

Newport Convent Primary School



Roll number:04067F

Geography Policy

Introductory Statement

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Geography at Newport Convent Primary School. It was developed through a process of consultation with the teaching staff, post holders and BoM. It is informed by the Curriculum Statements and Curriculum Guidelines, needs of the children and expertise and experience of the staff. It will form the basis of each teacher's long- and short-term planning in geography and so will influence teaching and learning in individual classrooms. The policy was reviewed by all the above during the school year 2024/2025. A review of our Geography policy takes place every two years and is published on our school website.

Rationale:

We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education of our pupils. In our school, SESE provides opportunities and equips the child with a range of skills and concepts to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives and of those in the wider world. Geography helps the child to develop a sense of their own place and fosters the child's sense of local, regional, national, European and global citizenship. We also recognise that Geography can develop an empathy with others and an appreciation of peoples from a diversity of cultural, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds. Geography helps to develop a sense of individual and community responsibility for the environment. This plan was drawn up in response to the 1999 Primary School Curriculum, to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum and to review our practises considering these principles. As a whole school plan, it guides the organised teaching and learning in Newport Convent Primary School. Finally, it should be noted that Geography has a distinct but complementary role with Science and History within SESE.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

We believe that the Geography Curriculum enables children to make sense of the natural and human environment in which they live and in the wider world. As such, Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. Geography prepares children to contribute to and play a role in their communities by encouraging them to appreciate the interdependence of people. Geography promotes an understanding of respect for different cultures and ways of life. The geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the immediate and wider environments.

(b) Aims:

We endorse the aims of the S.E.S.E. Curriculum as outlined in the Geography curriculum. We the staff of Newport Convent Primary School endorse the aims of the Primary School curriculum.

The aims of the geography curriculum are as follows:

- 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 develop the ability to use a range of communicative methods, especially those concerned with the development of graphicacy (mapping and other non-verbal, non-numerical forms of data presentation)
- 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 appropriate geographical concepts.

Strands and Strand Units:

Each teacher is familiar with the strands and strand units, content objectives for his/her class level and indeed for each other's class levels. This is to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school. All strands and strand units will be covered each year and content objectives will be planned at staff-planning meetings.

Strands and Strand Units	Junior Infants	Senior Infants
Human Environments		
Living in the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Family • My Classroom • My School • My Favourite Room • Our School • Our Playground • Who Works Here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Community • My School • Make a Map • Different Homes • My Home • Design a Playground • The Farmer
People and places in other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families in other places • Homes Around the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothes Around the World

Natural Environments		
The local natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn walk • Winter walk • Spring walk • Summer walk • A Grass Environment • The Base of a Tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Autumn • Explore Winter • Explore Spring • Explore Summer • Explore: A Soil Environment
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather Diary • Dress for the Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seasons • Rain
Planet Earth in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day and Night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space
Environmental awareness and care		
Caring for my locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recycling system for the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recycling system for the classroom

Strands and Strand Units	First Class	Second Class
Human environments		
Living in the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is in my class? • How can we make our own class a happy place? • How do we get to school? • What types of homes are there in Ireland? • What is it like to be a toy maker? • Who works here? • Where does wool come from? • What other materials come from plants and animals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do I live? • Who helps in my community? • How are homes around the world different to mine? • What is a floor plan?
People and places in other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do children play with in another place? • How is Christmas celebrated around the world? • What is Australia Day? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it like to go to school in the Australian Outback? • What is it like to go to school in Niger? • Explore: Day of the Dead • Explore: Diwali

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Chinese New Year? • What is life like in China? • What is it like to live and work in Spain? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore: Hanukah • Explore: The Dreidel Game • What games are played in other countries? • Explore: Easter Around the World • Explore: May Day in England • What do people around the world wear to celebrate?
Natural environments		
The local natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What wildflowers grow in Ireland? • How do we use water? • Where does water come from? • What would you find at the seaside? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I describe a tree in detail? • Why does rainfall matter? • What is a habitat?
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens in Autumn? • What happens in Winter? • What happens in Spring? • What happens in Summer? • What is the weather like this week? • What is the weather like in Ireland? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes in Autumn? • What changes in Winter? • What changes in Spring? • What changes in Summer?
Planet Earth in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Moon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore our Solar System
Environmental awareness and care		
Caring for my locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I take care of my school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why must we care for trees? • Why is water so important? • Where do foxes live?

