



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

**Message from President Michael D. Higgins  
Green-Schools Programme – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

Is mian liom mo bheannachtaí a sheoladh chuig ‘chuile dhuine a ghlac páirt i gClár na Scoileanna Glasa agus sibh ag céiliúradh 25 bliain ó bhunú an chláir. Tréaslaím libh.

May I send my very best wishes and congratulations to all those who are and have been involved in Green-Schools as you celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of what has been a transformative and exemplary programme.

For the last quarter of a century, the Green-Schools programme has helped to transform our schools into beacons of environmental consciousness, nurturing a generation of our younger citizens to become cognisant and mindful of their impact, on what surrounds them, what is precious, beautiful but can be lost, and to understand that we are all stewards of this precious, shared and vulnerable planet.

The Green-Schools scheme was launched in 1997 in the same year that the United Nations’ Kyoto Protocol was adapted by the global community, a milestone achievement aimed at protecting the planet from catastrophic climate change through the adoption of binding greenhouse gas emissions.

As we reflect on the past 25 years, it is clear that there remains so much to be done, new commitments, made and honoured – globally, nationally and locally – to tackle the serious issues that remain pressing for our ecological system. However, we can take great encouragement from the knowledge that our schools have become laboratories for environmental innovation.

Green-Schools has worked tirelessly to promote sustainability and environmental awareness in our young people, with great interest and enthusiastic, innovative actions coming into being, and being sustained, in schools across Ireland in relation to environmental issues such as energy and water conservation, litter and waste reduction, and eco-friendly and safe public transportation.

We are at a point of crisis, however, as our planet burns as a consequence of human actions that have been destructive. The severe concerns facing our planet have never been greater, and the urgency to act on and address these challenges has never been more urgent. A changing climate, pollution, and water management all threaten the health and wellbeing of all of us in Ireland and across the world.

The existential issue of climate change is one we must tackle together, and with a sense of urgency, if we are to avoid passing on a legacy to subsequent generations of an unstable and hostile Planet Earth.

It is truly heartening to see our young people being such important advocates in raising awareness of our pledge to tackle the causes of climate change, as expressed through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, our collectively agreed blueprint for a sustainable, inclusive future.

The success of Green-Schools gives us all confidence and hope that, with the support of engaged young people around Ireland, we can continue to confront these great challenges of our world – from climate change and biodiversity loss to global hunger and the quest for peaceful societies – and do so in a spirit of compassion and responsibility, recognizing that we belong to a greater family of global citizens.

I have over the years had a special relationship with the Green-Schools in recent times, enjoying my many visits to Green Flag raising events in schools, presenting Green Flags at awards ceremonies in Tailors' Hall, and speaking at the Green-Schools Expo in the RDS in 2016.

None of the excellent work that Green-Schools has achieved would have been possible without the initiative, ingenuity and leadership that so many teachers across Ireland

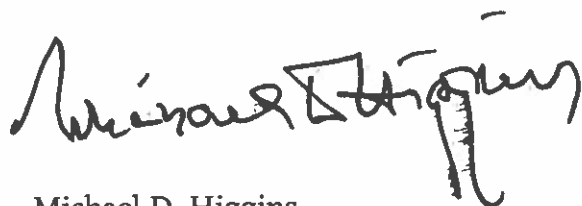
display, giving their time voluntarily, in their efforts to create a more sustainable, green and equitable future. May I send my appreciation and gratitude to all the teachers involved in Green-Schools for their dedication and hard work that goes into the programme. Tréaslaím leo is gabhaim mo bhuíochas leo.

As we celebrate this important milestone, let us renew our commitment to this vital cause, taking inspiration from the past 25 years, and looking forward with hope and determination, with efforts to empower our young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to protect the planet. Let us endeavour to work together to create a sustainable, just and equitable future for all. We all have a part to play.

Tréaslaím arís le 'chuile dhuine a raibh páirt acu i gClár na Scoileanna Glasa le 25 bliain anuas. Go n-éirí go geal le gach uile dhuine agaibh agus go maire an clár sa todhcháí.

Again my sincere congratulations to all those who have contributed to Green-Schools over the past 25 years, and I wish each and every one of you the very best for the programme to continue to thrive in to the future.

Beir beannacht.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Michael D. Higgins'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland