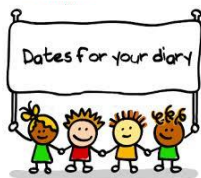


Eco-Schools Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland November 2014 Newsletter. We would like to apologise for the difficulties that many schools experienced when they tried to open the October Newsletter. We understand that c2k blocked the link and we have been working with them to try to ensure that this will not happen again. We appreciate your patience and understanding in this matter.

Your invitation to the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Celebration Event



Invitations have now been sent to schools for the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Celebration Event, which will be held on **Thursday 5th March 2015 at the Meadowbank Sports Arena, Magherafelt**. We are hoping that approximately 3000 guests, mostly schoolchildren from across Northern Ireland, will attend so we recommend booking your tickets soon to avoid disappointment.

Eco-Schools are proud to celebrate 20 years of Eco-Schools and this landmark event provides the opportunity to recognise all the fantastic environmental projects that schools are working on. Hands-on practical workshops and inspirational activities will form a key part of the event, providing guests with a productive and motivating learning experience. There will also be numerous interactive environmental activities, performances and exhibitions.

Tickets will initially be limited so book early to avoid disappointment!

Operation Energy Power Down Day – 6th November 2014

More than 100 Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland have been taking part in International World Days of Action again this year with SSE Airtricity's Operation Energy Power Down Day. Schools monitored their electricity use for a week with a whole school effort to switch off and power down on Thursday 6th November.



Last year schools were able to make an impressive 20% reduction in energy consumption during Power Down Day. Two Northern Ireland Schools, Cumran Primary School and Holy Cross Primary School Attical, were awarded first prize for their energy saving efforts in the Eco-Schools FEE International competition for World Days of Action.

We are looking forward to seeing the results from this year and sharing the successes shortly. Any school that has an interesting story that they would like to share about their Power Down Day can email it to ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org. Examples of best actions and results will be sent to FEE again this year as part of our International reporting.

European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR)

Eco-Schools would like to encourage all schools to do their bit for Reducing, Reusing and Recycling by participating in the European Week for Waste Reduction Campaign. The focus for EWWR 2014 is Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) and we would be delighted if schools could help raise awareness of the issue of food waste prevention.



There will be many useful resources in the Northern Ireland EWWR Resource pack as well as a variety of useful templates including EWWR's own guides, logos, banners and posters available to download via the LFHW website (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com) so getting involved needn't be work intensive. If your school would like to get involved this year please ensure your actions and pledges are registered **by the 10th November 2014 deadline** otherwise all your hard work won't be counted!

To find out more about EWWR 2014 log onto www.ni.lovefoodhatewaste.com and click on the link, or contact Danielle McCormick at Danielle.mccormick@wrap.org.uk.

Translink & Eco-Schools launch challenge for 'Healthier & Happier' School Run

NI pupils join 2 week sustainable transport challenge.

The 2014-2015 Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge has been launched to tackle the issue of car use and congestion around schools and boost the health and wellbeing of participants. Key Stage 1 – 3 pupils are encouraged to walk, cycle or use the bus and train for the school run. With recent independent research revealing that people who use sustainable transport for the journey to and from work have a significantly lower BMI and are happier than those who opt to use private transport, it's hoped that parents and pupils will also embrace these benefits and leave the car at home. Launching the initiative at Forge Integrated Primary School Belfast, **Translink's Lynda Shannon said:**



"We want to encourage pupils from a young age to adopt good travel habits that stay with them as they grow up and become the next generation of commuters travelling to work. As well as helping schools achieve the internationally-recognised Eco-Schools Green Flag, there are also some great challenge winner prizes up for grabs including an Ulsterbus Tours school coach trip and day out in Dublin. We're looking forward to working with local schools to tackle the school run congestion and help make life better for more families across Northern Ireland."

Schools can register their participation online now at www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools where there is a range of engaging classroom resources available to download.

For further information call Eco-Schools on 028 9073 6920 or email eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Operation Energy Resource

Operation Energy is an exciting education programme from SSE Airtricity, Principal Sponsors of Eco-Schools, which is aimed at inspiring teachers, children and parents to become advocates for energy-use reduction, awareness and efficiency. This fantastic free resource includes downloads, lesson plans and games, and is available online at www.operation-energy.com.



Northern Ireland Schools take action to Litter Less

Tackling the tricky issue of litter is the focus of thirty local schools determined to make a difference by looking after their local environment. They have received funding from the Wrigley Jr Company Foundation to deliver a 'Litter Less' project with pupils in the school and their local communities. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are delighted to be delivering the campaign through the Eco-Schools Programme in partnership with the Foundation for Environmental Education.