Strands and Strand Units	Third Class	Fourth Class
Human Environments		
People living and working in the local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food We Eat • Homes • Bridges • Looking at our School • Getting to know your Local Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in a community • Ireland-People and Places, towns and cities • GAA-County jerseys • Making maps
People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meath-The Royal County • Homes • Bridges • Transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story of a river • Rivers, lakes and mountains • Dublin • Tourism • Communications
People and other lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain (A European Country) • Australia (A Non-European Country) • Life in Egypt (A Non-European Country) • Plans and Maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy (A European Country) • China (A Non-European Country)
County, regional and national centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland-Provinces and Counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My County
Natural environments		
The local natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions • Around Our Coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot the changes • Clothes We Wear • Story of a river
Land, rivers and seas of my county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers, Lakes and Mountains (My County) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers, lakes and mountains (Ireland)
Rocks and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volcanoes, rocks and soils
Weather, climate and atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Weather • Apples from the Orchard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Water Cycle
Planet Earth in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The North Star and The Sun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planets-The Solar System

Environmental awareness and care		
Environmental awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Organising and re-using waste materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potatoes (Sustainable food production) • Pollution
Caring for the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Schools • Water Conservation • Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Schools • Water Conservation • Renewable Energy
Strands and Strand Units	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Human environments		
People living and working in the local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport and Your Body -People at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Diverse Communities • Food Glorious Food
People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and Communications-Getting Around the City • Limerick
People and other lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greece- First Greek zero waste island (A European Country) • Brazil (A Non-European Country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poland (A European Country) • Nigeria (A Non-European Country) • India (A Non-European Country)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County, regional and national centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport to Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your County Profile: A Project Challenge
Trade and developmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Health for All • Fairtrade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear and where? The Geography of Clothes
Natural environments		
The local natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Boglands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild About Animals
Land, rivers and seas of Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wild Atlantic Way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the Sea
Physical features of Europe and the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountains of the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers
Rocks and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating soil: Wetlands Field Trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rocks and Soil-Rocks
Weather, climate and atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring the Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Climate Breakdown
Planet Earth in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here Comes the Sun

Environmental awareness and care		
Environmental awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling and composting • Wind Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Breath You Take
Caring for the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling and composting • Wind Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Electricity-It's Shocking

We recognise that from Third to Sixth class in the Strand: Human Environments children study each year:

- People living and working in **their local area**
- People living and working in **a contrasting part of Ireland**
- A European country
- A Non-European environment

When choosing countries to study under the strand “Human Environments” we will consider:

- Children from other countries who have come to our school who might welcome a focus being placed on their country of origin. If this is acceptable to them, we could use this opportunity to make them especially welcome to our school.
- Places of interest to teachers
- Topics in the history curriculum with possibilities for integration

Children’s own ideas remain the starting point.

We will endeavour to reach a balance between knowledge and skills at this level.

Year Plan 3rd-6th class:

A contrasting place in Ireland

Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Meath	Dublin	Eco-towns	Limerick

A European Country

Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Spain	Italy	Greece	Poland

A Non-European Country

Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Australia/Egypt	China	Brazil	India

Aspect of Trade and Development

Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Fairtrade	Wear and where? Geography of Clothes

Skills Development

We are aware that the development of Geographical skills is of equal importance to strand content in this curriculum. The skills 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, Analysing, Recording and Communicating, Evaluating)

These skills will be developed through the content of the strands and strand units. Strategies for development of these skills will involve the children being actively involved in fieldwork and outdoor investigations as suggested in Teacher Guidelines starting on page 68, wherever practical.

