

Green-Schools 7 Steps and the Marine Environment.

1)Green-Schools Committee

The Green-Schools Committee aims to direct and address all phases of the Green-Schools Programme. It is the driving force of the programme and should ensure that all of the 7 steps are carried out.

Composition and Selection

As you have been working on the Green-Schools programme for many years, by now you will understand that establishing an effective committee is one of the most important aspects of the Green-Schools programme. It is essential that you include pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff; and remember that it is important that the committee is mainly student led. When you are establishing you committee for the Marine Environment theme, you should keep in mind that you are also required to maintain and develop the work carried out for all previous themes

Whether you want to create a committee dealing with all aspects of the programme; or a separate committee for each of themes is entirely up to you. However, it will be beneficial to allocate different jobs to different committee members so that the tasks are not too overwhelming.

2) Environmental Review

Aim : The aim is to raise awareness about the importance of the marine environment to our everyday lives and about the threats to this special ecosystem, in particular the threat of marine litter.

Review;

There are 3 essential actions we want you to carry out as part of the review

1. Marine Litter Awareness Survey.
2. Investigate sources of Marine Litter and promote an action to reduce it.
3. Take part in a 2 minute beach clean or 2 minute street clean.

1. Marine Litter Awareness Survey

Surveys are used to examine the level of awareness surrounding marine litter. Discuss the proposed questions in class and take into account the age and ability of the user. Survey as many students and staff as possible to get a clear picture. It should be done as early in the school year as possible .The questions are listed in the table below. You can return to the same list of questions at a later stage, as part of the Monitoring & Evaluating step, to see if levels of awareness have improved. Be sure and publicise the results on your Green-Schools notice board.

A similar survey could be brought home by the students.

Marine Litter Awareness Survey

Date	Class	Year 1	Year 2
	What % of students and staff ever heard of the term Marine Litter ?		

What % of students and staff can list 3 sources of Marine Litter		
What % of students and staff can list 3 reasons why marine litter is bad for the marine environment ?		
What % of students and staff can list 3 ways we can prevent Marine Litter entering the Marine Environment?		
What % of students and staff can list 3 ways in which Climate Change affects the Marine Environment all over the world?		

2. Investigate sources of Marine Litter and promote an action to reduce it.

This can be achieved in many ways for example;

- Exploring the biological diversity of our marine environment e.g. marine food webs
- Investigate your local river or beach. Find out what types of habitats are there, in and out of the water.
- Looking at invasive species in the oceans
- Do a class project on overfishing and its impact on the marine environment
- Finding out what is human induced enrichment to our waterways. How does it affect coastal and inland areas?
- Learn about the Great Pacific garbage patch, also known as the plastic continent. How did it get there? What can be done to reduce it?
- Contaminants – pesticides, insecticides, chemicals, cleaning products. Do a review of your schools cleaning products and gardening practices to see if they are environmentally friendly.
- Properties of marine litter – i.e. how long does it take to degrade, what is marine litter?
- You can bring in the global aspect too. For example you could look at what impact marine litter has on people in lesser developed countries who rely heavily on the ocean for their livelihood.
- Tie in with all our existing campaigns; Think Before You Flush (TBYF) in particular will make this theme interesting for midland schools or #2minutebeachclean or #2minutestreetclean campaigns; Eco-Schools litter less campaign.
- Raise awareness on Climate Change ; how does it impact the oceans? What problems can it cause for those living in lesser developed countries? What can we do to help?
- Learn exactly how big the Irish Marine Area is in comparison to the total Irish Terrestrial Area. (Terrestrial area = 70,273 km² versus Marine area = 490,000 km² !!)Do we spend enough time and money protecting this huge area of responsibility?
- Plastic - Where does plastic come from? Plastic litter is a serious problem in the marine environment. Look around you and you will see plastic in some form. List all the plastic items that can be found in your classroom or at home

3. Take part in a #2minutebeachclean or #2minutestreetclean

A #2minutebeachclean or #2minutestreetclean is just that! We ask you to clean a beach, park or street that you visit with your school, friends or family for just two minutes. See how much you can gather in such a short time!

