



# Eco-Schools Handbook

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TIDY Northern Ireland runs the Keep Northern Ireland Tidy Campaigns, and manages the Northern Ireland Borough Cleanliness Survey and TIDY Business initiative. It also operates the international environmental education programmes -Eco-Schools, 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. TIDY Northern Ireland is best known for its campaigns and public information on litter including car litter, gum deposition, drugs related litter, fast food litter and youth litter. However, it has also campaigned on a number of other anti-social behaviour issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and neighbourhood noise.

TIDY Northern Ireland 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** is the name given to the environmental schools programme managed locally by TIDY Northern Ireland that runs in Northern Ireland



The **Northern Ireland Environment Agency** is an Agency within the Department of the Environment. NIEA financially supports the Eco-Schools Programme within Northern Ireland managed by TIDY Northern Ireland. Their 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.



**Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)** is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation aiming to promote sustainable development through environmental education (formal school education, training of staff and general awareness raising).

FEE is mainly active through five environmental education programmes: Blue Flag, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment, Learning about Forests and Green Key.

TIDY NI is a full member of FEE and runs the Eco-Schools and Green Flag FEE programmes in Northern Ireland.

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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 its success both nationally and internationally and how it may be of benefit to your school, and explains how to register your school for the programme. **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 the award should be applied for and renewed. Some important additional elements of the Eco-Schools programme are also examined and details of contacts providing further resources and information are given.

## CONTENTS

<b>SECTION 1 WHAT IS ECO-SCHOOLS?</b>		4
1.1	International and National Aspects of Eco-Schools	5
1.2	Does Eco-Schools Make a Difference? Results from Research	6
1.3	Eco-Schools Topics	8
1.4	Benefits and Requirements of the Eco-Schools Programme	9
1.5	Four Stages of the Award Scheme	10
1.6	Registration	11
1.7	National and International Linking	12
<b>SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME: 'THE SEVEN STEPS'</b>		13
2.1	Step 1 Eco-Schools Committee	14
2.2	Step 2 Environmental Review	15
2.4	Step 3 Action Plan	16
2.4	Step 4 Monitoring and Evaluation	18
2.5	Step 5 Curriculum Work	20
2.6	Step 6 Informing and Involving the School and Wider Community	22
2.7	Step 7 Eco Code	23
<b>SECTION 3 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT</b>		25
3.1	Ensure you are Registered for the Eco-Schools Programme	25
3.2	Applying for the Bronze Award	25
3.3	Applying for the Silver Award	26
3.4	Applying for the Green Flag Award	27
3.5	Renewing the Award	27

## SECTION 1 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 are now represented in almost all European Union Member States, North America and various countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and in South Africa. There are also some pilot projects taking place in other parts of the world.



For more information about the programme, visit: [www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)

**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.



**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. 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. The Green Flag award is now established as a well respected and recognised eco-label.



**Eco-Schools is a long-term programme.** The Eco-Schools award as outlined above 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 award requires renewal every two years. This links in with the themed nature of the Eco-Schools programme as outlined in Section 1.3.



## 1.1 International and National Aspects of Eco-Schools

### International Eco-Schools

Eco-Schools is an initiative of FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), and 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 (see [www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org) for more information). *Green-Schools* is the name used in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Republic of Ireland. Eco-Schools began in 1994 as a pilot project in the UK, Denmark, Germany, France, and Portugal. In 2001, Eco-Schools moved from a European initiative to one of international dimensions with the inclusion of Africa, South America, Oceania, and Asia in the programme. By 2009 over 27,000 schools were participating in the programme, involving six million students. Eco-Schools is very much based on the principles of sustainable development (i.e. 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future') and Local Agenda 21 ('acting locally, thinking globally'). It is important for all schools to realise that their contribution and efforts, irrespective of scale, are part of a bigger programme with some 27,000 schools working towards similar ideals. In the future we may expect to see the name of the programme standardised to "Eco-Schools".

### Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland

**Eco-Schools** in Northern Ireland is managed by the Environmental Charity TIDY Northern Ireland [[www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk)].

In order that Eco-Schools can operate within Northern Ireland many organisations play a key role; These include:

**FEE:** 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 TIDY NI who run their own individualized Eco-Schools Programmes within their designated area and who report back to FEE. The international Eco-Schools website provides relevant information for any Eco-School in Ireland [[www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)].

**TIDY Northern Ireland:** This environmental charity is responsible for the management of the Eco-Schools programme including registration of schools in Northern Ireland, distribution of certificates and Green Flags, production of the Eco-Schools Newsletter, production of materials for Northern Ireland Schools, and the organisation of Green Flag assessments [[www.tidynorthernireland.org](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org)].

**Delivery Partners:** Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland can only run with the support of our numerous delivery partners who offer a wide variety of support to schools in Northern Ireland 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 section of the TIDY Northern Ireland website [[www.tidynorthernireland.org](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org)].

**Education and Library Boards:** The Northern Irish ELBs support the Eco-Schools programme. It is the preferred ESD programme for all five Education and Library Boards.

**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 *Eco-Schools* Office. See the TIDY Northern web site for contact information.

**NIEA:** The Northern Ireland Environment Agency financially supports TIDY Northern Ireland to run the Eco-Schools programme within Northern Ireland. They also provide environmental educational services for schools in Northern Ireland [[www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)].

**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 currently 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.

## 1.2 Does Eco-Schools Make a Difference? Results from Research

Since the introduction of the *Green-Schools* programme in the Republic of Ireland in 1997, there was significant anecdotal evidence of a substantial reduction of levels of litter and waste in participating schools. In 2001, a *Green-Schools* research project was undertaken to accurately record and measure the performance of the programme. Two aspects of the *Green-Schools* programme were investigated;

- The diversion of waste from landfill achieved by schools participating in the programme.
- The effect of the programme on the levels of student environmental awareness, behaviour towards the environment, and opinion leadership towards the environment.