- A sense of place will be developed through direct and indirect experiences first in relation to the child's own school and immediate surroundings but will later extend to include wider environments.
- The use of maps, globes and atlases will be used in an age-appropriate ways from infants to sixth class and will encompass a wide range of graphical activities.
- The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work. By following the content of this curriculum and by developing the geographical skills the children in the school are given opportunities to work as geographers at every class level.

Children's Ideas

We use the children's ideas of places and spaces as a starting point for all geographical activity. We find out what the children already know by:

- Talk and Discussion
- Questioning and Listening
- Play and Experimenting
- KWL Charts
- Enquiry Process and Questioning
- Annotated/labelled drawings
- Brainstorming
- Concept Maps

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge, to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate and address any misconceptions they may have.

Approaches and Methodologies:

We plan use the key methodologies of the Primary Curriculum in the teaching of Geography:

- 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 the following methodologies specific to Geography:

- Fieldwork and trails
- Survey
- Interview
- Models
- Maps
- Photographs
- Artefacts

We have completed a Geographical audit of our school grounds and the immediate locality and identified features that can be focused on when embarking on local environmental studies.

When exploring other places, we will consider these approaches and methodologies:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| -Artefacts | -Textbooks |
| -Atlases, maps and globes | -Establishing links schools in other places |
| -Interviews | -ICT |
| -Photographs | -Google Maps |

We have a selection of different atlases in the school and have a globe available.

We have wall maps of Ireland, Europe and the World and aim to acquire a variety of different types of maps (a map of the local area, a map of our school) in order that children experience a map rich environment. We have acquired drone footage and aerial photographs of our school to help the children draw accurate maps of the school. These are available to view on our school website.

Linkage:

When we are studying the local environment, we will study both the natural and human environments and the effect one has on the other. When we are studying distant places under the Human Environment strand, we also consider the natural environments of these places. The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

Integration: When teaching SESE subjects, we will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects at all class levels. We will refer to the teacher guidelines in Geography, History and Science in order to choose topics or themes for SESE integration. In particular the use of environmental trails in Geography will complement the study of living things in Science while the strand of Environmental Awareness and Care is common to both curricula. The use of trails will also lead to the study of how places and features have been shaped by the actions of people in the past and so integrate naturally with Local Studies in History.

Opportunities that exist for integration with other subjects are:

- SPHE: the development of the child's sense of identity and citizenship
- Mathematics: the skills outlined in mapping and graphs
- Visual Arts: aesthetic awareness in the environments and making drawings
- Physical Education: outdoor and adventures activities
- SESE: using the local school environment: for measuring and drawing to scale (internal and external school environment)
- Language: discussion of ideas and relationships in Geography – the language of location, direction and position.

Assessment:

As in all subject areas assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning of Geography. We as a staff have a common understanding of its purpose and the ways in which progress of children in geography will be assessed, documented and reported. Assessment in Geography seeks to achieve a balanced picture of the child's progress in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and in the development of important positive attitudes.

Assessment in geography in our school will fulfil the following roles:

- A diagnostic role – to identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child.
- A summative role – to establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work.
- An evaluative role – to assist teachers in assessing their own practices, methodologies, approaches and resources.

We recognise that assessment techniques used in geography must seek to assess progress in:

- a) Children's knowledge of the environment and of the world
- b) Children's ability to use geographical skills
- c) Children's development of attitudes

The assessment tools we will use in Geography will include:

1. Teacher Observation
2. Teacher designed tasks and tests
3. Work samples
4. Pupil projects
5. KWL charts, annotated drawings, concepts maps, etc

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:

It is important that all children experience a rounded environmental education. 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.

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical techniques so that all pupils have opportunities for success.
- Map work is graded for the less able and the more able students
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings is encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records and oral reports.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment, so all are encouraged to participate in fieldwork.
- The child with exceptional ability will be encouraged to undertake additional research and recording their geographical findings in a variety of ways.
- Content, methods of recording and desired learning outcomes will be differentiated for children with general learning difficulties.
- Children who were born abroad or who have lived in other countries will be invited to share their experiences with the other pupils.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to work co-operatively.