#2minutebeachclean

The next time you visit a beach why not take part in a #2minutebeachclean

- Follow Green-Schools and Clean Coasts - @GreenSchoolsIre @CleanCoasts on Instagram/Twitter/Facebook
- Go to the beach
- Collect marine litter for 2 minutes
- Take a snap of the marine litter you collect
- Post your snap on instagram/Twitter using the hashtag #2minutebeachclean @GreenSchoolsIre @CleanCoasts or post your picture to the Green-Schools Facebook page including the hashtags in the post- don't forget to tell us where you took your snap.
- Dispose of the litter you collected properly, recycle/bin it
- Be safe when you do your #2minutebeachclean
- You could even make it a race with your family, see who can collect the most in two minutes! Have fun!

3) Action Plan

Aim: The action plan aims to identify goals and provide a structured timetable for the reduction of the environmental impacts identified in the review

Action Plan

The action plan is the core of the Green-Schools Programme. It is a time tabled series of specific goals for improvement over a fixed time scale. Quantifiable targets should be set where possible e.g. increase awareness on types of marine litter by 20% in 9months.

The action plan, if possible, should be linked to curriculum work and have realistic and achievable targets. These goals should be specific and quantifiable where possible with proposed completion dates that show real success. Success increases confidence and builds enthusiasm for setting subsequent targets.

It is crucial that you work out how you will monitor and measure your progress and this should be integrated into your action plan. Try to involve all the committee members in the development of the action plan, and as much of the school as possible in its implementation.

The action plan is not a review of the work that has already been carried out, but a list of future targets and goals of your programme and a detailed description of the actions to be implemented (and by whom) within specific time frames in order to achieve those goals and targets.

In summary, your action plan should:

- Be developed from the results of your review;
- Contain realistic and quantifiable goals and targets with timeframes, where possible. These goals should be displayed at the top of the action plan;

- Be in table format (see sample on next page), identifying action, person or group responsible, and the timeframe for completion;
- Be displayed on your Green-Schools notice board.

Action Plan (example)

Action	Person Responsible	Target Date
Establish a committee for GC Marine Environment	Green-Schools Coordinator	September
Conduct the marine litter Survey with all students and teachers	Green-Schools Committee	October
Investigate sources and impacts of marine litter	1 st – 6 th classes	October/November
Create charts on the results of the marine litter survey	5 th Class	October/November
Increase awareness on all questions in the marine litter survey by 20%	The whole school	By the start of June
Investigate the Great Pacific Garbage Patch	4 th Class	February
Show examples of marine litter to infant classes – get them to create some art using the items	Green-Schools Committee	March
Do a 2minute beach/street clean	All classes	April
Research the impact of climate change on the marine environment and also the impact on less developed countries	4 th and 5 th Class	April
Host a marine environment action day - showing off projects that each class did throughout the year and every one dress like a pirate/mermaid	Green-Schools Committee	May

Action Plan (examples)

Here are some further examples and actions schools can implement as part of their Global Citizenship Marine Environment action plan:

- Adopt a local river/beach and do regular clean ups. Investigate the litter picked and check the sources of the litter . Discover the wildlife that depend on the river/coast and examine what lives in the water too.
- The older classes could learn about Circular economies _ Dame Ellen MacArthur <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCRKvDyyHml>
- Watch all 3 Green-Schools Marine Environment short videos and discuss the topics shown.
- Promote ways to save water at home and in school

- Think before you flush campaign. Learn all about the “dirty dozen”
<http://thinkbeforeyouflush.org/>
- Pick an item you use everyday and research it – Where does it come from? What impacts does its production have on the marine environment and on the people in its country of origin?
- What common marine litter items are bought most regularly by the students in the school? Think about plastic bags, sweet wrappers, drink cans, plastic bottles, wipes etc.
- Research how long it takes for common marine litter items to break down in the environment. Do natural products such as paper take as long as plastics? Think about common items you use- is there an alternative version that is more environmentally friendly (HINT: paper straws decompose much faster than plastic straws)
- Globally – The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is one of a number of large collections of marine litter in our oceans. Research this marine litter phenomenon and find out how it has occurred.
- Globally – checking out what aid projects your school supports and how much money has been raised for charity in the last school year.

These are a few suggestions to help you get started - but do not be afraid to include your own ideas as well!

4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Aim: Monitoring your Green-Schools programme will ensure that progress towards targets is checked, amendments made where necessary and success celebrated.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the monitoring and evaluation step of the programme schools are encouraged to have regular meetings to make sure all actions are working effectively. You should also repeat the survey you undertook for your review, at regular intervals throughout the year to establish if people’s knowledge on the causes and impacts of marine litter has improved. Establish if they know how to prevent marine litter entering the marine environment. Create graphs and charts to show the improvement in the students and teachers knowledge on the subject and put them up on your Green-Schools notice board. Evaluate levels of awareness and re do your marine litter survey.

