

## Eco-Schools Primary Environmental Review

This review is a suggested format, designed to be an audit tool for the Eco-Committee to use in your school. The questions are labelled so that you can tell which will require investigation by the pupils, which they will need to ask a member of staff about and which may take a bit of research.

The Eco-Schools programme does not require that you complete all the suggestions in this document. It is designed to be a stimulus that you can use to assess what happens in your school at the start of the programme and as a baseline audit each year.

You may not know all the answers to all the questions in each section but if you choose to work further on a topic the answers should be found by the next time you complete the review. It also might not include every possible idea that you could carry out, so please don't take the questions as exhaustive.






The questions will help Eco-Committee members to think of actions that can be undertaken in the school to improve the environment and the school's impact on our planet. The 3 chosen topics (1 major and 2 minor) for the year should then be put into an Action Plan.

Take the time to investigate every year as a lot can change over 12 months.

**Date completed: 30.03.23**

**Completed by: The Eco Committee**

### Key

	These are suggested links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For more ideas and information visit <a href="#">our website</a> .
	Pupils can find the answers themselves by looking carefully around the school.
	Pupils may need to ask an adult to find the answers to these questions.
	A little bit more investigation is required, maybe a survey or asking questions to other pupils.
	This is a way of <b>measuring</b> the impact that you are having on the environment so you can show how much you are improving. This is an important part of being an Eco-School.

# Biodiversity



Does the school have trees in the grounds?		Yes	No
Does the school have more hedging than fencing around the parameter?		Yes	No
Are some of your trees and hedging native species?		Yes	No
Does your school have a pond or marshy area?		Yes*	No
Does your pond have an exit route for frogs, toads, newts and hedgehogs?		Yes N/A	No
Does your school have a wildflower meadow? <b>We have a Pollinator Garden with wildflowers.</b>		Yes	No
Does your school have areas of long/undisturbed vegetation linking habitats together?		Yes	No
Does your school have any of the following aids to biodiversity? Please circle/highlight the ones that you have:  <b>Log pile</b> <b>Stone pile</b> <b>Minibeast hotel</b> <b>Scented flowers/herbs</b> <b>Butterfly bushes</b> <b>Bird feeders</b> <b>Water for birds</b> <b>Bird boxes</b> <b>Bat boxes**</b> <b>Swift houses***</b> <b>Bee homes</b> <b>Hedgehog House</b> <b>Hedgehog passages (i.e. under/through fencing)</b>		Yes	No
Are the school grounds free from herbicides and pesticides?		Yes	No
Do you always use peat-free compost?		Yes	No
Have you carried out a biodiversity survey of your school grounds?		Yes	No

## Biodiversity action points/comments:

\*We were instructed by EA to remove our pond due to health and safety concerns.








We have a Marshy area in outdoor classroom.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Install a new pond.
- ✓ Create hedgehog passages (i.e. under/through fencing)

# Climate Change



Do pupils understand the difference between weather and climate?		Yes	No
Is there an understanding of the contributing factors to climate change i.e., the use of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere?		Yes	No
Do some classes study the effects of climate change on different people and wildlife around the world?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand their carbon footprint and know ways to reduce it?		Yes	No
Which of these things do you do to reduce the school's carbon footprint: Circle all that you are doing:  <i>Walk/cycle/take the bus to school*</i> <i>Recycle all the waste you can</i> <i>Buy local food</i> <i>Carpool to school</i> <i>Save energy</i> <i>Plant trees</i> <i>Use less plastic and paper</i> <i>Save water</i> <i>Offset air travel through the Global Forest Fund</i>		Yes	No
Do you measure any of the above actions you have taken?		Yes	No
If yes, have you used an online carbon calculator to see how much carbon you are saving? <i>Hint one is available in the Eco-Schools Resource Library.</i>		Yes	No

## Climate Change action points/comments:

There aren't many footpaths for pupils and staff to walk to school safely.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Measure out climate change actions.
- ✓ Look into the Global Forest Fund.
- ✓ Complete an online carbon calculator to see how much carbon we are saving.

# Energy



## Gas / Oil:

Are windows and doors always kept shut when the heating is on?		Yes	No
Does each classroom have a thermometer so you can try and keep the temperature at 18 degrees centigrade?		Yes	No
Is there insulation in the roof of the school building to reduce heat loss?		Yes	No

## Electricity:

Are lights <b>always</b> turned off in empty rooms?		Yes	No
Are lights turned off as soon as there is enough daylight?		Yes	No
Are projectors/whiteboards, computers and monitors switched off when not in use?		Yes	No

## General:

Do pupils understand how our energy is generated, how it effects the environment, and the benefits of renewable energy?		Yes	No
Do pupils or an adult keep track of the electricity readings?		Yes	No
Has the school investigated possible sources of renewable energy?		Yes	No

What is your Display Energy Certificate (DEC) score? You should be able to find it in your school or <a href="#">online</a> . It's a really useful document to track your school's energy efficiency between years.		100 - D
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## Energy action points/comments:

The school has installed solar panels on the roof.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Staff to be reminded to turn heating off rather than open windows.
- ✓ Purchase thermometers.
- ✓ Energy Monitors will make sure that lights, projectors/whiteboards, computers and monitors are switched off when not in use or not needed.

