switch Off' when not in use. Switch off radiators if rooms become too warm. Compare units of electricity and oil saved from last year. Year 6 study on 'Renewable Energy' plus a presentation from Bryson Energy and John Murtagh MUDC	Results displayed on Eco notice board. Awareness raised to all pupils and staff of the need to save energy. Awareness raised to all pupils and staff of the need to save energy. Electricity 2014 = 79,539 Kwh; 2015 = 71,966 Kwh, Oil 2014 = 40,500 litres; 2015 = 34,500 litres.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Jan' 2014- Dec' 2015 Feb' 2015	Eco-Committee Eco-Committee Eco-Committee All staff and pupils Eco-Committee Year 6 Staff, Bryson Energy, John Murtagh, St Pius X Staff
Litter	Reappoint litter busters in Yr3 and Yr4 to monitor all playgrounds Continue focus on use of all bins Big Spring clean.	Litter-free playgrounds Litter-free school environment	Sept 2014 Annually	Eco-Committee Year 7 MUDC	June 2016
Waste/ Recycling	Designate monitors in Years 1 and 2 to check the blue classroom bins Design blue bin posters for P1 and P2 rooms Reminder for parents about Clothes banks Visit Magherafelt VCU	Incentive for pupils to use the correct bins. Litter-free school environment. Child friendly posters on display. Recycled clothes funds help local SVDP Waste composting	Sept 2014 Oct 2014 Cleaners Mar 2016	Eco-Committee M Diamond Eco-Committee Cookstown Textile Recyclers	June 2016 Oct 2014
	EWWR Week Awareness. Reduce photocopying (PaperCut account for all Staff), recycle ink cartridges.	Key Stage Assemblies Reduction in use of paper = approx 20%	Dec 2015 ongoing	All staff All staff	

STEP 4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation measures your progress and indicates areas for review if necessary.

What is in our bins?



FAIRVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYCLARE, complete an annual waste audit on a sample of classroom bins.

Data Collection can be recorded in your school's Data Zone in the website login area.

Monitoring and Evaluation gives your Eco-Schools programme its credibility. As mentioned previously, it should be developed in parallel with your Action Plan. Again, using our road-trip analogy, monitoring allows you to evaluate how far you have travelled towards your final destination and also how quickly this has been achieved. Before and after measurements are key to this.

As far as possible, the students should do the monitoring. This will help give them a greater sense of ownership of the programme.

Monitoring is vital for identifying areas in your Action Plan that can be improved upon and amended. This aids performance and feeds back to further actions and new goals. It also enhances whole-school awareness by highlighting the successes of your Eco-Schools programme. This can provide a 'feel good' factor about the achievements and progress to date and continue motivation and participation at a whole-school level.

Publicise your results

Make sure the whole school is aware of your progress by displaying any results and figures prominently in the school (e.g. on your Eco-Schools notice board, school newsletter, assembly, school website, etc.). Remember, successes should be celebrated!

Monitoring – collection of quantifiable data e.g. water/energy use, number of bins taken to landfill, transport to school data, healthy snacks data, etc.

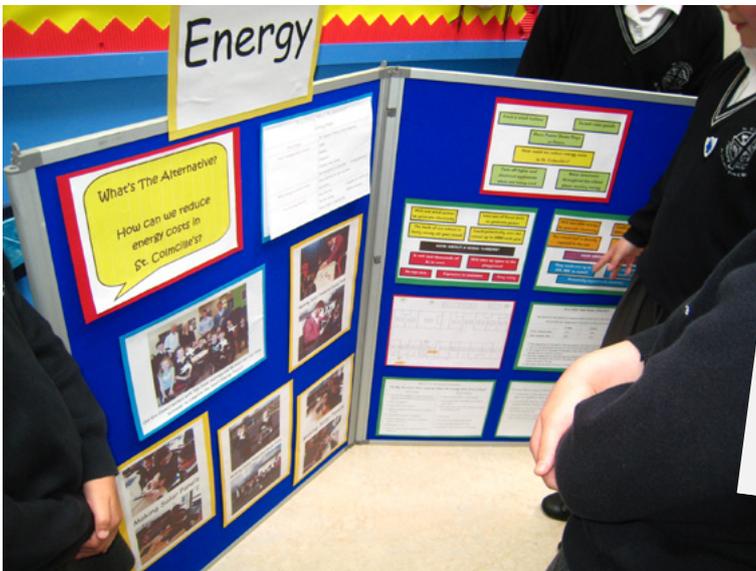
Evaluation – comparison of before and after data in relation to the topic covered and consideration of the results and what they mean.

