

Title**Whole School Plan: Geography****Introductory Statement and Rationale****(a) Introductory Statement**

This policy was reviewed in 2022 by the whole teaching staff of St. Colman's National School, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Primary School Curriculum 1999. Through the formulation of this policy, a common understanding of the purpose of the subject and how it will be implemented in this school has been created among the staff. Therefore, it will form the basis for teachers' long and short term planning. It will also inform new and temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in the teaching of Geography in our school

(b) Rationale

This plan is a record of whole school decisions regarding teaching and learning in relation to Geography in line with the Curriculum. This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short-term planning. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

Vision and Aims**(a) Vision**

Geography is the study of the earth, its inhabitants and the inter relationship between them in the content of place, space and environment. It seeks to describe and explain the natural and human features found in the numerous environments on the earth. It celebrates the rich diversity of peoples living in these places and it explores the social, economic and cultural activities in which they engage.

The child's sense of wonder and curiosity is a primary motivating factor in studying Geography. His existing knowledge and experience form the basis for learning.

Through guided activity and discovery methods and the use of geographical and investigation skills the child's immediate environment provides the context for learning and he becomes an active agent in his own progress. This learning process in Geography is even further enhanced through integration with History, Science and Art etc. Through our S.E.S.E. programme the principals of the curriculum are readily realisable.

We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving an awareness of the unique richness of their local area and to further develop this awareness of regional, national, European and worldwide communities. S.E.S.E. enables the child to live as an informed and caring member of the local and wider environments. 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 the different cultures and ways of life. The Geography curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the immediate and wider environments.

(b) Aims

The aims of the geography curriculum are:

- 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 graphic (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.

Because of our unique abundantly rich historical and geographical local environments we aim to develop a pride and respect for our local heritage and in particular our national identity. We will foster and develop a sense of the child's local, national, European and global citizenship.

Each teacher will aim to realise the content objectives within each strand and strand unit relevant to his or her class and to do so in a staged and continuous programme. To facilitate this development of a sense of place we will develop global maps and graphical skills and investigative skills.

Through talk, discussion, questioning, listening, problem solving, drawing and teacher designed tasks we hope to elicit what the children already know and to build upon this knowledge.

We foresee many opportunities for linkage with History, Science, Maths and art etc and this integrated approach will be done in the different classes at different stages.

Curriculum Planning

Strands and Strand Units

All teachers are familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for their class levels. Curriculum objectives area at the core of each geography lesson, and teachers refer to the curriculum objectives in their own planning.

	Infant classes	First and second classes
Strands	Strand units	Strand units
Human Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community • People and places in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the local community • People and places in other areas
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local natural environment • Weather • Planet Earth in space

environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planet Earth in space Caring for my locality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caring for my locality
Environmental awareness and care		
	Third and fourth classes	Fifth and sixth classes
Strands	Strand units	Strand units
Human Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People living and working in the local area People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland People and communities Natural environmental features and people Settlement: homes and other buildings People at work Transport and communications People and other lands – <i>an environment in another European country, an environment in a non-European country</i> County, regional and national centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People living and working in the local area People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland People and communities Natural environmental features and people Settlement: homes and other buildings People at work Transport and communications People and other lands – <i>an environment in another European country, an environment in a non-European country</i> County, regional and national centres Trade and development issues
Natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local natural environment Land, rivers and seas of my county Rocks and soils Weather, climate and atmosphere Planet Earth in space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local natural environment Land, rivers and seas of Ireland Physical features of Europe and the world Rocks and soils Weather, climate and atmosphere Planet Earth in space
Environmental awareness and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental awareness Caring for the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental awareness Caring for the environment

Skills and Concepts Development

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 geographic 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 way from infants to 6th class and will encompass a wide range of geographical skills.

The geographical investigation skills will be included in various indoor and outdoor investigation work.

Children's ideas

We plan to 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

Play and experimenting

Enquiry process and Questioning Brainstorming

Concept maps

We do this to build on the children's previous knowledge or to challenge the existing ideas if they are not accurate.

Approaches and Methodologies

Our teachers will follow the recommended sequential approach for Geography whereby local areas are followed and studied followed by regional, national, European and global studies.

We plan to 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 methodologies specific

to Geography:
Fieldwork and trails Survey
Interview Models
Maps
Photographs
Story

Linkage and Integration

Linkage

We acknowledge that linkage and integration are recommended within the SESE curriculum. We hope to make a link between our geography topics in so far as possible for the class levels. Teachers will explore possibilities for linkage across the Geography curriculum and develop such opportunities in their classroom.

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 learn about the natural environments of these places.

The strand Environmental Awareness and Care is by its nature, linked strongly with the other two strands.