Equality of Participation and Access:

We will endeavour to make Geography accessible to all.

Equal opportunity will be given to boys and girls to access the geography curriculum

- Provision for children with physical difficulties will be made so that they can access the geography curriculum
- Children whose first language is not English will be supported in accessing the geography curriculum

The geography curriculum in our school allows children to learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in Ireland and throughout the wider world and so promote cultural awareness.

Timetable:

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary Curriculum Introduction a minimum of two and a quarter hours per week is devoted to SESE in infant classes and a minimum of three hours for classes from 1st to 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

Teachers might use discretionary curriculum time (2 hours per week) for SESE as appropriate.

Resources and ICT:

Resources:

- Use of the school and of the local area as a resource. (e.g. Water treatment plant in Newport; geography trails locally)
- Guest Speakers e.g. Concern; Trocaire; parents with knowledge of other countries e.g. Russia, Poland, USA
- Environmentalists in the community will be asked to talk to children and share their knowledge with them
- Link with Green School Project themes

In order to create a map rich environment, we intend to use a selection of the following resources for mapping:

- Maps or plans of the classrooms
- Map of our school
- Ireland Wall Maps
- Europe Wall Maps
- World Wall Maps
- Atlases
- Ordnance Survey Map of locality
- Globes
- Aerial Photos and Drone footage
- ICT

ICT: We have Wi-Fi access and iPads which can be used as a geographical resource. Use of the internet is governed by a user safety policy.

Health and Safety:

We have a Health and Safety policy in place in our school which covers safety concerns around out of school activities, in this subject fieldwork.

Individual teachers planning and Reporting:

- Individual teachers go into more detail re content, skills, resources needed, methodologies, recording of work and assessment in their short-term planning.
- Cúntais Míósúil assist in evaluating progress in Geography and inform future teaching.

- Parents are informed of children's progress at Geography at parent teacher meetings and in end of year reports.
- Teachers are aware of the curriculum covered at each class level in order to ensure a coherent, broad and balanced programme is experienced by the children by the time they leave sixth class.

Staff Development

- Teachers will have access to reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with Geography.
- Staff will be encouraged to research and try out new approaches and methodologies.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend courses on geography that may extend our understanding of Geography as a distinct subject and as a part of SESE and to share information gathered at such courses with other staff members.

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 are encouraged to help in the delivery of the geography 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.

Community Links

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

Success Criteria

We will review this whole school plan for Geography in the future using the following criteria:

- How individual teacher preparation, planning and teaching reflects this plan
- How methodologies listed in this plan are working in the classroom
- Resources—adding additional resources as necessary to assist the delivery of this programme
- How well are geography concepts learnt by children
- How well are children's geographical skills progressing: a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping.
- Are key messages being adhered to:

- 1.The primary resource for Geography is the environment, starting with the local, then progressing to the regional, national, European and global
- 2.Knowledge and skills are of equal importance
- 3.Geography is about developing a sense of place and space.

Implementation

We have embarked on the implementation of this Whole School Plan for Geography.

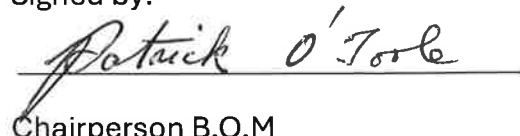
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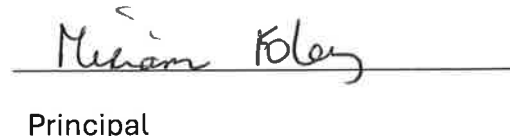
This Whole School Plan for Geography will be reviewed during the 2026/2027 school year and any necessary changes will be made.

Ratification and Communication

Following ratification by the Board of Management, a copy of this plan will be available to parents and guardians on the school website.

Signed by:


Chairperson B.O.M


Principal

Date: 9-10-2024