Schools that had been awarded the Green Flag were diverting *on average 45%* of their waste away from landfill in comparison to schools that were not participating in the programme. In fact, several of the awarded schools were very close to achieving zero waste, with some producing as little as 2 grams of waste per person per day.

Over 1,300 4th and 5th class students from awarded *Green-Schools* and schools that were not participating in the programme were surveyed across the country. The results of this work are as follows:

- Awareness and knowledge levels of the environment were very similar among both types of student (i.e. *Green-Schools* and non-*Green-Schools*).
- Behaviour towards the environment was significantly different. Students from awarded *Green-Schools* drop less litter, take part in more local environmental projects, conserve more water and more electricity, and are more conscious of the environment when making a purchase than their non-*Green-Schools* counterparts.
- *Green-Schools* students are better “opinion leaders” for the environment, i.e. they discuss the environment with more people and in more settings, particularly the classroom, and provide more encouragement to their peers than their non-*Green-Schools* counterparts.
- *Green-Schools* students indicated that their teachers were their main source of information and motivation regarding environmental issues.
- Recycling levels of glass, paper, cardboard, and aluminium, as well as the levels of home composting were significantly higher within the homes of *Green-Schools* students.

- A total of 91% of students within non-*Green-Schools* felt they could do something about the state of the environment. However, this concern was even higher among *Green-Schools* students at a level of 96%.
- The main environmental concern indicated by both types of student was litter.

Further research carried out in 2005 indicated that the awarded schools had improved their performance and on average were diverting over 60% of their waste from landfill. Out of a sample of 79 schools, over 10% (8 schools) were diverting in excess of 90% of their waste from landfill. Calculations indicate that around 5 tonnes of waste is directly diverted from landfills per school day in Ireland due to the work of *Green-Schools*.



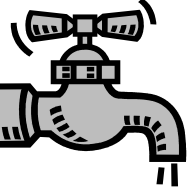




Overall, both sets of research show that the Green-Schools programme is having a very significant effect on environmental behaviour and attitudes in Ireland.

TIDY Northern undertook a survey in March 2007 investigating the influence of the Eco-Schools Programme in Northern Ireland. Results indicated that the Eco-Schools programme had most impact on the **ethos of the school** and in the **encouragement of pupil participation across the ability range**. Respondents said that the best things about being involved in Eco-Schools were:

- Team work
- Increasing environmental awareness
- Involving parents
- Pupil enthusiasm
- Involvement of whole school
- Formal and organised approach
- Empowerment of children
- Practical activities
- Sense of responsibility
- Change in attitudes
- Healthy foods
- Helping the environment
- Sense of ownership
- Student Council
- Delivery of ESD
- Pride in school
- Improved relationships
- Keeping school grounds tidy and pleasant

### 1.3 Eco-Schools Topics

The Eco-Schools Programme is focused around nine key environmental topics:

	<p><b>Litter and Waste</b> Examines the impact of litter and waste on the environment and explores practical means for reducing and minimising the amount of litter and waste produced by the school.</p>
	<p><b>Energy</b> Suggests ways in which all members of the school can work together to increase awareness of energy issues and to improve energy efficiency within the school.</p>
	<p><b>Water</b> Provides an introduction to the importance of water both locally and globally and raises awareness of how simple actions can substantially cut down water use.</p>
	<p><b>Travel</b> Suggests ways for pupils, staff and local government to work together to raise awareness of transport issues and come up with practical solutions that will make a real difference to pupils' everyday lives. In 2007 when this booklet was published the Travel Theme is operating only as a pilot in the Dublin area.</p>
	<p><b>Healthy Living</b> Examines some of 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.</p>
	<p><b>Biodiversity</b> refers to taking action to improve the variety or diversity of wildlife and plants within the school or local community.</p>
	<p><b>School Grounds</b> requires action that improves the surroundings of the schools making it a more stimulating place for pupils and visitors.</p>



### Global Perspective

seeks to ensure that pupils consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of the decisions that they make on the local and global community, in the future as well as for the present.



### Climate Change

requires pupils to consider the effects and impacts of climate change. What impacts are we having through our lifestyles, and how can we influence the situation both locally and globally?

## 1.4 Benefits and Requirements of the Eco-Schools Programme

*Eco-Schools offers your school opportunities to:*

- Raise achievement and enhance learning styles and thinking skills
- encourage active citizenship
- gain access to a network of local delivery partners
- gain a prestigious award at Bronze, Silver or 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

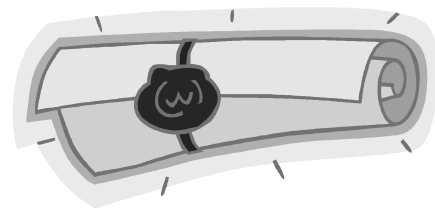
*It requires:*

- 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.

## 1.5 Four Stages of the Award Scheme

The award has four main stages:

1. Registration
2. Implementation of Eco-Schools Programme
3. Applying for your Award
4. Award Renewal



***Please note that there are minimum requirements that must be fulfilled and that the school must have implemented all seven steps before applying for an award. The following pages cover each of these seven steps in detail. Further information on the awards system and how to apply is covered in Section 3.***

## 1.6 Registration

**Before you register your school you need to be sure you have sufficient support from the Principal and other staff.** We suggest that one or more core members of staff read this handbook and present an outline of the Eco-Schools programme to colleagues and the school's Board of Governors. The presentation should cover:

- The benefits to the school
- The seven essential elements as described on the following pages
- The scheme's flexibility
- The intention to start with small, achievable targets
- The long-term nature of the programme
- The programme's potential to act as a focus for developing a whole-school policy for environmental education

If the idea is received with sufficient enthusiasm for it to continue you will need to register your school formally.