# Global Perspective



Does your school have an active link with a school in another country?		Yes	No
Do the teachers have Fairtrade tea and coffee in the staffroom?		Yes	No
Are there any other Fairtrade products used in school? (fruit juice, footballs, bananas)		Yes	No
Do pupils recognise the Fairtrade symbol and understand its meaning?		Yes	No
Do you have any visitors from the local community/Eco-Schools delivery partners to talk about local or global issues?		Yes	No
Are pupils aware of their Rights and Responsibilities (linked to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child)?		Yes	No
Do you have any whole school awareness days to support people in other countries/situations?		Yes	No
Do you ever raise money or collect clothing/toys for charities working in developing countries?		Yes	No
Are pupils aware of, or are lessons linked to, the UN Sustainable Development Goals?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand that choices/behaviours in the developed world can effect people in the developing world in an unfair way?		Yes	No

## Global Perspective action points/comments:

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Hold a whole school awareness day to support people in other countries/situations.
- ✓ Develop awareness and complete lessons based on UN Sustainable Development Goals.

# Healthy Living



Do you have a fruit tuck shop that is run by pupils?		Yes	No
Are pupils encouraged to bring fruit for break?		Yes	No
Do you measure how many pupils bring a healthy break/lunch to school?		Yes	No
Do pupils have the opportunity to suggest what healthy choices they would like to include in the dinner/canteen menu?		Yes	No*
Is there free drinking water available to pupils all day?		Yes	No
Do all pupils get to experience growing and then eating their own food at school?		Yes	No
Is there a fitness programme established in the school?		Yes	No
Does the school invite outside health agencies to come and talk to pupils about their health?		Yes	No
Does the school have an anti-bullying policy?		Yes	No
Does the school run any mindfulness and meditation lessons?		Yes	No

## Healthy Living action points/comments:

\*Our dinners are brought to us from another school. We don't have any say in what is provided.

We have a Healthy Snack Policy that is sent out to parents every year.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Start a tuck shop run by pupils.
- ✓ Take part in a Healthy Lunchbox initiative.

# Litter



## Inside the school:

Is the inside of the school free from litter?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins inside the school?		Yes	No
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	No
Are the bins emptied often enough?		Yes	No

## School grounds:

Are the school grounds free from litter?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins around the school grounds?		Yes	No
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	No
Are the bins suitable? E.g., does the litter blow out or are they too small/big?		Yes	No
If litter is present, is it coming from children in school or from outside the school grounds?		School	Outside

## Outside the school:

Is your community generally litter free?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins in the community?		Yes	No
Does the school help to keep the community clean?		Yes	No

## General:

Does the school have a clear policy on litter?		Yes	No
Do all pupils know the problems caused to the environment and wildlife by dropping litter?		Yes	No
Do you keep a record of what, where, when and amount of litter found?		Yes	No

## Litter action points/comments:

Some people throw rubbish out of their car windows and this can blow into our school grounds.

We have contacted Eskra Community Association to organise a Community Litter Pick.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Purchase more outside bins.
- ✓ Contact FODC to request more community bins.
- ✓ Complete regular litter picks in our school grounds and keep records of litter found.
- ✓ Take part in Wrigley's Litter Less Campaign.
- ✓ Take part in the Big Spring Clean.

**Please note Eco-Schools NI consider balloon releases a form of mass littering. Having a balloon release at school may put your Green Flag status in doubt. Please consult the litter topic section of the Eco-Schools website for more information.**

# Marine



Can pupils list 3 reasons why the marine environment/ocean is vitally important to us?		Yes	No
Do the pupils know about plastic pollution in the oceans?		Yes	No
Can the pupils list 3 reasons why marine litter is bad for the marine environment?		Yes	No
Do you study in class the Marine topic and the effects of plastics on wildlife and human health?		Yes	No
Has your school banned any single use plastics? Circle any actions that you are currently doing:  <i>Refusing - plastic straws/cutlery/bags/Styrofoam food containers</i> <i>Reducing – wrappers/packaging</i> <i>Recycling - plastic/food waste</i>		Yes	No
Do you measure any of the above actions you have taken?		Yes	No
Do the pupils recognise the things listed below as sources of plastic pollution (macro and microplastics)? Circle all that you are able to identify:  <i>Packaging</i> <i>Farming</i> <i>Construction</i>  <i>Coastal Tourism</i> <i>Cosmetics and toiletries</i> <i>Shipping</i>  <i>Texiles and clothing</i> <i>Road transportation</i> <i>Fishing</i>		Yes	No
Has your school taken part in a litter clean-up of a beach/river/or local area?		Yes	No

## Marine action points/comments:

Please list 3 ways we can prevent marine litter entering the marine environment

Single use plastic water bottles are banned in our school.  
We can prevent marine litter entering the marine environment through improved waste, in particular plastic waste, management, increased recycling and avoidance of single use products.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Complete the Marine topic in class.
- ✓ Ban more items.
- ✓ Measure our actions.
- ✓ Continue to take part in the Big Spring Clean.

# Outdoor Learning



Are there games painted on the playground?		Yes	No
Are there murals, mosaics, sculptures or other artwork?		Yes	No
Are there plenty of things for climbing and balancing on, jumping and swinging from?		Yes	No
Are there quiet places to sit and talk?		Yes	No
Do you grow your own vegetables or fruit in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do you have an outdoor classroom/log circle area?		Yes	No
Do you have friendship stops or buddy benches?		Yes	No
Are any lessons held in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do you keep count of how many lessons are held in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do all pupils have the opportunity to suggest what changes or new things they would like in the school grounds?		Yes	No

## Outdoor Learning action points/comments:

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Make a mosaics wall and a bee sculpture for our Pollinator Garden.
- ✓ Make a rope swing.

# Transport



Do most pupils walk, cycle or catch the bus to school?		Yes	No*
Do you survey how people travel to school?		Yes	No
Is there somewhere dry and safe to store bikes?		Yes	No
Does the school provide cycle instruction for pupils?		Yes	No
Do you hold regular walk or cycle to school events/days?		Yes	No
Is it safe to walk or cycle to school?		Yes	No
Do cars park away from the entrance to the school?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand the environmental benefits of sustainable transport?		Yes	No
Have you taken part in a sustainable transport challenge i.e. the Translink Travel Challenge?		Yes	No

## Transport action points/comments:

Most of our pupils travel to school by bus or car due to a lack of footpaths on main roads.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Survey how people travel to school.
- ✓ Find out more about the Translink Travel Challenge.

# Waste



## Reduce:

Does the school use email to send newsletters? Website		Yes	No
If you send letters, is it one per family?		Yes	No
Do teachers photocopy back-to-back when they can?		Yes	No
Do pupils bring their packed lunch in reusable containers?		Yes	No

## Reuse:

Are there scrap paper trays in the classrooms?		Yes	No
Are the toilet paper and hand towels made from recycled paper?		Yes	No
Does the office and photocopier use recycled paper?		Yes	No
Do you reuse any packaging in the classrooms (e.g. junk models)?		Yes	No
Do you have a swap shop for school uniform/games/ books/DVDs?		Yes	No

## Recycle:

Which of the following do you recycle? (circle or highlight)						
Paper	Plastic	Cans	Cardboard	Clothing/Material		
Batteries	Phones	Stamps	Glasses	Food	Ink	
Cartridges						
Do you have a compost bin/area that is in use?		Yes	No			
Do you use your compost on the school grounds?		Yes	No			
Are there enough recycling bins around the school?		Yes	No			
Do the recycling bins always have the right things in them?		Yes	No			

## Information:

Do you measure how much waste you are preventing from going to landfill sites?		Yes	No
If so, does everyone in the school know how much waste you are saving from landfill?		Yes	No
Do pupils in the school know the issues of landfill?		Yes	No

**Waste action points/comments:**

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Use our own compost on the school grounds.
- ✓ Measure how much waste we are preventing from going to landfill sites.

# Water



Is the school free from dripping taps?		Yes	No
Do pupils always turn the taps off fully?		Yes	No
Do you have water saving devices in the toilet cisterns? <i>e.g., a Hippo bag or bottles filled with water</i>		Yes	No*
If you have push taps, do they dispense the right amount of water at the right speed?		Yes	No
Do you have a water butt to collect rainwater for watering plants?		Yes	No
Is rainwater collected and used for anything else around the school? <i>e.g., flushing toilets or maintaining pond levels</i>		Yes	No
Do you learn about water issues in other countries?		Yes	No
Is the school involved in any river or coast conservation projects?		Yes	No
Are pupils or an adult able to take water readings from the meter or from the utility bill? (NI Water may be able to help you with this)		Yes	No

## Water action points/comments:

\*Toilets were installed by EA.

We could complete the following actions:

- ✓ Create posters to remind pupils to turn taps off fully.
- ✓ Ask Monitors to check the taps regularly.
- ✓ Get involved in a river or coast conservation project.