

St. Augustine's National School

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Geography

Introductory Statement and Rationale:

This Geography policy was drafted by the staff of Kilshanny N.S. It was compiled in conjunction with the guidelines of the School Development Planning Service in response to the needs of the revised curriculum. We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education of our pupils. In our school SESE provides opportunities for the child to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives. As a whole school plan it guides the organised teaching and learning in Kilshanny N.S.

Vision and Aims

Vision:

As a school community we aspire to enable each and every child to reach his/ her full potential. We are aware of the contribution SESE makes to the harmonious development of the child. We believe that the Geography Curriculum enables children to make sense of the natural and human environments in which they live and in the wider world. As such, Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. Geography prepares pupils to contribute and play a role in their communities by encouraging them to appreciate the interdependence of people. Geography promotes an understanding of and respect for different cultures and ways of life. The Geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the environment.

Aims:

We endorse the aims of the SESE Geography curriculum as outlined in the Geography Curriculum P. 14:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth
- To develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence
- To encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness

- To encourage the development of caring attitudes and responsible behaviour towards the environment, and involvement in the identification, discussion, resolution and avoidance of environmental problems
- To develop an understanding of geographical concepts.

Additional aims particular to our school:

- ❖ Enhancing the school grounds
- ❖ To encourage recycling and composting in the school
- ❖ Participation in the Green Schools Initiative
 - Flag 1: Anti-Litter/Recycling
 - Flag 2: Energy
 - Flag 3: Water Conservation
 - Flag 4: Travel
 - Flag 5: Biodiversity
 - Flag 6: Global Citizenship Litter and Waste
 - Flag 7: Global Citizenship Energy
 - Flag 8: Global Citizenship Marine Life
 - Flag 9: Global Citizenship Travel
- ❖ To bring the children on a geographical field trip every year: this trip will be relevant to the Green Flag Programme examples of Geographical Field Trips:
 - Cycling to Kilfenora
 - Visiting Organic Gardens/Farms
 - Beach Clean-up at Lahinch
 - Visit to Inagh Recycling Centre
 - Spa Wells – Streams and Our Local Waterways
 - Trip to Aran Islands
 - Trip to Seed Savers, Scariff
 - Beach clean-up at Fanore
 - Wellbeing/Mindfulness Walk
 - Cycle Training

Curriculum Planning

Strands and Strand Units

Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/ her own class levels and indeed for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school.

All strands and all strand units must be covered each year but not all the content objectives need be addressed within a strand unit.

The three strands of the Geography curriculum are: Human Environments; Natural Environments and Environmental Awareness and Care.

Junior Infants – Second Class

We are aware that the content of the Geography Curriculum at this level is

Human Environments

- Living in the local community;
- People and places in other areas

Natural Environments

- The local natural environments
- Weather
- Planet Earth in Space

Environmental Awareness and Care

- Caring for my locality

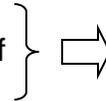
We are aware that one of the key messages in this Geography Curriculum is that children start developing geographical concepts by exploring their local, immediate

environment. In this way the children get a strong sense and appreciation of their own place. This will be reflected in our teaching at this level and subsequent levels.

Third - Sixth classes

Human Environments

- People living and working in the local area
- People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland
- People and other lands (**Choose an environment in another European country and an environment in a non - European country.**)
- County, regional and national centres.



Explore these 2 strand units through a selection of sub-units:

- People and communities
- Natural Environmental features and people
- Settlement: homes and other buildings
- People at Work
- Transport and communication

Trade and development issues (5th and 6th only)

Natural Environments

- The local natural environment
- Land, rivers and seas of my county
- Rocks and soils
- Weather, climate and atmosphere
- Planet Earth in space
- Land, rivers and seas of Ireland (5th and 6th)
- Physical features of Europe and the world (5th and 6th)

Environmental awareness and Care

- Environmental awareness
- Caring for the environment

2. Skills Development

The skills of working as a Geographer are:

- A sense of place and space
- Maps, globes and graphical skills
- Geographical investigation skills (questioning, observing, predicting, investigating and experimenting, estimating and measuring, analyzing, recording and communicating, evaluating)

These skills will be developed through various indoor and outdoor investigation work e.g. fieldwork and trails

Children's ideas

-We plan to use the children's ideas of places and spaces as a starting point for all geographical activity through

- Talk and discussion
- Questioning and listening
- Annotated drawings
- Brainstorming
- Concept maps
- Children who were born abroad or who have lived in other countries will be invited to share their experiences with the other pupils.

3.Approaches and Methodologies

The key methodologies to be used in the teaching of Geography are:

- Active learning

- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment.

In learning about our own natural and human environments we will use methodologies specific to Geography:

- Fieldwork
- Survey
- Interview
- Models
- Maps
- Photographs
- Artefacts
- Trails

Integration

We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels. Teachers create their own integrated topics and / or referring to the Teacher Guidelines in Geography, History and Science. Subjects which lend themselves to integration include SPHE, Maths, Visual Arts, PE and Oral Language.

Multi Grade Teaching

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to work cooperatively.

Assessment and Record Keeping

- Teacher observation of the children's learning as the geography curriculum is implemented
- Teacher designed tasks and tests at the end of units of work.
- Work samples eg. finished projects and investigations. These records will inform the teacher as to the progress of the child and as to the effectiveness of their teaching methodologies.

Children with Different Needs

Geography plays a pivotal role in this education and so we will do our best to ensure that every child will have opportunities to engage in learning activities appropriate to their abilities.

- Map work will be graded for the less able and the more able students.
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models

Organisational Planning

Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (page 70) a minimum of two and quarter hours per week is devoted to SESE in infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes 1st – 6th. One hour of this time will be spent on Geography.

On occasion, time will be blocked as appropriate. This might occur when

- working on an integrated project
- exploring the local environment

Resources and ICT

- We have access to the internet so that we can use the web as a geographical resource.
- We use text books as a resource in our teaching of geography.
- Education Resource Packs such as "Agri Aware", Archaeology in the Classroom, Trocaire Packs, etc are used to support the curriculum.
- Environmentalists and other experts in the community will be asked to talk to the children and share their knowledge with them.
- Atlases, globes, maps (Ireland, Europe, World)
- Ordnance survey maps of locality
- Satellite images www.met.ie, www.osi.ie
- Google 3D maps
- Apps: Google Earth, National Parks, Geo Walk, Amazing Earth, Tap Quiz Maps, Flags and Capitals, Know your Ireland, Map Games & Puzzles
- Historical maps
- A selection of DVDs
- CJ Fallon Interactive E-Books
- Burren Outdoor Education Workshop
- Nature Walks around the School Environment

Parental Involvement

Parents have an important role to play as custodians of local knowledge that can be shared with their children as they explore the various aspects of the local environment. Parents may be encouraged to help out in the delivery of this programme by participating in surveys and interviews.

Parents from other countries may be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish or if it is appropriate.

Parents are invited to celebrate and view results of projects, surveys and investigations.

Community Links

People in the local community who have an interest and knowledge in the environment may be invited to speak to the children.

The local library will be a source of knowledge for the children.

Success Criteria

We shall review this whole school plan in the future under the following headings:

- How methodologies listed in this whole school plan are working in the classroom
- Resources
- How procedures for fieldwork are working in the school.
- How well are geographical concepts learnt by the children
- How well are the children's geographical skills progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.

Review

This Whole School Plan for Geography will be reviewed every four years.

Ratification and Communication:

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ (Date)

Signed: _____ (Chairperson B.O.M.)