Fill in and return the enclosed Eco-Schools registration form to the address given for Eco-Schools on the web site or apply online at [www.eco-schoolsni.org/](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org/)

Returning this form will confirm your participation in the programme and **your intention to apply for an award in the future.** You can register at any time of year. You will receive notification by email of your school's registration with the Eco-Schools programme.

## Registration for Eco-Schools Programme

Please send this form to the Eco-Schools Office. Up-to-date contact details are available on the Eco-Schools website [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org) \* Denotes required field.

*Email address:	
*Password: Please keep a copy of this password as you will need to enter your email address along with this password each time you wish to apply for an award.	
*Title:	
*Forename:	
*Surname:	
*Job title:	
*School Name:	
*Postcode:	
*Address 1:	
*Address 2:	
*Town:	
*County:	
*Tel:	
*Education And Library Board:	
*School DENI Number	
*Local Council:	
*Type of School e.g. primary, college:	
Number of teachers in your school:	
Number of pupils in your school:	
If you do not want your personal information to be passed on to other partner organisations in the Eco-Schools programme, please tick this box.	Yes/No [Delete as Required]

## 1.7 National and International linking

**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.** 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, TIDY Northern Ireland  
Tel: 028 9073 6920  
Email: [info@eco-schoolsni.org](mailto:info@eco-schoolsni.org)  
Website: [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

A demonstration of the linking programme and further information is also available on the international website at [www.eco-schools.net](http://www.eco-schools.net).

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

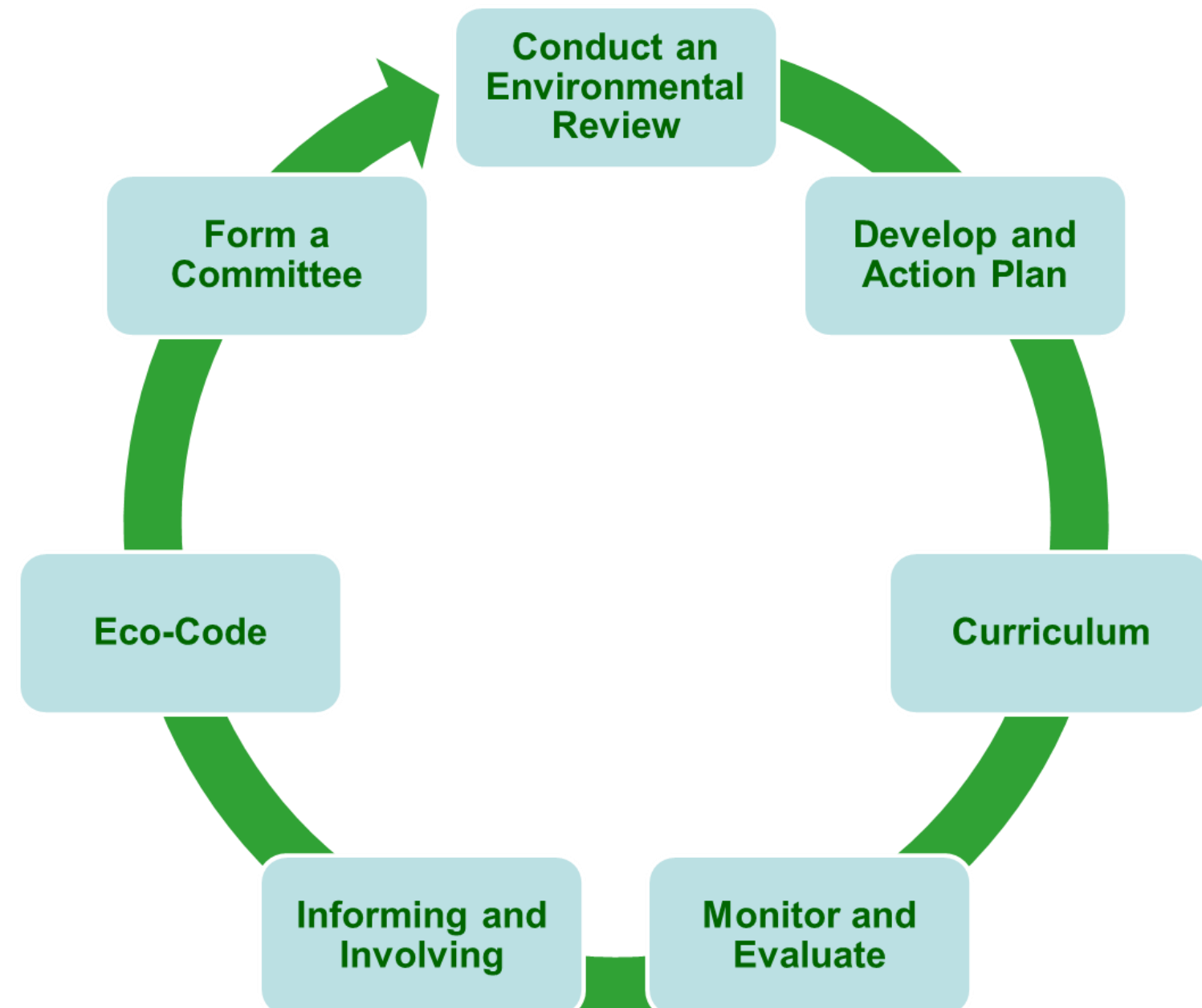
## 2. IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME: 'THE SEVEN STEPS'

*The aim of the Eco-Schools project 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. Pilot testing showed that a programme including the seven essential elements listed below provided a structure successful in achieving this aim.