Schools in Northern Ireland will be taking part along with schools from 27 other countries around the Globe to raise awareness of litter problems and encourage positive behaviour changes. The Campaign will form an important part of their Eco-Schools work as they go for the prestigious internationally recognized Green Flag award and will include practical actions like litter picking and waste reduction as well as a campaign to win hearts and minds in the battle against littering.

The Campaign was launched with St Mary's Primary School and St Colm's High School from Draperstown. The two schools have been working together to gather litter and to protect the environment in their schools and the local Moykeeran 'Plantin' Park. Last year they collected 22 bags of rubbish in a combined litter pick with 83 pupils taking part. This year the two schools hope to continue to work closely together on all Eco-School projects, giving their pupils the opportunity to contribute positively to maintaining an eco-friendly environment in Draperstown.



Council and Eco-Schools Cluster Group Meetings

Eco-Schools staff were delighted to attend Cluster Group meetings organised by the following Councils during October 2014:

- **Newry & Mourne District Council** – thanks to Pat McShane for organising 2 recent events Slieve Gullion Courtyard and the Nautilus Centre in Kilkeel. These meetings were attended by a total of 37 teachers who were able to hear more about the Eco-Schools Programme as well as other organisations able to assist them with their Eco-Schools work.
- **Down District Council** – thanks to Lucinda Scott for organising this event attended by 25 teachers in Down District Council offices. The event was attended by Down DC Biodiversity Officer, Sustrans, RSPB and Trócaire representatives who were able to give teachers some valuable insight into how they can assist them with the practical application of the Eco-Schools Programme.



Both these meetings proved to be a great success with many schools registering for projects/initiatives and very positive encouragement was given by schools already involved in the Programme.

A joint Cluster Group meeting is being organised by Emma Adair for the **North Down and Ards Borough Council** areas on 19th November 2014 from 3 – 4pm at The Alderman George Green Community Centre in Bangor. Any schools from those council areas wishing to attend should contact Emma Adair directly at North Down Borough Council.

Eco-Schools and **Belfast City Council** will be holding a joint 'Sharing of Good Practice' meeting on 18th November from 1.45 – 3.45pm at Forge Integrated Primary School. There will be some new resources launched at this meeting along with school presentations from Taughmonagh Primary School and Harberton Special School about their Tree Trail and Forge IPS will share their Green Flag assessment process and projects. Any schools wishing to attend are encouraged to bring their own great ideas to display on an 'Ideas Table' so please contact Joanna.mcdonnell@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org if you would like to attend.

Council Green Flag Award Presentation Ceremonies

During October, two councils hosted Green Flag award presentation ceremonies which are an excellent opportunity for both schools and councils to publicise their environmental activities and to reward the pupils who have undertaken all the hard work over the year.

Congratulations to schools in **Coleraine Borough Council** who were invited to a very special Green Flag Presentation Ceremony in the Council Offices. 7 schools achieved the prestigious Green Flag award during the last academic year:

- Hezlett Primary School;
- Kilrea Primary School;
- St. Columba's Primary School, Kilrea;
- St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Primary School;
- Portstewart Primary School;
- St. Columba's Primary School, Ballerin; and
- Mill Strand Integrated Primary School.



Eco-Committee pupils also participated in a Q&A session in the chambers with Mayor of Coleraine, Councillor George Duddy. It was great to see them answering all his questions with such enthusiasm and knowledge. Clearly well-deserved Green Flags!

Well done to 3 schools in **Strabane District Council** area who were invited to attend a Green Flag Presentation Ceremony in the Council Offices. Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School, Donemana Primary School and St Theresa's Primary School all celebrated their Green Flag success with Councillor Dan Kelly and it was a fantastic reward for all the pupils and staff after their hard work!

Delivery Partner Update

We have a number of delivery partners who can help schools with the topics, either by visiting their schools or by providing the necessary resources. The full list of [delivery partners](#) can be found on the Eco-Schools Website.

Green Flag Awards

Well done to four schools, **Holy Child Nursery School, Drumnamoe Nursery School, Linn Primary School** and **Down High School** on achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag in October. We are continually amazed at the knowledge and enthusiasm of all the pupils and staff at our Green Flag schools and they are to be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.



Eco-Schools Northern Ireland
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
Bridge House, 2 Paulett Avenue
Belfast, BT5 4HD
Tel: 028 9073 6920
eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org