In summary, Monitoring and Evaluation should:

- Be developed in parallel with your Action Plan.
- Be carried out by the students when and where possible.
- Feed back into your Action Plan to identify areas for adjustments and improvements to be made when and where necessary.
- Be publicised (e.g. displayed on your Eco-Schools notice board, newsletter, etc.).
- Be completed year on year to measure ongoing progress.
- Be recorded in your School Zone using the Data Zone - this information is automatically attached to your Green Flag application.

TOP TIP: It is important to quantify your Monitoring where possible, using a unit of environmental performance that is applicable to your school, e.g. number/volume of bins going to landfill weekly, units of electricity consumed per month, average cost of water consumption per student per month, etc. It is important to take **before and after** measurements so you can evaluate your progress.

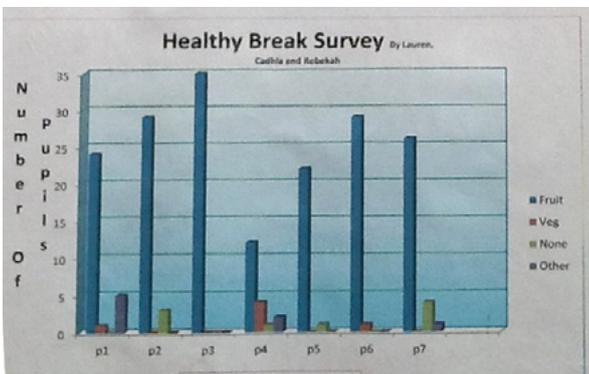
Examples of **Evaluation** by schools in Northern Ireland on the Eco-Schools Programme.



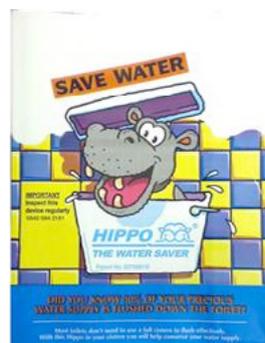
ST. COLMCILLE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYMENA, monitored their Energy use in school and discussed the need to conserve energy. Pupils investigated renewable/non-renewable sources of energy and the pros and cons of each type.



POND PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, LISBURN, pupils discuss the results of their wrapper free 'Naked Lunch' initiative which greatly reduced rubbish in the bin.



MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELFAST, carried out lunchbox surveys to find out what pupils are eating. The P7 class analysed the results and created new Break and Water Policies which contained helpful tips and recipes. A follow-up survey showed the positive changes they had made as a school.



FAIRVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYCLARE, measured the amount of water being used by the school. Following on from their findings they installed Hippos to the toilets cisterns to save water.



BALLYCLARE PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYCLARE, monitored their rubbish bins and recorded how full they were each day. As a result they were able to switch a general waste bin to recycling to reflect the change in their waste produced.

STEP
5

Curriculum Work

Integrate the Eco-Schools programme with the curriculum work of the school when and where possible.

This is the one step where teachers rather than pupils have the most influence and the Eco-Committee will need your help to complete this step. Ideally your Eco-Schools work will complement your curriculum work and you will increasingly see the value of, and many ways to link, the two together.

The principle behind Eco-Schools is that environmental topics being studied in the classroom should influence the way the whole school operates. What you decide to study should, if possible, enhance the environmental actions (i.e. your Action Plan) being undertaken by your school. This will provide greater relevance for the students. Opportunities exist within Eco-Schools to make curriculum links into a range of subjects at many levels, with topic related curriculum linked resources available through the Eco-Schools website. The table below outlines just some of these opportunities. Most schools are already incorporating a variety of environmental issues into the curriculum.