It should be remembered that this process is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate any school and that 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**  
This directs the school's involvement in the project. Ideally the committee includes pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, management and parents.
- 2. Environmental Review**  
A process of examining the school's environmental Impacts in order to identify targets for action and Improvement.
- 3. Action Plan**  
This gives specific and achievable targets with proposed completion dates that will show real success.
- 4. Monitoring and Evaluation**  
This will ensure that progress towards targets is checked, amendments made and where necessary success celebrated.
- 5. Curriculum Work**  
Curriculum materials are provided that give ideas on How to integrate environmental issues into lessons.
- 6. Informing and Involving**  
A publicity programme keeps the school and wider community involved and informed through displays, assemblies and press coverage.
- 7. Eco Code**



## 2.1 Step 1: Eco-Schools Committee

**Aim: *The Eco-Schools committee aims to direct 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. 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. 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! 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.

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 elements 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.

*TOP TIP to get things started on the right track 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.*

### **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

**Fourtowns Primary School**, Ahoghill, Co Antrim showed that the younger pupils could successfully form part of the Eco-Committee, which we recommend. Their committee was made from two representatives from each of the classes of the school from P1 to P7. It included the Principal, the Secretary and a parent. 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.

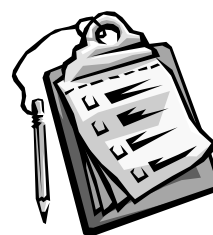
## 2.2 Step 2: Environmental Review

**Aim: The aim of the review is to identify the initial situation within the school regarding the environmental theme 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, or through assembly or public announcements. It is important that the students are involved in the review process.

By thoroughly checking all potential environmental impacts of the school for the theme 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



*TOP TIP It is important to quantify your review 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. You can use this indicator throughout the Eco-Schools programme as a benchmark against which future monitoring can be compared.*

**In summary, your environmental review should:**

- Give a clear indication of the school's environmental impact for the specific theme (e.g. the amount of waste produced, the amount of energy consumed, etc.) before the Eco-Schools programme is implemented
- Be undertaken by the students when and where possible

### **Northern Ireland Eco-Schools Programme Environmental Review Materials**

Schools can choose whether or not to devise their own Environmental Review but Informal and Formal Review templates are available on the Eco-Schools website [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

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 an informal review.

At Silver and Green Flag level, a school has to complete a formal environmental review. This can be devised by the school but the results must be documented.

For the Green Flag award there must be a Follow up Review.

## 2.3 Step 3: Action Plan

**Aim: The Action Plan aims to identify goals and provide a structured timetable for the reduction of the environmental impacts identified in the 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 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 measure 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.

*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.*

### 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>	Anne Byrnes	September
<b>Devise way of monitoring can numbers</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Class Maths</b>	<b>October</b>
<i>Survey pupils to find best place for recycling bins</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> Class English	October
<b>Site bins</b>	<b>Brian Jones</b>	<b>November</b>
<i>Publicise scheme to all pupils and staff</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> Class Technology	November
<b>Calculate percentage recycled, display results on notice board</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Class Maths</b>	<b>January</b>
<i>Decide on remedial action if targets not reached</i>	Committee	January

### In summary, your Action Plan should:

- Be developed from the results of your review
- Contain realistic and quantifiable goals and targets. These goals should be displayed at top of Action Plan
- Be in table format (as above), identifying action, person or group responsible, and the time frame for completion
- Be displayed on your Eco-Schools notice board
- Include regular monitoring, and be updated if and when necessary

An Action Plan Template can be found in the Eco-Schools website:

[www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

**Example of an Action Template [Extract Only] by Armstrong Primary School in Co Armagh**

<b>Objectives/Target</b>	<b>How? Who?</b>	<b>By When?</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Finance</b>
Energy: To raise awareness of energy conservation  To raise awareness of how energy can be wasted in the school building	Make and display 'Switch Off Lights' around the school.  In assembly set up energy competition- find ways energy is wasted at home. Survey on electricity used in one week.	Sept 2005  Jan 2006	Pupils conserve energy at school.  Data collected with the help of the caretaker. Present before and after graph.		Paper, Laminator  Copies of energy resource page. Computer.	None  None
Healthy Living. To encourage pupils to make healthy food choices.  To promote the importance of physical activities.  Continue to encourage healthy food choices.	Promote healthy break every day. P4-7 promote healthy lunch by having a no chips day in the school canteen.  Participate in physical exercise in assembly hall [Eco-Awareness Day]  Ask Mr Dickson how more healthy lunch days could be carried forward. Competition – make healthy eating posters.	May 2004  June 2006  June 2006	Pupils making healthy choices.  Pupils become more physically active.  Pupils making healthy food choices.	Canteen Menu  Feedback from pupils  Compare no of chips/salads sold in the summer term. Make a graph.		None  None  £89.50 [PTA]
School Grounds To improve the appearance of the school  To grow fruit and vegetables  To attract wildlife to the school grounds.  To raise awareness of the importance of wildlife habitats.	Plant hanging baskets, shrubs, trees and flowers [Gardening Club].  Plant apple trees and rhubarb.  Plant sunflower seeds to attract bees and other insects. Create a log pile. Competition to make bird boxes. Set up in grounds. P4 make a log pile.	June 2005  June 2006	First impression of school grounds improve.  Children develop an interest in planting.  Increase in no of wildlife in school grounds.	Feedback from pupils.  P4 count no of minibeasts in a blank measured area before building log pile and survey after 1 week/month. Record results.	Hanging baskets, compost, shrubs, and flowers. Trees provided by Wildlife trust. Apple Trees.  Logs, Bird boxes, Table for survey	Donation PTA £40.00

## 2.4 Step 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

**Aim: Monitoring and evaluation aims to check your progress and indicates areas for change if necessary.**



Your 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. As far as possible, the students should do the monitoring. This will help give them a greater sense of ownership of the programme. (Also, teachers have more than enough to do themselves!).

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 loudly!*

*TOP TIP: A simple way of envisaging your monitoring programme is to think of it as a number of 'mini' reviews. The unit of performance chosen for your environmental review may now also be used in your monitoring process (e.g. number of bins going to landfill weekly, electricity costs per month, water consumption per student per year etc.). This allows easy comparisons with the initial results of your review and thus proper evaluation of the rate of success of your action plan.*

### In summary your monitoring and evaluation programme should:

- Be developed in parallel with your Action Plan
- Be carried out by the students when and where possible
- Use the same unit of performance as for your Environmental Review to allow comparison with initial figures
- Feed back into your Action Plan so as to identify areas for adjustments and improvements to be made when and where necessary
- Increase the likelihood (or reduce time required) for achieving goals formulated in your action plan
- Be publicised (e.g. displayed on your Eco-Schools notice board, newsletter, etc.)

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

**Ballykeel Primary School** in Ballymena, Co Antrim held an environmental week and pupils on the Eco-Committee monitored the effects of transport to school and the waste produced from lunch.

### How did you get to school today?

(Normal Week)

Day of Week	Number of Pupils Present	Walk	Bike	Car (Shared L10)
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	20	11	—	9
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	21	10	—	11
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	21	11	—	10
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> May	22	11	—	11
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	20	12	—	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>49</b>

Can you reduce the number of car journeys during Environment Week?  
Name of Class: P2T

Some people walked and M'Auley shared a lift

### How did you get to school today?

(Environment Week)

Day of Week	Number of Pupils Present	Walk	Bike	Car (Shared L10)
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	21	15	—	6
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	21	14	—	7
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	21	17	—	4
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	21	14	—	7
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	19	13	—	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>30</b>

Did you reduce the number of car journeys during Environment Week?  
By how many? 19 less  
Name of Class: P2T

### Break & Packed Lunch Waste Record

(Normal Week)

Date	Number of Pupils Present	Number of Waste Items
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	20	18 + 23
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	21	13 + 26
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	21	21 + 22
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> May	22	21 + 34
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	20	17 + 32
<b>WEEKLY TOTALS</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>232</b>

(Environment Week)

Date	Number of Pupils Present	Number of Waste Items
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	21	15 + 18
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	21	12 + 17
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	21	11 + 12
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	21	12 + 15
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	19	11 + 10
<b>WEEKLY TOTALS</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>137</b>

### WASTE MINIMISATION

P5A

During Environment Week these 6 pupils (Jordan, Kyle, Dear, Paige, Shannon and Ellen) never had any waste items!

We reduced our number of waste items by more than a half! This bar graph shows how well we did as a class.

Everybody in the class recorded their own individual results.

**Mulavilly Primary School, Co Armagh**, diligently recorded their healthy eating on a chart every day positioned prominently on the class door.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Fri
Food	Fruit	Water	Fruit	Water	Fruit	Water
Students	Colored in	Colored in	Colored in	Colored in	Colored in	Colored in

Good effort this week! Keep thinking.

### Litter in our Playground

29<sup>th</sup> March

Category	Count
PAPERS	38
STRAWS	1
PLASTIC BOTTLES	1
CHIP BAGS	1
CARTONS	1
OTHERS	1

**Armstrong Primary School, Armagh**, recorded the litter in their playground before and after a litter campaign.

## 2.5 Step 5: Curriculum Work

**Aim: To integrate the Eco-Schools programme with the curriculum work of the school when and where possible.**

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. 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.

### Northern Ireland Eco-Schools Programme

The Eco-Schools programme has achieved international and Northern Ireland recognition as the recognised delivery tool for **Education for Sustainable Development [ESD]**. It is the preferred ESD programme for all five Education and Library Boards 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 here in NI, along with the Department of Education.

Eco-Schools is now an integral part of the Sustainable Development Strategy for NI 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 here in Northern Ireland ESD.

An excellent resource that is available to schools in Northern Ireland is the "Good Practice Guide for Primary, Secondary and Special Needs Schools" [available from [www.welb-cass.org](http://www.welb-cass.org)]. This guide clearly illustrates how to integrate ESD into the whole school curriculum [[www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)].

How Millstrand Integrated Nursery School [Portrush, Co Londonderry] integrated their Curriculum with the Eco-Schools Programme [as described by the Nursery Teacher].

Millstrand Nursery School in Northern Ireland demonstrated Good Practice by linking their Eco-Schools Programme to the Nursery Curriculum when they applied for their first Green Flag.



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 of 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 <i>Eco-Schools</i> 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].

## 2.6 Step 6: Informing and Involving the school and Wider Community

**Aim: To spread the Eco-Schools message throughout the whole school and the wider community through ongoing publicity and a 'Day of Action'.**

It is important to insure that actions and events organised for the Eco-Schools programme are well publicised. This helps ensure maximise 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 or parish 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 children to present their research and results.
- Exhibitions of project work, both in school and in the wider community.
- Making use of local press and radio.

*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.*

The '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. TIDY Towns, Energy Awareness Week, Tree Week, etc.). Benefits of the 'Day of Action' include:

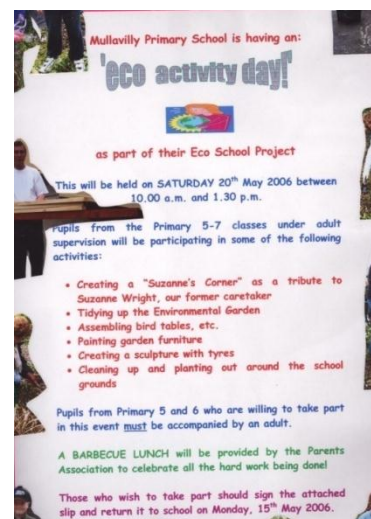
- Raising awareness of Eco-Schools within and beyond the school.
- Involving the wider community. Parents, neighbours, local businesses and the Local Council can all be drawn in. They can give advice, practical help, money, or gifts. This will also make excellent publicity for the school.

**In summary, informing and involving the school and wider community 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.



NoticeBoard at Landhead Primary School, Ballymoney, Co Antrim [Left]  
Day of Action at Mullavilly Primary School, Armagh [Right]



## 2.6 Step 7: Eco-Code

**Aim: To state 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 not to be a list of vague comments along the lines of 'we will care for the environment and encourage wildlife'. Each statement should describe an action that all students and staff can carry out. The code should be displayed somewhere prominent (e.g. your Eco-Schools notice board) and be updated as new issues are addressed. Therefore, your Eco-Code should be specific to your school.

**Harpur's Hill Primary School in Coleraine, Co Londonderry, created this rap with music and actions. They even demonstrated it at a Primary School Teachers Workshop at the University of Ulster in Coleraine.**

Our school is really cool  
We'll always be the best  
We're still recycling paper  
We never take a rest.

We're saving all our water  
Don't throw it all away!  
We've got to turn those taps off  
'Cause one day we'll have to pay.

We're no fools at Harpur's Hill  
We're eating healthily  
We know that greens are good for us  
They give us energy!

So come on, join us, one and all  
We're learning and its fun!  
We'll get that new green ECO Flag  
Because we're number ONE!!!!

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. 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.

*TOP TIP: As outlined above, 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 below for examples).*

**T.R.A.S.H.**

Try Recycling Ashbourne Shows How;

**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 Ciaran's Primary School in Cushendun, 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

## Submitting a Successful Application – Top Tips!

The following is a list of suggestions and tips to help with your successful application for the Green Flag award:

<b>1. Committee</b>	While there are no set rules for its structure, remember that students should make up the majority of the committee, not teachers!
<b>2. Review</b>	Again students should be involved in (or responsible for) the review as much as possible. Make sure you give plenty of detail on the procedure and results of your review in answering the application questions.
<b>3. Action Plan</b>	It is important to remember that the Action Plan is <b>not</b> a review of the work that has been carried out. Rather it should be a list of actions and targets set out from the results of the Environmental Review, to be carried out by specific individuals/groups within specified time frames, in order to achieve quantifiable goals. Publicise your Action Plan on your Eco-Schools notice board, and make sure you have included a copy of your Action Plan (which should be in table format) in your application.
<b>4. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Use charts and graphs where possible to evaluate your progress, display these results on the Eco-Schools notice board and be sure to give some examples of these graphs/charts in your application.
<b>General</b>	<p>The most important factor in your application is to ensure all the questions on the application form are answered clearly, in detail and to the best of your ability. Perhaps you can delegate the responsibility of answering the questions to students on your committee. (Some of the best applications for the Eco-Schools award have been put together entirely by students).</p> <p>If you wish to add any additional information you feel is relevant to your application, please do, but remember that you shall also be visited by an assessor, and you may be able to show much of this work to the assessor at this time.</p> <p>Finally, a simple format for your application will be fine! Don't worry about putting your application in a fancy folder, with individual plastic sleeves for each page – instead think about producing your application by reusing old pages, printing on both sides, etc. Remember, you can also submit your application in electronic or CD-ROM format.</p>

### 3. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

There are three main levels of award in the Northern Ireland Eco-Schools Programme: Bronze, Silver and the prestigious Green Flag award [which is renewed every two years].

In a school with little prior environmental work a typical school will apply for a Bronze award in the first year, a Silver award in the second year and a Green Flag by the end of the third year. We expect schools to have successfully completed the Bronze and Silver Awards before applying for the Green Flag Award.

If you have a history of environmental work you may be able to complete the Bronze and Silver Award Schemes in a shorter time than the two years suggested but evidence to support this must be provided in the Green Flag application form. However there must be at least six months evidence of running the committee and the seven steps of the Eco-Schools Programme!

#### 4.1 Ensure you are registered for the Eco-Schools Programme

Before applying for an award ensure that you have been registered for the Eco-Schools Programme. Contact the Eco-Schools Admin Officer. Contact details can be found on the Eco-Schools website. You can also check on the website yourself by entering your school's details.

#### 4.2 Applying for the Bronze Award

This award is self-assessed. Visit the Eco-schools website for details of how to apply for your Bronze award [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org). The Eco-Schools Admin Officer will be willing to assist.

You can download your certificate straightaway. We provide checklists below to assist in this self-assessment.

#### Self Assessment Form BRONZE AWARD

*At Bronze level do not send any forms or other written information to the Eco-Schools office. The scheme is based upon our trust in the judgement of the school itself. Our assessors may, however, choose to visit a random sample of Bronze Level schools each year to ensure that the expected*



- a) The school has identified an Action Team and the team has met on at least **two** occasions.
- b) The Action team has completed an Environmental Review, formal or informal.
- c) The Action Team has produced a basic Action Plan and shared the plan with the rest of the school community.
- d) The Action Team can identify progress towards achieving elements of the Action Plan.
- e) The school can indicate that some environmental issues have been covered within curriculum work.
- f) The school has a designated Eco-Schools notice-board/web-pages or newsletter page, detailing the activities being undertaken towards achieving the award.

### 4.3 Applying for the Silver Award

This award is self-assessed. Visit the Eco-schools website [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org) and log in at the “apply for an award”

page. The Eco-Schools Admin Officer will be willing to assist with any problems.

You can download your certificate straightaway. We provide checklists below to assist in this self-assessment.