Integration

We will explore possibilities to integrate the SESE subjects to all class levels, we will refer to the Teaching 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 compliment 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 also exist for integration with other subject areas such as

S.P.H.E., Mathematics, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Oral Language and Literacy, Gaeilge, Religion, Music

Multi-Grade Teaching

Ballindaggin NS often has classes that include multi grades. On a yearly basis the teachers meet to discuss how best to facilitate learning in these classes, to the best of the schools ability. Teachers discuss booklists which are devised to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school has adopted the *Lets Discover* SESE programme and in so far as possible the books are used in a biannual system. This feeds into the Book Rental scheme that is available in the school. In the event of Irregular Multi Grade Classes the teachers will discuss options and decide on the best solution to the multi grade situation at the time. Teachers will also have access to alternative Geography Text books for further resources and materials.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is used by teachers to inform their planning, selection and management of learning activities so that they can make the best possible provision for meeting the varied needs of the children.

Assessment in Geography seeks to measure and report the child's progress and achievements in all

aspects of the curriculum.

Assessment in Geography will:

- Identify areas of difficulty in order to respond to the needs of the child.
- Establish the outcomes of learning after completing a unit of work.
- Assist teachers in assessing their own practice, methodologies, approaches and resources.

The Assessment tools we will choose from are:

- Teacher observation (pages 79,80 C.S)
- Teacher designed tasks and tests (pages 80,81 C.S)
- Self-assessment
- Telling and re-telling of events and stories
- Oral, written and pictorial accounts and descriptions of sites visited or people interviewed
- Group work on projects,
- Work cards or activity sheets
- Role play, hot seating or dramatising a conversation or event
- Speculating on the feelings and emotions of others so as to create a spoken or written account
- Model making
- Drawings and labelling
- Compilation of a work on a particular geographical topic or the presentation of project work using information and communication technologies
- Projects completed on geographical themes
- ICT resources and quizzes
- Results of the child's independent research
- Teacher-designed revision test on a unit of work
- Tests
- Oral presentation of work
- Work samples, portfolios and projects (pages 82,83 C.S.)
- Feedback from pupils and parents
- Individual work in the child's copy,
- Filling out answers to tasks on fieldtrips,
- Drawings,
- Construction of models, i.e., river basin and its environs.

A record of the child's application and progress is kept in the school reports which are carried from class to class annually. These records will inform the teacher of the progress of the child; the effectiveness of teaching methodologies employed and will inform future planning.

The assessment records will form the basis for reporting and discussing the child's progress with parents. This information will be relayed at parent/teacher meetings.

Children with Different Needs

- Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with additional needs by differentiation of text, language used, assignment and expected outcome.

- Teachers will use a variety of teaching methodologies and ensure opportunities for hands on and practical activities when appropriate
- Classes are organised/activities adapted to include children who may have physical disabilities in their layout, access to entrance, exit, toilet and activity.
- Children with exceptional ability/interest in Geography will be encouraged and supported by differentiation of text, language used, assignment and expected outcome.
- A mixture of co-operative learning activities will be employed, such as focused group work, paired work and grouping children in mixed ability groups
- Opportunities are provided for children to communicate information in a variety of ways, whether through; report, creative writing, project work, drama, PowerPoint presentation or voice recording/video
- 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.
- All children benefit from active involvement in the environment so all will be encouraged to participate in fieldwork.
- The exceptional able child 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.
- The draft guidelines for children with general learning disabilities NCCA are available in our school for teachers to consult where necessary.

Equality of Participation and Access

Geography will be accessible to all children within the school regardless of their age, gender or ability.

For those children experiencing any form of disadvantage we will adapt the teaching and learning to meet their needs. The work will suit their ability, and we will use alternative resources, ICT and visual aids where deemed necessary.

Ballindaggin National School recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment.

The geography programme and classes are used to integrate the culture of all pupils.

Organisational Planning

Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction (p70) a minimum of three hours will be allocated to SESE per week, from first class to sixth, (1 hour per week allocated to Geography) and two and a quarter hours with Infant Classes (45mins per week to Geography).

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

- Working on a project

- Exploring the local environment
- Having persons in to speak to the class
- Going on trails.

Teachers will consider the use of discretionary curriculum time for SESE when appropriate.
 Infant Teachers will integrate SESE through Aistear also.

Resources and ICT

Besides our adopted programme, Teachers have compiled resources in their relevant classes to support the teaching of the Strand units at each class level. There is a variety of textbooks to support the teachers in preparing for topics.

Safe internet practices may be carried out by children in relation to Geography projects and research.

Teacher will use interactive boards and power point displays when teaching Geography.

Children's response to Geography may also be recorded in multiple ways such as but not limited to printing, video, photographs

Green Team- The Green team will help to inform and support the pupils in relation to environmental awareness.

Parents/Guardians- Some parents may come in and describe their careers and how these careers impact the school community.

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

- Map of our school
- Local Street plan
- Ordnance Survey maps of County
- Ireland Wall maps
- Europe wall maps
- World Wall maps
- Atlases – a variety of different ones is a good idea – each have their own strengths
- Globes
- Satellite Images : www.met.ie
- Leisure maps / Tourist maps showing trails etc
- Transport route maps : those found on bus timetables
- Aerial photos particularly of local areas
- Historical Maps or previous OS versions
- Electronic Maps: CD ROMs and internet have good interactive maps.

I.C.T.

We have access to the internet and tablets so that we can use the web as a geographical resource and we have identified some useful websites including but not limited to

www.worldgeographygames.com

www.met.ie

www.askaboutireland.com

www.googleearth.com

Health and Safety

In terms of health and safety issues, we are aware of the possible dangers of taking children on fieldtrips outside school premises. Every effort will be made to make the circumstances as safe as possible. Children will be taught to handle equipment to limit the risk to them.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers will consult this Whole School Plan and the curriculum documents for Geography when they are drawing up their long and short term plans. Teachers will include all the strands and strand units every year and will select objectives within the strand units each year. Where it is meaningful and suitable, Geography will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with the other SESE subjects of Science and History. Cúntais Míósúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in Geography and informing future teaching.

Staff Development

Teachers will be encouraged to attend in-service workshops and courses on Geography in order to enhance their understanding and teaching of the subject. They will up skill other staff in what they have learned by sharing the expertise acquired at these courses. Guest speakers may be used to supplement and support the work of the class teacher. These are recognised as up-skilling opportunities for the teachers involved.

Parental Involvement

We encourage parental involvement in the formation of our school policies. Draft policies are provided to the Parent's Association so parents are given the opportunity to contribute. The Board of Management and the Parents Association are given draft copies of our policies and plans and bring them to the attention of the wider community.

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 come to the school to help out in the delivery of this programme by:

- a. participating in surveys and interviews
- b. sharing skills or interests

- c. by helping out in supervision of fieldwork when/if needed
- d. Talking to the children about their lives, work, cultural and leisure interests

Community Links

Local organisations are invited to provide information on the services that they provide. We are very much aware of the school's role in the community and we are also conscious of the fact that the expertise of people in the community is an invaluable resource to any school. Where expertise is available in the area, these people will be invited into the school.

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

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

The work of some national agencies relates to aspects of the Geography programme. As well as accessing materials produced by these agencies specifically for schools, we will welcome visits by speakers from these organisations. ie Bord Na Mona , Duchais , ESB , Tree Council

Personnel from Concern/ Trócaire / Fair Trade will be invited to speak with the senior pupils about trade and development issues, about issues involving the developing world such as famine and fair trade

Places of interest

Ballindaggin NS is located to the North of Co Wexford on the foothills of the Blackstairs Mountains. Due to our location we are in the vicinity of many geographical places of interest including but not limited to: Mount Leinster, Rosslare Harbour, Carnsore, Lavender Farm (Gorey), Wexford Slobs, The Raven Woods, promenade walk in Enniscorthy, Beaches, Local windfarm, Edenvale, Hook Head

Success Criteria

We will use the following criteria to assess the success of this plan

- Our yearly and classroom planning is based on the Whole School Plan
- There is a balance between skills and content
- Development of geographical skills throughout the classes
- Integrated themes are being developed, on occasion, across the school, using a whole school approach.
- That the curriculum is spiral and developmental in its structure
- Photographs, displays and use of artefacts are evident in classes
- Procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed throughout the school
- Children's feedback
- Teacher and Parent feedback
- Inspectors' suggestions and/or feedback

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

How methodologies listed in this plan are working in the classroom?

How procedures for fieldwork are working in the school?

How well geographical concepts are learnt by the children?

How well the children's geographical skills are progressing (a sense of place and space, geographical investigation skills, and mapping)

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

- Class teachers are responsible for following the whole school plan and for the implementation of the geography programme in their own class.
- Pupils are expected to co-operate and participate in class lessons.
- Parent are responsible for supporting their children's learning
- The principal is responsible for leading the monitoring and evaluating of the plan

(b) Timeframe

Implementation will be carried out from the 21/22 school year

Review

(c) Roles and Responsibilities

The following people will be involved in the review of the Geography plan:

- The Board of Management of Ballindaggin National School
- The principal
- The teachers
- The pupils
- The parents/guardians of Ballindaggin National School

(d) Timeframe

Review will be carried out on a biannual basis

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the _____ of _____ 20__

Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

The policy is available to view on the school website or a hard copy can be requested via the school office.