In summary, the Eco-Schools programme should:

- Be integrated with the curriculum through as many subjects and levels as possible
- Be used to inform the whole school of environmental issues and instigate action in the school community



MCKINNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, DUNDROD, used data collected from their Eco-Schools projects for class numeracy tasks and created an Eco-Maths display for all to enjoy.

Northern Ireland Eco-Schools Programme and your school development plan.

The Eco-Schools programme has both achieved international and national recognition as the recognised delivery tool for **Education for Sustainable Development [ESD]**. It is the preferred ESD programme NI Education Authority and is a Curriculum Objective in the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum and a Key Element at Post Primary level. The programme is also strongly supported by the majority of local Councils.

Eco-Schools is now an integral part of the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and is one of the ministerial targets in that strategy – therefore it is at the heart of the education process for the future of students in Northern Ireland ESD.



The Eco-Schools programme supports the NI Curriculum Objectives:

To develop a young person as an individual

To develop a young person as a contributor to society

To develop a young person as a contributor to the economy and environment

TOP TIP: Reference 'Eco-Schools Programme' in the School Development Plan rather than informal terms e.g. 'Eco-Club', etc.

Mill Strand Nursery School in Portrush demonstrated good practice by linking their Eco-Schools Programme to the Nursery Curriculum when they applied for their first Green Flag.

Mill Strand Nursery School Eco-Schools Programme

Subject	Example
Religious Education	By working on the Eco-Schools programme the children have been able to observe the start of life from seeds they have planted to the end results of flowers and fruit. They understand that flowers and fruit contain seeds to start another cycle of life. They begin to understand the importance of relationships between animals and plants in the world when they observe the insects and flowers interacting. We can use their experience in the garden as a basis for discussing the creation, cycle, beauty, and mystery of life in terms of their own religious beliefs.
Language Development	Fiona Watters from Coleraine Borough Council arrived to give a short talk on recycling [Part of our Waste Topic for the Eco-Schools Programme]. The children listened and demonstrated their understanding by placing various items in the appropriate bins! It was all great fun. Later in the year Bryson House came to give a talk about recycling to the whole school. They were very impressed with the knowledge of the nursery children.
Early Mathematical Development	One the most well received projects we initiated with Eco-Schools was bird watching with the nursery children [Part of the Biodiversity Topic with Eco-Schools]. We supplied laminated boards showing some of the most common birds and binoculars. During this project whenever a child observed a bird we noted it in a table. It allowed us to introduce the concept of counting the number of birds and classification along with ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the Eco-Schools programme was performed. We would like to know if our wildlife garden and bird cakes attract more birds into our garden. Maybe we will join the RSPB Bird watching scheme this year, which asks schools to monitor birds in their grounds. They are a partner in the Eco-Schools programme.
Arts	A Nursery Eco assembly was organised for the end of term. Our Eco-Code "We are working as a team to make our nursery go Green" was displayed on the front of the stage for everyone to view. The nursery children performed action songs about the environmental work they had carried out and read out short statements. For example the children have been identifying the birds in the garden and they acted out a song about a blackbird eating worms one by one. Many of the children were able to read out environmental statements like "We grow potatoes in our garden" to an audience consisting of the lower primary and their parents grandparents and carers. The parents were a great support as they dressed their children in green for the day. This was part of our "inform and involve" aspect for our Green Flag award. It really improves the children's confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school year there have been many opportunities for the children to create pictures of the work they have been doing for Eco-Schools.
The World Around Us	By growing flowers and vegetables from seed in our own garden and observing the wildlife in the garden [including our minibeast log pile in our Conservation Volunteers Wildlife Garden] the children have gained a great respect for plants, animals and the environment. They know that saving water is important [we have a water butt, supplied by a parent, and other water collection vessels for the garden] and they know that recycling is important [we compost all our healthy break waste]. For Eco-Schools we have estimated the amount of water we have saved by reusing the water in the water tray and the amount of waste we have diverted from landfill using our compost bins. This will be a good figure to present at school governor meetings and will show how we are impacting on the world around us even in a small way. At the school summer fair we created a wonderful Eco-Stall and were able to sell all our extra plants from the garden [cos lettuce, beans, carrots etc] to raise money for our Eco-Schools project next year. The children learn that their produce can be sold. Entrepreneurship at the nursery level. They are learning more about the world! When we were awarded an Eco-Schools Bronze Certificate we asked the local media to come around and take a photograph with the children. This will help the children understand a little more about the media and will help with informing the wider community of our work here in the school.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	The children in the nursery are very aware of our healthy eating initiative [Part of the Healthy Living Topic In Eco-Schools]. We ask parents to only supply a healthy break with no fizzy drinks. During our Healthy Eating Week we offered children a wide selection of fruit and vegetables. We even included lettuce grown in our own garden! We recorded the variety of vegetable and fruit that each child ate and displayed it on a notice board and gave the parents a booklet [Monitoring and Evaluating for Eco-Schools]. We converted part of our nursery into a kitchen and made omelettes and potato and leek soup [all from our own garden]. Our local fruit and veg man came in with a large display of his wares for the children to hold and sample. The children know where all their food originates from!
Physical Development and Movement	After the Nursery Eco-Assembly we organised a sports days just for the nursery children [Part of the Healthy Living Topic for Eco-Schools]. One of the most fun elements was a supermarket trolley relay race. There were no winners and losers. We even managed to involve the wider community in the healthy living aspect of the Green Flag award by running parent egg and spoon races. There was such demand we had to run the race 3 times! Our School Grounds provide many opportunities for play and physical movement [Schools Grounds Topic for Eco-Schools].

STEP
6

Informing and Involving

To spread the Eco-Schools message throughout the whole school and the wider community with ongoing publicity and 'Days of Action'.

It is important to ensure that actions and events organised for your Eco-Schools programme are well publicised. This helps ensure maximum participation from the different groups involved. Methods of informing the school and wider community could include:

- A special Eco-Schools notice board in a prominent position for students and visitors.
- The use of a school newsletter to publicise the programme, or if possible create a specific Eco-Schools newsletter.
- The use of assemblies to announce success in achieving targets or for the students to present their research and results.
- Exhibitions of project work, both in school and in the wider community.
- Making use of media and websites.



Eco-Notice Board at **SACRED HEART COLLEGE, NEWRY.**

A 'Day of Action' is an opportunity for students, staff and the wider community to get together to work towards achieving some of the targets set out in your Action Plan. In some cases it may be carried out in conjunction with local or national projects (e.g. Live Here Love Here's Big Spring Clean, Translink's Bus + Train Week, Energy Awareness Week, etc.). Benefits of a 'Day of Action' include:

- Raising awareness of Eco-Schools within and beyond the school.
- Involving the wider community. Parents, neighbours, local businesses, environmental organisations and the local Council could all be involved. They can give advice, practical help, money, or gifts. This will also make excellent publicity for the school.



Whole school Day of Action at **ULIDIA INTEGRATED COLLEGE, CARRICKFERGUS**, 'Green Day' - which included a public litter pick, making bird feeders, eco talks from various environmental organisations, planting and Fairtrade bake off.

In summary, Informing and Involving should:

- Ensure that both the school and wider community are fully informed of the progress of your Eco-Schools programme.
- Cover as many media sources as possible, e.g. television, internet, radio, school newsletter, notice board etc.
- Encourage greater numbers of the school and members of the community to get further involved in your Eco-Schools programme.

A sample **Press Release** is available in the Appendix.

TOP TIP: Contact your local newspaper and ask them to publicise details of the success of your Eco-Schools programme as detailed by the students.

STEP 7 **Eco-Code**

Highlights the objectives that demonstrate the school’s commitment to environmentally friendly actions.

The Eco-Code should be negotiated by as many of the students and staff as possible and related to the Action Plan and curriculum work. It is another opportunity to communicate your Eco intentions and should be catchy and memorable. The code should be displayed in prominent places (e.g. your Eco-Schools notice board, classrooms, staffroom etc.) and be updated as new issues are addressed. Your Eco-Code should be specific to your school.



Eco Eric

ST BERNARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLENGORMLEY, designed an Eco-character to help the younger pupils engage with Eco-Schools activities and daily tasks.

It is important that students feel they have had involvement in developing this code, as this will give them greater reason and encouragement to follow it. It shouldn't be a list of rules. Many schools have used a competition to develop their Eco-Code. This is also a good way of Informing and Involving the whole school. The Eco-Code can also be released to the local press and the general public.