#### Self Assessment Form SILVER AWARD

**At Silver level do not send any forms or other written information to the Eco-Schools office. The scheme is based upon our trust in the judgement of the school itself. Our assessors may, however, choose to visit a random sample of Silver Level schools each year to ensure that the expected high standards are being maintained.**



- a) The school has identified an Action Team and the team has met on at least four occasions. The team includes a parent and/or governor representative.
- b) The Action Team has completed a Formal Environmental Review and has recorded the results.
- c) The Action Team has produced a detailed Action Plan (including timescales and targets) and shared the plan with the rest of the school community.
- d) The Action Team can demonstrate progress towards achieving elements of the Action Plan.
- e) The school can identify progress towards one large-scale project and indicate involvement with two others (one of which must be waste related). Identify progress means that the school has an understanding of the project topic and recognises its importance to sustainable development within the school environment and wider community.
- f) The school has a prominent, designated Eco-Schools notice-board/web-pages or newsletter detailing all of the different Eco-Schools activities being undertaken.
- g) The school has informed parents and the wider community about the good work being undertaken in the school towards Eco-Schools.
- h) The school can indicate that some environmental issues have been covered within curriculum work in most year groups.
- i) The school has agreed, adopted and displayed an 'Eco-Code'.

#### 4.4 Applying for the Green Flag Award

To apply for the Green Flag award, you can download the application form directly from the Eco-Schools website [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

Note that we encourage electronic submission of this form [either via email or on a CD] to eliminate the need for paper. Please send this to the Eco-Schools Admin Officer in TIDY Northern Ireland [Contact details on the TIDY Northern Ireland Website: [www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk/eco-schools](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk/eco-schools)]. Note that if you are sending photographs of children we need a permission slip to publish these [A permission slip is provided on the following pages].

Once the Eco-Schools Admin Officer has received your application, they will acknowledge receipt, review the application and make recommendations. When the school has completed any recommendations, an assessment will be arranged. Fully trained volunteer assessors in Northern Ireland perform these assessments. The Eco-Schools Admin Officer will try to arrange a date and time that will suit the school and the volunteers in particular locations.

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]:

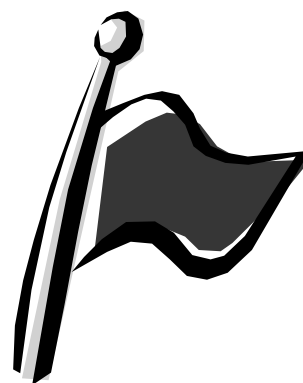
- Review all the relevant documentation: the Eco-Code, minutes [in any format], Environmental Review and Action Plan
- View the Eco-Schools Notice Board
- Meet the Eco-Committee
- Tour around the school preferably led by the Eco-Committee
- Meet pupils from a variety of classes and age groups
- View the results of various activities

Schools may submit an application at any time of the year. However if an application is submitted near the end of the school year we cannot guarantee that an assessment can be arranged before the end of that academic year. Email or ring the Eco-Schools Office to find out the deadline date for submission if you do wish to have your school assessed before the next academic year.

#### 4.5 Renewing the Award

Once you have been awarded your Green Flag you will need to renew the award every **two years** thereafter. To maintain your flag, you will need to show that you have maintained the successful implementation of the topics you had covered for the previous Green Flag and that you have tackled at least one other topic.

To renew your award, use the same application stating clearly that you are applying for renewal. The Eco-Schools office will inform you when this is required.



## **Application Criteria GREEN FLAG AWARD**



1. The school has identified an Action Team, and the team has met on at least **SIX** occasions.  
The team has the support of a parent and/or governor. Pupils take significant responsibility for the running of the team.
2. The Action Team has completed a formal Environmental Review, (which must at least cover the issues of waste, energy and water) recorded the results and **undertaken a follow-up review.**
3. The Action Team has produced a detailed Action Plan, including timescales and targets, and shared the plan with the school community and updated it based upon the follow-up review.
4. The Action Team can identify progress towards achieving most targets in the Action Plan and can produce physical evidence of data collection and analysis (graphs etc.)
5. The school can identify substantial progress towards one large-scale project and indicate involvement with two others. *Identify 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.*
6. The school has a prominent, dedicated notice-board detailing the activities being undertaken towards Eco-Schools. Eco-Schools activities are being reported in assemblies and at governors meetings.
7. The school can illustrate regular communication lines to parents and the wider community about the good work being undertaken in the school as a result of Eco-Schools.
8. The school has agreed, adopted and displayed an Eco-Code.
9. The school can produce evidence that environmental issues have been covered within curriculum work in most year groups throughout the school. Where possible pupils have been involved in data collection and analysis of data used to monitor progress in the project topic.

**The school is willing to share good practice with other schools who wish to join the scheme.**

## Example Press Release

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

[Name of School] in [Town, Place, etc] has just been awarded a prestigious [Bronze/Silver Award or First/Second/Third/Fourth Green Flag] by the charity TIDY Northern Ireland. These awards are presented to schools who take part in the internationally recognised Eco-Schools Programme and who meet rigorous criteria demonstrating environmental action in both the school and the local community. The Eco-Schools Green Flag symbolises excellence in the field of environmental activity.

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

[Thank Delivery Partners who helped and others]

More information on the Eco-Schools Programme can be found on the TIDY Northern Ireland website [[www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk](http://www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk)].

## Permission to Publish Photographs of Children

It is always beneficial to all schools to promote good practice. Photographs are an excellent way to visually describe the activities that are taking place. We will need permission to publish photographs in various educational materials. If you wish you can complete this form along with any photographs you send to the Eco-Schools Office.

I have sought permission from parents or guardians to publish the enclosed photographs [description below] of children in our school who are undertaking the Eco-Schools Programme in Northern Ireland. Permission was sought to publish the photographs in the various media indicated below:

Eco-Schools Newsletter for Northern Ireland	Yes/No
TIDY Northern Ireland Website [ <a href="http://www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk">www.tidynorthernireland.org.uk</a> ]	Yes/No
Eco-Schools International Website [ <a href="http://www.eco-schools.org">www.eco-schools.org</a> ]	Yes/No
Various other educational publications for the Eco-Schools Programme such as instruction booklets and displays at teacher training workshops.	Yes/No

### Description of Photograph/s

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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

TIDY Northern Ireland will never publish any of the names of the children in these photographs.

*This is a sample of the Green flag application form- please refer to the website for the most up to date form @www.eco-schoolsni.org*

## GREEN FLAG Application Form

School Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
LEA	
Name of Headteacher	
Name of Eco-Schools Co-ordinator	
Date of Submission	

Tick this box if you are renewing your Green Flag Award

### SECTION 4 SECTION 1 – About your Action Team

Who are the 'Action Team' members and who do they represent? (Please list)

SECTION 5 Team members	SECTION 6 Represents

Who chairs/organises the meetings?	
Who takes minutes/ records the proceedings of team meetings?	
How often has your team met to–date?	
On how many occasions has a parent, governor or other member of the 'out-of-school' community attended to date?	
How are decisions arrived at during meetings?	
How can pupils not on the team make suggestions?	
How does the team feedback decisions to the rest of the school?	

*[Suggested evidence for Section 1 = minutes and other meeting reports]*

## SECTION 2 – About your Environmental Review

*NB: Please send two copies of both your initial Environmental Review Checklist and your Follow-up Environmental Review Checklist with this form.*

Who carried out your initial Environmental Review and when?	
Who carried out your follow-up review and when?	

*[ Suggested evidence for Section 2 =: The Environmental Review documents themselves, minutes and meeting reports, photographs, pupil accounts, data collection sheets, etc.]*

## SECTION 7 SECTION 3 – About your Action Plan

*NB: Please send two copies of your current Action Plan with this for which should include targets and methods of measuring the targets set.*

Who was involved in developing the action plan? Briefly describe process.	
How did you share the action plan with the rest of the school?	

## SECTION 8 SECTION 4 – About Eco -Schools developments in curriculum work

Please give 3 brief examples of curriculum work carried out related to Eco-Schools

	Year Group	Subject Area	Activity
<b>SECTION 9</b> Example 1			
Example 2			
Example 3			

Can you offer any examples of how pupils' involvement in Eco-Schools has led to a rise in educational achievement?

Please describe briefly.

[Suggested evidence for Section 4 =: Lesson plans, pupils own work records, wall displays, etc.]

## SECTION 5 – About your Eco-Schools Communication

*NB: Please send two identical photographs of your notice board/web-pages with this form.*

Where is your Eco-Schools notice board?	
What information is put on the Eco-Schools notice board	
Who is responsible for new material on the notice board?	
How often does new material appear?	
Is Eco-Schools promoted in any other way? E.g. website, newsletters, posters	

[Suggested evidence for Section 5 =: The notice-board photograph, assembly plans, press releases/press cuttings, minutes from governor meetings, AGM agendas, letters to/from business contacts, Newsletter.]

## SECTION 10 SECTION 6 – About your schools Eco-Code

*NB: Please include two copies of your eco-code with this form.*

Briefly explain how your Eco-Code was developed?	
How often is it reviewed?	
Where is it displayed?	
How do you ensure all pupils are aware of it?	

[Suggested evidence for Section 6 =: The Eco-Code itself, assembly plans, notice-board photograph, lesson plans etc.]

## SECTION 7 Monitoring Achievements

Which of the Eco-Schools topics have you tackled? For each topic that you have worked on, please provide an indication of the scale of the project (i.e. major project, small / short project) N.B. one of these projects must be waste.

Topic	Tick if worked on and note scale of project
Litter	
Energy	
Water	
Waste	
Transport	
Healthy Living	
School Grounds	
Biodiversity	
Global Perspective	
Climate Change	

Referring to your action plan, please outline the targets that you set, the steps you have taken to achieve these and the progress you have made to-date?

Target	Steps Taken	Progress to date / results

What evidence can you offer to demonstrate how each of the targets has been met? E.g. analysis such as tables, graphs  
**(Do not send this information in with your report)**

[Suggested evidence for Section 7 = Before and after photographs, meter readings, waste audit data, pupil attitude questionnaires etc. etc.]

**SECTION 8 – General**

**(To be completed by the Headteacher)**

Briefly describe how you see your Eco-Schools programme developing in the future	
What have been the benefits of Eco-Schools to your school?	
How have you managed to ensure whole school awareness and participation in Eco-Schools?	
How has Eco-Schools been integrated into your School Development Plan?	

**Signed:**.....  
**Headteacher**

**SECTION 9 – Re-applications**

**Complete this section if your school has previously been awarded the Green Flag status**

Explain briefly what progress you have made with your Eco-Schools work and what have been the main developments since you were awarded green flag status	
If it has been significantly more than two years since you were awarded green flag status, please explain briefly the reason(s) for this and outline any problems which have occurred.	
If your application is successful do you require another Green Flag	Yes / No

### Checklist for Green Flag Application and Re-Application

<b>SECTION 11 3 x This completed application form</b>	
<b>3 x Your Initial Environmental Review</b>	
<b>3 x Your follow-up Environmental Review</b>	
<b>3 x Your Eco-School Action Plan</b>	
<b>3 x Notice-board photograph</b>	
<b>3 x Your Eco-Code</b>	
<b>3 x Your Display Energy Certificate</b>	

**NB: Please ensure that you print or copy documents double sided wherever possible.**

The above (and no other material) should be sent to:

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland

**TIDY Northern Ireland**

Bridge House  
Paulett Avenue  
BELFAST  
BT5 4HD

Or e-mailed to:

[info@eco-schoolsni.org](mailto:info@eco-schoolsni.org)