

Green-Schools TRAVEL



The Irish school community has done an **AMAZING** job to ensure our schools can re-open and our students can return to school in a safe and happy environment. The Green-Schools team would like to acknowledge the phenomenal work of principals, teachers, caretakers, secretaries, Boards of Management and Parents Associations.



We understand that school communities are working in new ways and have put in huge efforts to ensure that our schools can re-open. While staying safe at school is the number one priority right now, we believe that continuing working on your Green-Schools programme can also be extremely beneficial at this time.



WE ARE HERE TO HELP IN ANY WAY WE CAN!



Our most important piece of advice for Green-Schools Coordinators this year is...relax! We know you have a lot to think about so we will not be expecting schools to be in a position to run their programme in the usual way, and we want to re-assure all coordinators that there is no pressure from us – only support!

We hope this document will provide you with re-assurance, clarity and some fun and useful ideas to help you! Let's focus on what we **CAN** do together to help our environment!

HERE ARE SOME KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER:



- 1. Continuity** – In a time where “normality” seems to be a distant memory, restarting with old habits can be key. Regardless of age, for both students and teachers resuming work that was temporarily put on hold will help to restore a sense of continuity and will bring back the enthusiasm of seeing a project progressing. Students already did amazing work continuing to care and learn about the environment during lockdown by using our resources online. Going back to school is the perfect occasion to share new knowledge and apply it in a practical setting.
- 2. Learning Outside** – If you can get outside, this is a perfect opportunity to enhance your programme. What better place for learning about the environment than in nature itself? No need to go very far: a schoolyard, a garden or the local park can be the perfect location to keep working on your theme in a fun and safe way. Learning Outside is not only COVID-friendly (respecting social distances), it is also proven to be of vital importance in the promotion of health and well-being – both mental and physical. Green-Schools is producing a “Guide to Learning Outside” which will be available soon.
- 3. Your work is amazing!** – You did so much already, it would be a pity to stop now. During lockdown we received an outstanding number of applications and the standard of work was incredible, showing how committed Irish schools are to taking action for our planet. Continuing this work is still so important and we know we can still work together to make a real difference.
- 4. The world needs more environmentalists!** The climate emergency is not over, and collaborative efforts are vital if we are to reduce emissions. Therefore, your work on all 10 of the different Green-Schools themes is extremely important to keep raising awareness and form future environmental leaders and climate ambassadors!
- 5. We will be working with you** – The amount of assistance, access to resources and help that you will have from us will not be affected. We are working hard to maintain all our events/workshops /seminars for the year, using online platforms as much as possible. Our promise is to make it as easy, safe, interesting, and fun as possible for both students and teachers to keep working on their Green-Schools themes even from a distance!

Following the 7 steps of Green-Schools may be a little bit different for now.

HERE'S A FEW IDEAS TO HELP:



Step 1: Green-Schools Committee

If class groups cannot mix then select one classroom to be your Green-Schools Committee, pods can take responsibility for different elements. The Committee can be rotated using different classrooms throughout the year. (Different classrooms can take responsibility for different actions or if you are renewing your flag different classrooms could take responsibility for a different theme.)

A Green-Schools representative could be selected from each class who could report back to the whole school on their actions (using the intercom, or perhaps via a virtual meeting)

Alternatively, socially distant committee meetings may be possible using large halls or appropriate outdoor spaces

Your Green-Schools Committee can keep the whole school updated using the intercom or they could even create an online Green-Schools Noticeboard where classes can upload their work as using a physical Notice Board may not be possible.

Ideas, notes, suggestions, meeting minutes and other documents could be written up by class representatives and shared by teachers.

Step 2: Environmental Review - Travel

Before you even start to think about the solution you need to find out more about the problem. Your environmental review should look at school travel patterns in order to identify targets for action and improvement.

The following actions will help you find out the current situation as regards travel within and around your school:

Travel surveys – Schools can undertake a baseline travel survey to find out how students and staff travel to school. These can be conducted in a variety of ways:

- Travel surveys will be available digitally.
- You can use a recording sheet in each class, recording how students travel to school over a week, collate the sheets and share the results with the whole school. Recording sheets are available from your Green-Schools Travel Officer. Ask each morning, over a week, how students travel to school (this could be conducted by a student or teacher). Write the number who travel that particular mode,

against each mode of transport on the sheet. Instructions are given on how to collate results. Your Travel Officer can collate your results, or your committee can collate them. Remember to share them with the school and display them on your Green-Schools Notice Board.

Walkability Audit – Your school can undertake a walkability audit. This will be conducted by your Green-Schools Travel Officer to look at how pedestrian friendly it is outside and around your school. Findings such as the need for infrastructural changes outside the school, more signage or even road markings might be identified. The findings will be compiled in a report and submitted to your Local Authority for their review and feedback. We have a list of questions to ask and discuss with you. We will ask for your input too!

Cycleability Audit – These will be conducted by your Green-Schools Travel Officer, if promoting cycling to school, to look at how bike friendly it is outside and around your school. Findings such as the need for infrastructural changes outside the school, more signage or even road markings might be identified. The findings will be compiled in a report and submitted to your Local Authority for their review and feedback. We have a list of questions to ask and discuss with you. We will ask for your input too!

Traffic Count Survey – Schools can undertake a traffic survey. These can be conducted in a variety of ways:

- If the road passing your school is near a classroom window a student or a pod can stand inside, by the window, and can record what type of traffic as well as how much traffic is passing your school grounds, during a set period of time. Ask your Green-Schools Travel Officer for more details (recording sheet and lesson plan are available). They are also on our website: www.greenschoolsireland.org.
- This survey can also be conducted with your Green-Schools Travel Officer and committee (pod) outside, using your tablet for example to record traffic passing.
- This is an activity you can conduct as a class/ bubble outside and again your Green-Schools Travel Officer can explain further and provide you with recording sheets or you can use a tablet if you have one.
- Remember to share your results with the school and display them on your Green-Schools Notice Board.

Speed Survey - Schools can undertake a speed survey. These can be conducted in a variety of ways:

- If you have speed feedback signs by your school this is an activity you can conduct as a class/ bubble outside and your Green-Schools Travel Officer can explain further. Recording sheets are available but you could also use your tablet to record findings.
- This can be conducted with your Green-Schools Travel Officer and committee (pod) outside, using a speed gun and by using your tablet for example to record traffic passing. Worksheets are also available if needed.
- Remember to share your results with the school and display them on your Green-Schools Notice Board.

Mapping Exercise – This is a useful tool to identify where students live and how far they have to commute to school. This activity allows you to look for park and stride locations and explore options for promoting sustainable travel to school/college.

- This can be done by obtaining or drawing a large map of the school and it's catchment area. Students can pin their address on the map to identify their distance from the school and the route they take. Take a picture and share with your Green-Schools Travel Officer or share via a video call.
- Map my route: Students can make a map of their school journey and include information on how they travel and the sights en-route.
- You can use eircodes to plot where everyone lives on google maps and see the distance they live from the school. This can also show how students travel to school.

Step 3: Action Plan

An overall Action plan will be important! Just like climate action where we think globally and act locally, in schools this year class-based actions that feed into your school plan may be necessary. (Each class could even come up with their own Mini Action Plan to display throughout the year)

We highly recommend that you communicate with all staff and explain what your Green-Schools goals are for the year and ask the other teachers if they have anything planned in their classes that might feed into them.

It will be important this year to review suggested actions in light of all HSE guidelines to avoid setting targets which may be difficult to achieve.

Use online platforms to share your Action Plan if the physical Notice Board is out of use. Making use of school websites, blogs, social media channels or internal communication systems will be really important this year to share information!

Check out your theme handbook and www.greenschoolsireland.org for sample Action Plans and case studies.



Step 4: Monitoring & Evaluation: Travel

To ensure that progress towards your targets/actions in your action plan are checked, amended, that achievements are awarded and celebrated we ask you to monitor and evaluate your progress, reviewing your action plan as you go along.