How do these results compare to the first time the survey was completed. Have you reached the targets set in your action plan?

Secondary schools or older students could also find out things like:

- Are students and staff aware that their habits and actions may have a positive or negative impact on the marine environment?

Are students and staff more conscientious when buying products, taking account of the chain reaction and whether purchasing a particular product may have an adverse effect on the environment or not? (see our Marine Environment video : The plastic Continent)

5 Curriculum Work

Aim: The aim is to link the theme of Global Citizenship Marine Environment to the curriculum work going on in your school. The links are very varied, some examples are provided below.

SPHE (Primary)

- Promote personal development and well-being.
- Develop Citizenship and a sense of personal and social responsibility.
- Promote communication, co-operation, and working with others
- Encourage media awareness.e.g. submit an article to the press about an issue related to the marine environment or your local river.

Art

- Creation of posters to aid the awareness of the importance of the Marine Environment
- Creation of art using pieces of marine litter

CSPE (Secondary)

- Recognised as a suitable Action Project for Junior Certificate classes.
- Develop citizenship and a sense of personal and social responsibility; e.g.set up a campaign in your school to raise awareness on our over dependence on plastic, tell others about the impacts and ways to avoid it.
- Promote communication, co-operation, and working with others.
- Encourage media awareness e.g. create a blog on your marine environment action project.

Geography

- Develop a critical understanding of environmental issues relating to the marine environment at a local and global level.
- Study of humans and their impact on the marine environment (e.g. Pollution, waste management, sustainable management of resources, over fishing...)
- Looking at climate change and how it impacts the oceans and people living in lesser developed countries
- Promote communication of ideas, report writing and presentation.

Sciences

- Develop a scientific approach to problem solving.
- Study of marine food chains
- Encourage responsibility for the marine environment and promote sustainable development.
- Promote communication of ideas, report writing and presentation.

Maths

- Provide real life situations for mathematical analysis (creation of graphs and charts).
- Introduction to database management.

Physical Education

- Outdoor and team activities (beach clean ups).

Languages

- Promote communication skills, public speaking, debates.
- Potential for many activities involving speaking and writing
- Creation of a new Green Code.

History

- Examination of sea levels over time
- Explore different cultures throughout history and how they regarded the marine environment and its importance.
- Look at settlement patterns and the importance of rivers and oceans

6. Informing and Involving

Aim: To spread the Green-School message throughout the whole school and the wider community through ongoing publicity and a “Day of Action”.

Your Green-Schools notice board should be one of the most important ways of communicating what you want to achieve in the school and to keep everyone in the school up-to-date with developments. You can also display information on common marine litter items and awareness campaigns such as “Think Before You Flush” or “#2MinuteBeachClean”. Try and keep up-to-date with what is happening in the EU and display this information also.

You should also organise a whole school **Action Day**. The purpose of the action day is to get the whole school and even the local community involved in the new theme. For example projects done throughout the year could be on display while other activities take place such as rocky shore adventures, clean ups, marine litter displays etc .

You could organise a ‘dress as a pirate’ day or ‘dress as your favourite marine creature’ day and raise awareness about the importance of our marine environment all throughout the day. The ideas are limitless, you can be as wacky as you like as long as everyone understands the importance of this very special ecosystem by the end of the day. Most importantly have fun!!!

7. Green Code

Aim: To state the objectives that demonstrates the school’s commitment to environmentally friendly actions.

As with all the previous themes, your Green Code should be a statement of the schools commitment to environmentally friendly actions, in this case on a global scale. It should be negotiated by as many of the pupils and staff as possible and it should relate to your action plan and curriculum work. It is important that pupils feel they have had involvement in developing this code, otherwise they will ignore it. Personal and social education periods offer a good place for discussing the values underlying a common Green-Code, and provide an opportunity to extend the discussion to personal codes and values. Alternatively, this could take place in tutor time, or in class. A competition is also a good way to ensure everyone is involved and enter into the spirit of things. Make sure you display your Green Code on your notice board, you could also publicise it in the local press and send information to parents.

Green code example: Less litter in the sea makes a healthier ocean for you and me