



ECO-SCHOOLS NEWS

August 2016

Welcome Back!!

Eco-Schools look forward to another record breaking year in 2016-2017.

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Northern Ireland schools continue to excel in the prestigious global Eco-Schools programme, achieving a record number of Green Flag awards for the 5th consecutive year in 2015/16 with 136 schools achieved the prestigious, internationally recognized Green Flag Award

This represents a year-on-year increase in the number of schools achieving the prestigious award for the 5th year in a row. Increasing from 55 in 2010/11 to 97 in 2011/12; 103 in 2012/13; 114 in 2013/14; 128 in 2014/15 and now a record breaking 136 in 2015/16 school year. See the [full list](#) of schools achieving the Green Flag award in 2015/16.

We are looking forward to building on success this year and supporting more schools to reach Green Flag status. Keep an eye out here in the newsletter for ideas, visit our [website](#), [twitter](#) and [facebook](#) pages for ideas and please contact us directly with any questions you may have about the programme eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.



Pupils from St Kieran's Primary, Campbell College Junior School, Christ the Redeemer Primary, Greenwood Primary and Knockbreda Primary in Belfast celebrate Green Flag success at Belfast City Hall.

Green Flag application deadlines for 2016-2017.

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

- Pre-Christmas assessment: **4th November 2016**
- Pre-Easter assessment: **6th January 2017**
- Summer assessment (before the 23rd June): **10th March 2017**



Please note that there will be no assessments organised for the week commencing 26th June 2017.

We will do our best to assess schools submitting after the suggested deadlines but may find this difficult, particularly in the summer term, which is very busy. So beat the rush and get your application in early.

Ambassador Eco-Schools

We are delighted to be able to expand our Ambassador Eco-Schools scheme to more outstanding Eco-Schools.



Being an Ambassador Eco-School is recognition that you are an inspirational flagship Eco-School, with exceptional levels of pupil leadership and whole school support which ensures sustainability is embedded in the school ethos.

As well as continuing as an excellent Green Flag school an Ambassador

Eco-School will be held up as an example of good practice in the Eco-Schools programme and mentor and work with other less experienced schools.



Belmont Primary School hosting international visitors in 2015.

Read more of the specifics on our [website](#) and contact [ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto: ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org) for more information and an application form to be considered for Ambassador Eco-School status.

Calling all Volunteers

We would like to say a massive thank-you to all our amazing volunteer Green Flag Assessors who helped us reach another record breaking year in 2015/16. Without you we would not be able to deliver the programme at the level we do.

Eco-Schools is always seeking new Assessors who can offer up a couple of days a year to complete a minimum of 2 assessments. If you are an environmental enthusiast, or educator and/or you are interested in inspiring and encouraging young people to look after the environment then please [contact us](#). Irish speaking Assessors would also be very welcome. (All Assessors will be Access NI checked).

The next Green Flag Assessor training date is 27th September from 9am to 2.30pm.

We are also looking for volunteers to help us with other aspects of administration work for the programme. Please contact us if you could give us some of your time.

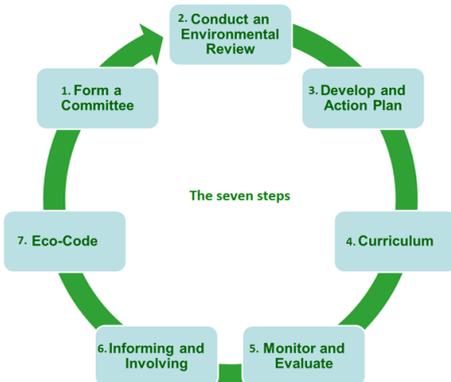
Eco-Schools Programme - reminders and updates.

It's always worth reminding yourself of the Eco-Schools programme structure especially if you have been working on the programme for a number of years.

The programme is structured around the international **7 steps** framework and is assessed on your actions in each of these areas. [Read more on the 7 steps here.](#)

In Northern Ireland we have **10 topics** from which you chose 3 to work on. For your Eco-Schools awards you should be working on 1 major topic and 2 minor topics which you can maintain all the way to your first Green Flag. After your first Green Flag we suggest you change your topics around and/or introduce a new topic to keep your programme fresh. [Read more on the 10 topics here.](#)

The **Green Flag** application will ask you to outline what you have been doing in each of the seven steps. In the past this has always been a paper application but this year we are delighted to be **moving the process online**. More information on this exciting development will follow in the next newsletter. This will require you to **know your login** - so [contact us](#) if you have forgotten it.



School News:

Ballycraig Primary host School Grounds Open Day.

Ballycraig Primary, Ambassador Eco-School for School Grounds, hosted their second successful open day on 27th June. Nearly 30 schools popped along to see the great work the school has been doing in the garden, wildlife area, playground and their hens. Guests were shown around by Jocelyn Brown, Eco-Coordinator at the school, and enthusiastic parents and pupils. Inviting parents to get involved in the school garden has made a huge difference to the look of the school and its place in the local community. The school has successfully raised money, won many awards and involved local businesses in their school grounds activities. As a result they have created an enviable outdoor learning space which the pupils benefit from and are extremely proud of.



Pupils and parents proudly showcased their excellent School Grounds work at Ballycraig's open day.

Ulidia Integrated College pupils enjoy end of term Green Day.

Ulidia Integrated College, Ambassador Eco-School for Global Perspectives, held their annual Green Day at the end of last term. The day involves the whole school in environmental actions, learning and fun activities. This year Ulidia were delighted to invite pupils from neighbouring Acorn Integrated Primary along to enjoy the day too. Ulidia have been mentoring Acorn who are hoping to go for their first Green Flag later this year. Green Day saw guests from Eco-Schools, Trócaire, Ulster Wildlife, QUB and ISL come along to talk to the pupils as well as a bird of prey display to round off the day. Pupils also completed litter picks and planting around the school and local community.



Ulidia pupils collected litter along Belfast Lough shore during their Green Day in June.

Council News:

Eco-Schools Cluster Group Meetings.

Hosted by our supporting Councils these events are an opportunity to meet your local Council representatives, Eco-Schools staff, other schools and environmental organisations to find out what support is available for your programme this year.

Newry, Mourne and Down:

28th Sept @ 1230, Slieve Gullion Courtyard: contact [Patrick McShane](#)

29th September @ 1400, Downshire Civic Centre : contact [Rebecca McGreevy](#)

Mid and East Antrim:

4th October, 5th October and 6th October - times and locations to be confirmed: contact [Barry Tapster](#)



Eco-Schools visit EduFestNI 2016

Staff from the Eco-Schools team were thrilled to take part in this year's EduFestNI gathering at Cullybackey College on 16th August. It was a great opportunity to meet lots of inspiring teachers and attend some interesting sessions. Around 300 teachers and 40 exhibitors attended the event.

We were particularly impressed by the session held by Neil McAllister from Fairview Primary and Jocelyn Brown from Ballycraig Primary who did a great job explaining their actions for success in the Eco-Schools programme.



International Eco-Schools News:

Wrigley's Litter Less Campaign 2015/16 Overview.

The second year of the Campaign Phase II was internationally launched in September 2015, and Campaign ran across 22 Eco-Schools countries. It continues to have a great impact and, most importantly, is positively influencing the behaviour of the participants across the world. Stories from schools can be [read here](#). If you are interested in being involved this year contact [Ruth Van Ry](#).



YRE winning articles published by Huffington Post.

Take a look at the inspiring winning articles from last year's international Young Reporters for the Environment competition in the [Huffington Post](#). We hope Post Primary School pupils will be inspired to take part again this year. More details available on our [webpage](#).



FEE fully committed to the Sustainable Development Goals

As a global organisation, the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) shapes and highlights its role as a stakeholder and trendsetter in the Sustainable Development process, particularly for environmental, educational and eco-tourism matters. [Read more...](#)

As part of this commitment to the SDGs, we at Eco-Schools, would like to encourage schools to take part in the World's Largest Lesson.

World's Largest Lesson during the week of 18th September 2016.



In September 2015 World Leaders committed to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. 17 goals to achieve 3 extraordinary things in the next 15 years. End extreme poverty. Fight inequality and injustice. Fix climate change. To realise these Goals everyone, however young they are, needs to take part. So join our movement, teach young people about the Goals and encourage them to become the generation that changed the world.



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

[Click here](#) and find all the resources you need to introduce the Global Goals to young people, take part and take action.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful news:

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland is operated by the environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Here is the latest news from other areas of our organisation:

Green Flags for Parks Awarded

Environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, in association with Heyn Environmental Solutions, revealed the parks and green spaces that have been awarded a prestigious Green Flag for parks award.

Armagh Palace Demesne provided the perfect backdrop, as a record 51 parks and green spaces in Northern Ireland received their award, for exceeding tough environmental standards for green space management and visitor facilities – the Green Flag Award is the mark of a quality park or green space, recognised throughout the world.

For the 2016/17 season, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful saw a continued increase in public parks, country parks, cemeteries and green spaces meeting the demanding standards.

A full list of the winning parks can be found on the [Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful website](#). Why not see if there is one near you and plan some outdoor learning in an award winning setting?

Don't forget you can [pledge](#) your support to the Live Here Love Here campaign and receive updates about actions being taken in your community.



51 Parks and Green Spaces were awarded Green Flags for 2016/17.

Other News:

Sustrans seeking schools for active travel initiative.

Sustrans will be continuing to deliver the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland for the next five years until 2021 with funding from the Department for Infrastructure and the Public Health Agency. The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an active and healthy journey to school. This initiative will directly help your school to progress in the Transport, Healthy Living and Climate Change Eco-Schools topics.

They are now recruiting schools to join the free programme which will begin in October 2016. If you would like your school to join the Active School Travel Programme, please visit their [website](#) where you can download the application form and supporting materials. Please be sure to return your application before the deadline of **Friday, 30th September 2016**. Alternatively, you can request the application pack by emailing schoolsNI@sustrans.org.uk or ringing 028 9043 4569.



Killylea Primary

Woodland Trust - free trees and education resources available.

Schools are invited to apply for free packs of trees for planting from the Woodland Trust each autumn and spring. The tree packs come in a choice of size and mix of species, ranging from 30 native trees for a small copse, to 420 trees for an area equivalent to a large football pitch. Schools can apply for up to 2 free packs per year – they're ideal for gardening clubs and to make your school more environmentally friendly.

Choose from six different themes – from species that will attract wildlife to favourites that will provide year-round colour or a wild harvest.

Find out more and register for your free trees online at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees.

Lots of free supporting resources, including the Green Tree Schools Award, can be found at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/schools.



Open Air Laboratories (OPAL)

National Network Event

“Education in the 21st Century”

This outdoor learning expo will include a range of speakers, exhibitors and practical workshops to inspire and aid the incorporation of outdoor learning into your teaching.



Thursday 22nd September 2016
9.30am – 2.30pm
The Great Hall, Queen's University Belfast

To register or for more info click [here](#)
Or check out Eventbrite



LOTTERY FUNDED

More Green Flag photos from June 2016.

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.



St Joseph's Primary, Strangford.



Windmill Integrated Primary, Portadown.

Contact us at:

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The Eco-Schools Programme is supported by DAERA

Don't stop here! Visit our Eco-Schools Northern Ireland [website](#) for more news, project ideas, programme guidance, case studies, delivery partner information, and much more.