

Sustainable Schools Competition – Information for Teachers

Overview

This competition invites students to promote a new or recently established/improved sustainability project at your school, which **they are actively involved in**, in the form of an A3 or A2 illustrated poster.

Entries where the students are not actively involved in the sustainability project will not be accepted. (So don't just ask your students to do a poster about a project that is already running within your school.)

The competition will be judged within age categories, (i.e. junior, middle and senior primary school, and upper and lower secondary school), based upon the main class or grade involved in the project.

Special attention will be given to school projects that show originality, resourcefulness and cooperative activity (amongst the students and/or within the larger community).

Please deliver your Sustainable Schools Poster Entries to Coal Creek Community Park Korumburra and Museum (P.O. Box 193 or South Gippsland Highway, Korumburra) before Wednesday 10 March 2010. Posters will be displayed at the Sustainability Festival at Coal Creek on Sunday 14 March.

What is a sustainable schools project?

The following information has been included for any teacher who wishes to involve their class in a sustainability project, but doesn't know where to begin. Feel free to use any of the examples of "environmentally responsible school operations" listed below. Websites have only been included as examples, so please do your own research as well.

Environmental education is based upon the following principles:

- Thinking globally (understanding global environmental issues)
- Acting locally (actively involving young people in a local project)
- Making personal connections (building on students' experiences, perceptions, feelings and existing knowledge)
- Developing values (helping young people to value their natural and cultural heritage)
- Developing citizenship (developing skills to participate in social action for the environment)
- A sense of place (developing an understanding of the Australian environment)
- A sense of time (understanding how the past has shaped the present)
- Exemplary practice (practicing what we preach)

Environment-friendly schools follow environmentally responsible ways of operating, as well as actually teaching environmental education in the classroom. For example, these schools recycle paper instead of throwing it into the regular bins. Or they encourage water and electricity conservation. The added bonus of such activities is that these conservation measures are often effective money savers as well.

Components of an environmentally responsible school operations plan may include:

✓ **Waste reduction and recycling**

Reduce paper use, reuse paper, collect and recycle paper, compost organic material, avoid disposable containers . . .

(Try <http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au/> or the Planet Ark website <http://planetark.org/>)

✓ **Organic and water-wise gardening**

Plant native water-wise plants, use mulch, create a rain garden, teach students about growing vegetables, use companion planting and crop rotation to decrease the need for pesticides . . .

(For a water wise garden see <http://conservewater.melbournewater.com.au>, or listen to why “what we eat now (too much meat, too few plants; too much fast food, too little home cooking) is putting the entire planet at risk” at http://www.ted.com/talks/mark_bittman_on_what_s_wrong_with_what_we_eat.html.)

✓ **Purchasing**

Purchase the minimum possible amount of packaging, use reusable packaging, encourage rubbish-free lunches, avoid plastic foams and foils . . .

✓ **Management of toxic materials**

Ensure proper hazardous products labelling and storage, enforce zero toxics to landfill, ensure all hazardous waste is taken to municipal collection facilities . . .

(For example, visit <http://www.mobilephonerecycling.com.au/>)

✓ **Energy conservation**

Reduce overlighting and increase the use of variable controls, lower room temperatures, insulate and seal buildings, replace inefficient lights, motors and appliances, use protective outside landscaping and tree planting . . .

(Try <http://www.urbanecology.org.au/topics/energyconservation.html>)

✓ **Water conservation**

Use flow restrictors on taps, ensure regular maintenance to prevent leaks, use dual-flush toilets . . .

(Go to <http://www.southeastwater.com.au/personal/education/forstudents/Pages/Resourcesandlinks.aspx> for a huge list of websites to visit.)

✓ **Transportation**

Ensure adequate student parking racks and security, bike parks, and safe entrances, exits and crossings, encourage staff use of bicycles (eg provide secure parking and showers), encourage parent car pooling . . .

(Check out Bicycle Victoria at <http://www.bv.com.au/>)

✓ **Borrowing versus buying**

Encourage borrowing over buying as a general principle and expand the opportunities for this, in cooperating with neighbouring schools and the wider community wherever possible, establish community recreational equipment and game libraries, develop sports and media equipment loan programs . . .

✓ **Wildlife habitat**

Plant and maintain locally indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses, build and put out nesting boxes for birds, mammals and small bats, do some bird watching around the school and local area . . .

(Visit <http://birdsinbackyards.net/> for information about birds and to do a real survey.)

✓ **Charitable fundraising and contributions**

Contribute a portion of student-raised funds to worthwhile environmental projects or organisations, hold special fundraising events or programs for specific projects (buying a piece of rainforest, planting trees, sponsoring an animal at the Zoo)

(Visit the zoo at <http://www.zoo.org.au/>)

Please note: much of the content for this section is sourced from the book *Blueprints for Greening Schools: Principles, policies and practices for environmental education in Australian secondary schools*, written by Noel Gough, published in 1992 by the Gould League.

South Gippsland Sustainability Festival, Coal Creek, Sunday 14 March 2010

South Gippsland Sustainability Festival Sustainable Schools Competition – ideas for poster content.

Name of sustainability project	Photograph or diagram of project	
Names of class and teacher involved		
Who else was involved in this project?		
How will this project help to make your school more environmentally sustainable?	Estimated cost for this project	
Why did your Class chose to do this particular sustainability project?	Estimated savings as a result of the project	
Who benefits from this sustainability project?	Location of project	
References used – books, websites or anything else		