ANDREWS MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, COMBER, wrote their Eco-Code as a song set to the chorus of 'Let It go' from Frozen.

We're Eco,
Let us grow,
We plant our own fruit and veg.
We're Eco,
Let us grow,
Saving water along the way.
We're so cool,
We walk and cycle to school.
Saving energy is the way,
We try to eat a healthy break every day.

ST CIARAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, CO ANTRIM, created a really fun and snappy Eco-Code.

1, 2, 3, 4
Pick the litter off the floor

Don't be a litter bug
Give mother-nature a hug

Be good
Don't waste food

TOP TIP: The Eco- Code can be an excellent 'hook' for Informing and Involving the whole school. Some schools have turned their Eco-Code into a 'rap' or slogan that all students and staff can use. A further development of this is the use of a catchy 'mnemonic' or 'acronym', where by the first letters of each line of the Eco-Code spell out an aspect of the code (see examples).

T.R.A.S.H.

Try **R**ecycling, **A**ll **S**tudents **H**elp;

P.A.P.E.R

Paper will not be wasted;
All pages in copy will be filled;
Photocopies will be backed;
Every box, paper and cardboard will be reused, recycled and therefore reduced;
Reduction of paper is our aim.



ST MARY'S COLLEGE, PORTGLENONE, Eco-Code.

APPLYING FOR AWARDS

There are three award levels within the Eco-Schools programme.



■ **Bronze**



■ **Silver**



■ **Green Flag – must be renewed every two years**

Schools can apply for Bronze and Silver as long as they meet the criteria and have at least six months evidence of running the Eco-Committee and are following the seven steps of the

Eco-Schools Programme. Schools must be registered for a minimum of 1 year before they can apply for the Green Flag.

How and when to apply

The Bronze and Silver awards are self-assessed online and trust is placed on each school to complete this process. If your school meets the award criteria (see pages 22 and 23), log in to the website to apply online and download your Bronze or Silver certificate. Although it is advised, a school does not have to apply for bronze and silver, but may proceed directly to Green Flag.

An application must be submitted to Eco-Schools for a Green Flag award. An assessment visit will be organised to the school. Green Flag awards need to be renewed every two years, the process is the same for renewal as first flags.

Green Flag Applications

To apply for a Green Flag assessment use the application form in the School Zone section of the Eco-Schools website. Simply fill in each section and submit the form to us for processing. Green Flag application paper forms can also be found in the resources section of the Eco-Schools website for download – these then must be posted or emailed to us.

It is important to remember that the Eco-Schools Programme is a continual programme and as such Green Flag assessments can be arranged at any time throughout the school year. It is not necessary to wait for eco-projects to be

completed prior to applying for assessment due to the on-going nature of the programme.

We strongly recommend early application for Green Flag assessment in order to ensure assessment before the end of the school year. All supporting documentation must be submitted along with the application. If an application is submitted after the final deadline set for the school year we cannot guarantee that an assessment can be arranged before the end of that academic year.

Green Flag Applications Deadlines

We accept Green Flag applications at any time throughout the year. There are some deadlines for applications if you would like to be assessed before a certain time of the year.

Our final deadline for assessment in June is usually sometime in early March.

See our website Awards section for more details.

Green Flag Assessments – What to expect

Once we have received your application, we will acknowledge receipt (within approx. 2 weeks), review the application and request any outstanding information. Once the application is complete an assessment visit can be arranged. Fully trained volunteer Eco-Schools Assessors complete these assessments.

The assessment will typically last no more than two hours. The Assessors will expect the following to occur during an assessment (they do not expect a formal presentation as the report provides all the information):

- Meet the Eco-Committee.
- Tour around the school preferably led by the Eco-Committee.
- View the Eco-Schools Notice Board.
- Meet pupils from a variety of classes and age groups.
- View the results of various activities.
- Review relevant documentation and evidence: the Eco-Code, Environmental Review and Action Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation and examples of curriculum links.

Renewing the Green Flag

Once you have been awarded your Green Flag you will need to renew the award every two years. To renew your flag you will need to show that you have maintained the topics you had covered for the previous Green Flag and that you have tackled a new Major topic (a previous Minor can become a Major or you may want to introduce a new topic).

If your last assessment resulted in recommendations (separate to suggestions) these must be clearly addressed in your application and assessment visit.

To renew your award, use the same application process including the renewal section.



The Eco-Committee from **ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, MULLANASKEA**, chat to assessors about their recycling actions in school.

The Eco-Committee from **ST COMGALL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BANGOR**, show off their Bug Hotel during their assessment.





Awards criteria – Bronze

Step 1 - The Eco-Committee

- A representative group of pupils and adults meet to discuss environmental action for the school.
- Meetings take place at least once per term.
- Minutes of each meeting are recorded.
- Results of group discussions, actions and proposed decisions are communicated to the rest of the school.

Step 2 - Environmental Review

- A Simple Environmental Review of the school is carried out by the Eco-Committee.
- Following the review, areas for improvement are identified and activities are planned that will change and improve the environmental performance of the school.

Step 3 - Action Plan

- A basic Action Plan is developed following the findings of the Environmental Review.
- The Action Plan is shared with the whole school.

Step 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Eco-Committee makes a note of progress towards targets.
- The group discusses success or otherwise of the action being undertaken.

Step 5 - Linking to the Curriculum

- Environmental issues are covered as part of curriculum work in most year groups across a range of subjects.

Step 6 - Informing and Involving

- The Eco-Committee has a school notice board which gives details of environmental activities being carried out.
- The school lets parents know of action being undertaken in some way.
- The wider school community learns of the environmental activity going on in the school.

Step 7 - The Eco-Code

- There is an agreement on some environmental statements for the school drawn up by the environmental group and agreed by the whole school.



Awards criteria - Silver

The school can **identify progress** towards one major topic and indicate involvement with two others. 'Identify progress' means that the school has an understanding of the topic and recognises its importance to sustainable development within the school environment and the wider community.

Step 1 - The Eco-Committee

- Pupils put themselves forward to be part of a decision making environmental committee.
- There is representation from the wider school community on the committee.
- The committee meets a minimum of once every half-term.
- Pupils share responsibility with adults for keeping minutes of each meeting.
- Pupil representatives ensure the dissemination of information to and from the committee.

Step 2 - Environmental Review

- Pupils and adults plan how to carry out a Full Environmental Review of the school.
- The results of the Full Environmental Review are recorded.
- Results of the review are made known to the whole school.
- The Eco-Committee plans action resulting from the review.

Step 3 - Action Plan

- A detailed Action Plan is developed following the findings of the Environmental review.
- The Action Plan includes timescales and targets.
- The Eco-Committee shares the Action Plan with the rest of the school community.

Step 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Eco-Committee reviews progress against set targets.
- The Eco-Committee reports progress to whole school by appropriate means on a regular basis.
- The value of activities and action is understood and is committed to by the whole school - pupils and adults.

Step 5 - Linking to the Curriculum

- Some aspects of Eco-Schools activities are integrated into the school curriculum for most year groups.

Step 6 - Informing and Involving

- An Eco-Schools notice board is kept in a prominent position within the school.
- The whole school is kept informed and involved in activities through assembly presentations or newsletters.
- The whole school engages in a number of Eco-Schools activities such as recycling and litter picking.
- Parents are involved in Eco-Schools activities and the school has informed parents and the wider community about the work being undertaken by the school in relation to Eco-Schools.
- Eco-Schools activities are reported through various media i.e. radio, local press, website.

Step 7 - The Eco-Code

- The Eco-Committee suggests an Eco-Code to the school for their agreement.
- The Eco-Code is displayed on the Eco-Schools notice board.



Awards criteria – Green Flag

The school must have **identified substantial progress** towards one major topic and indicated involvement with two others. ‘Identified substantial progress’ means that the school has an understanding of the project topic, recognises its importance to sustainable development within the school environment and wider community, and has implemented change.



FLEMING FULTON SCHOOL, BELFAST, celebrate being awarded their first Green Flag.