Also to look at the Travel application on our website: www.greenschoolsireland.org. You can:

- Share information and actions from committee meetings over the intercom on your notice board or website.
- Travel surveys can be repeated regularly to monitor success and changes in travel choices. To use our 'Scores on The Doors' resource. Ask your Green-Schools Travel Officer for assistance.
- Carrying out regular travel awareness surveys may also be beneficial in evaluating students understanding of what sustainable travel is and how they can take actions at regular intervals where possible.
- Cycle parking and scooter parking record keeping - Record on a regular basis those that cycle and scoot to school. Collate the results and share with the whole school.
- Virtual Golden Boot/Travel Award (refer to your Travel Handbook) - Share the winner of your Golden Boot/Travel Award with the whole school via a virtual Notice Board. You could also show the winners by displaying the award (certificate or picture of the class with the award) on your classroom window.
- Explore the use of google classrooms, Aladdin and Seasaw in your school for conducting surveys, sharing information. Share your findings with the whole school.
- Use quizzes as a fun way to keep everyone engaged in the monitoring and evaluation. You can use virtual platforms for the quiz such as Kahoot, but it is also possible to run a whole school quiz through the intercom. All classes can participate in this with 1 pod making a team in each class.





Step 5: Curriculum Links

In accordance with recommendations from the Department of Education, Green-Schools recommends continuing with your curriculum work outside as much as possible. We are developing a "Guide to Learning Outside" with practical tips for teachers and curricular links which will be available shortly.

There are lots of resources on our website www.greenschoolsireland.org which can be used to link Green-Schools to the curriculum. The many resources developed for the Green-Schools Stay Home project are classroom friendly and available online now.

Step 6: Informing & Involving

There are many ways to continue to tell everyone about the great work you are doing! If you have a school website you can set up a Green-Schools page, or a blog. E-zines are another great way to spread the word.

A Virtual Notice Board could work well this year, using sharing communication platforms like Miro, which each class can access, share, and view others work. The Committee can also upload information here about your Green-Schools programme.

There will be plenty of people in your community who will have adapted to delivering talks or workshops online so reach out to them and get them involved!

If an Action Day is not possible this year maybe hold a "Learning Day" or "Learning Week" where each class focuses on videos, lesson plans and activities associated with your Green-Schools theme.

Use your classroom windows to communicate your eco-friendly artwork, Green Code and messages.



Step 7: Green Code

Your Green code should be composed taking into account the current HSE guidelines.

Your Green Code is more important than ever this year as it's something the whole school community can get behind even if they can't get together. Each class could run a Code Competition with the winners chosen by the teacher, and sent to the Coordinator. Maybe your principal could pick the overall winner and announce over the intercom!

Use the school website, virtual noticeboard or your windows to communicate your Green Code to everyone!





WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

We're always here at the end of the phone, e-mail or even ZOOM call if you want to chat.

For up-to-date information on events, supports and resources please follow our social media channels FB, Twitter, Insta, and look online at www.greenschoolsireland.org where you can also sign up to receive our E-Zine.

Here's some really useful information for all schools working on the Travel theme:

- **A dedicated Travel Officer** is available to help your school with the Travel or GC Travel theme.
- **Online seminars** in October for all GS Co-Ordinators
- Online primary and secondary **conferences** in November
- **Clean Air Week** will take place from 16th - 20th November
- **Cycle and Scooter** parking may be available for your school, please contact your Travel Officer
- **Cycle training** funding may be available for your school, please contact your Travel Officer.



We aim to be as flexible as possible when it comes to the application and assessment process this year. We also may have to make changes depending on HSE guidelines but we will keep you updated and promise to work with you to make sure your hard work is rewarded if you are due to renew your Green Flag this year.

Our provisional deadline is the **26th March 2021**

You will need to register on our new online application system at www.greenschoolsireland.org to submit an application.

TOP TIPS



Focus on what you can do! Raising awareness and learning are really important elements of the programme



We understand this is a challenging time so it may not be possible to fully complete certain elements of the application form



Get in touch! Please contact us with any questions or concerns about the application process



Take lots of photos! As much of your work may be classroom based awareness raising and learning it's a good idea to take lots of photos or recordings, not only for your application but to share with the whole school and assessor if they cannot physically visit.



Keep as many records of your work as possible!



We absolutely love visiting schools to see all your amazing work, but this may have to happen virtually – either way, rest assured your work will be rewarded.



Don't stress



For queries about the application or assessment please contact:
gsapplications@eeu.antisce.org

For queries about the Travel theme please contact your
Green-Schools Travel Officer.

NOTES



Green-Schools
TRAVEL

GREENSCHOOLSIRELAND.ORG

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An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport