

Climate Action Week

Secondary School Case Study



Loreto High School Beaufort

The Green Committee in Loreto Beaufort first began their Climate Action Campaign by surveying the whole school as part of their Environmental Review. They asked students and teachers about the causes and effects of climate change, as well as potential solutions or actions to reduce climate change. Then they decided to focus on waste and transport as sub themes under climate change.

As the school already had a great recycling and composting system, the Green Committee decided to take it one step further and look at electronics and batteries (**below**). They contacted WEEE and had a speaker visit the school. An annual battery competition was launched. Blue boxes from WEEE Ireland were obtained and each form class brought in as many used batteries for recycling as they could. Classes were encouraged to gather batteries from their neighbours and local businesses too.



Transport surveys were also conducted because not as many people were cycling to school due to safety concerns. They arranged for large signs outside the school asking parents not to block the cycle lane. They purchased a number of traffic cones which a committee member puts outside the school gate every morning to block off the cycle lane from cars. They invited the community Garda to come and patrol the school gate area on a few mornings. The Green Committee also awarded random surprises to cyclists - attaching sweets or balloons to bikes on random days to encourage more cycling.

During their Climate Action Week, the school ran over 15 events including many climate change competitions, a staff training session, peer-to-peer learning on climate science, awareness campaigns and a folder of resources on climate change for all subject teachers.

The Green Code

"We in Beaufort endeavour to:

- Raise awareness of climate change issues
- Get the school working as a community to lower carbon emissions
- Encourage recycling and waste and energy conservation.
- Promote walking, cycling and carpooling to school"



As part of Green Week, the committee designed a model depicting the plight of the polar bear acting as a visual representation of Climate Change to the school surrounds (**above**). For each action or activity within the school identified as causing the release of co2 emissions, a water droplet was added and a balloon representing the ice was removed. Each time an action was taken to mitigate emissions (walking and cycling, recycling); an additional balloon was placed on the display. The project would give clear indications of the schools environmental performance and by using such a prominent visual representation, all 620 students became aware of the detrimental effect each action was having on climate change. Each day of the week a different theme was focused on. Climate change facts were distributed throughout the school. Each class that evaluated these facts were given points towards the Golden Boot Award-a trophy provided to the most environmentally friendly class using the points system in the photo attached.

Testimonial

"Our surveys showed that over the two years knowledge and awareness of the causes and effects of climate change increased. We liked the fact that under the umbrella of climate change we could look back at many of the previous themes... water, transport, waste etc rather than focusing solely on one area".

Celebrations!

Over the last two years they managed to recycle over 10,000 used batteries.

They also managed to more than double the number of cyclists while working on the travel theme!

After two years they found the following:

- 74% of the school community were able to name 3 causes of climate change,
- 85% were aware of the main effects of climate change,
- 94% were able to suggest actions to reduce climate change,
- 61% agreed their knowledge of climate change had increased during the 2 years as a result of the Green-Schools Committee awareness campaigns.