Step 1 - The Eco-Committee

- Pupils put themselves forward and are selected by their peers to be part of the Eco-Committee.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to approach adult members to join the committee for specific tasks.
- The committee meets at least 6 times.
- Where possible, we recommend that pupils chair the each meeting, keep the minutes, and detail how decisions have been made.
- Minutes are displayed on an Eco-Schools notice board.

Step 2 - Environmental Review

- Pupils and adults on the Eco-Committee plan and carry out a Full Environmental Review of the school in consultation with some non-committee members.
- A review document is used that covers every area of environmental impact.

- The results of the review are collated into one document for display on the Eco-Schools notice board and website (if the school has one).
- Pupil members on the Eco-Committee collect suggestions for action from school classes or tutor groups.
- A Full Environmental Review is undertaken once a year to identify areas in need of attention

Step 3 - Action Plan

- A detailed Action Plan is developed following the findings of the Environmental Review.
- The Action Plan includes timescales and targets.
- The Eco-Committee shares the Action Plan with the rest of the school community.
- The Action Plan is updated based upon the findings of the Follow-up Environmental Review.

Step 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Eco-Committee ensures that evaluation of action is on-going, appropriate to the activity monitored and that it is carried out by pupils.
- The whole school is aware of progress of environmental action and is given the opportunity to evaluate its effect through discussion and debate.
- The Eco-Committee meets to review progress and analyse the data collected.
- They build on successes and decide on remedial action when activities are not proving successful.
- Some monitoring data is used for curriculum work.
- A comparison of measurements collated year on year should be discussed, analysed and evaluated to map progress and show clear areas where environmental performance has been successful.

Step 5 - Linking to the Curriculum

- The school has a named individual responsible for environmental education/sustainable development education.
- The school has a curriculum plan integrating a range of environmental issues into the curriculum across most year groups or classes in a range of subjects.
- Aspects of Eco-Schools activities are integrated into a range of subjects across the curriculum for the majority of classes or year groups.
- Issues surrounding sustainable development are explored through curriculum activities in many year groups.

Step 6 - Informing and Involving

- Eco-Schools activities are displayed in a prominent position on a notice board within the school.
- Eco-Schools activities are reported through various media e.g. website, local press, social media, newsletter.
- Eco-Schools activities are integral to the school and the whole school engages in a Day of Action (or similar activities).
- The wider community is involved in the activities going on in the school, for example family member, local council officers and members of local businesses, environmental organisations.
- Pupils write reports of activities for the local press (when possible).

Step 7 - The Eco-Code

- The whole school is given the opportunity to make suggestions for what they believe should be included in the Eco-Code.
- The Eco-Committee creates a code using suggestions. The code is then presented to the rest of the school for approval.
- The Eco-Code is displayed on the Eco-Schools notice board and in all classrooms. It is also displayed in any communal areas, offices and staffrooms and on the school's website (if the school has one).
- The Eco-Code is reviewed by the whole school every year to make sure it remains appropriate.

APPENDICES: SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

When you receive your Bronze, Silver or Green Flag Award this is an excellent opportunity to promote your school and your Eco-Schools Programme in the local media. To help, here is a press release that you can modify for your own needs.

[Name of School] in [Town, Place, etc.] has been awarded a prestigious Eco Schools Bronze/Silver/Green Flag by the environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

The Eco-Schools Programme is the world's largest Environmental Education programme and aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of a school. Its participatory approach and combination of learning and action makes it an ideal way for schools to begin improving the environments of schools and their local communities.

Eco-Schools work through a simple seven-step process resulting in the programme becoming central to the school's ethos. Schools can choose from ten eco-topics ranging from litter and waste to energy, biodiversity and transport to name a few. Eco-Schools work towards achieving awards - bronze, silver and the prestigious Green Flag.

The internationally recognised Green Flag is this highest award given to Eco-Schools and symbolises excellence in the field of environmental activity.

[Place some information and photograph here about work undertaken at the school, including topics covered]

[Thank Delivery Partners who helped and others]

The International Eco-Schools Programme is operated in Northern Ireland by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and is a free to enter programme. Please visit www.eco-schoolsni.org for further information.

Send your press release along with a nice photo showing your Eco-Schools success to your local paper and congratulations on all your great work!



For more information and case studies about Eco-Schools, visit: