



Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1437](#)

Main Petitioner: Les Wallace

Subject: Recycling in Schools

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure the provision of recycling facilities within school playgrounds is mandatory. In addition calls for a national survey of in-school practice and teaching on reduce, reuse and recycle to ensure current best practice becomes the standard practice.

Background

There is currently no legal requirement on Scotland's schools to provide recycling facilities within school playgrounds. Provision of recycling facilities within state school playgrounds is the responsibility of Scotland's local authorities.

The Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 will require waste producers, which includes schools to separate and present for collection the key dry recyclables (glass, metal, plastic, paper and card) and food at source from the start of 2014.

There has been no national survey on the way in which teaching of the reduce, reuse and recycle principles is undertaken across Scotland. A national initiative on eco-schools is in operation across Scotland.

Eco-Schools Scotland

Many of Scotland's schools currently take in part in an initiative called Eco-Schools. Eco-Schools is an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school action for the environment. It is an environmental management tool, learning resource and recognised award scheme.

The Eco-Schools programme in Scotland engages children and young people in key issues including the environment, sustainability, global citizenship and the value of a low carbon future.¹

¹ <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/>

The Eco-Schools Scotland programme is made up of seven elements, incorporating ten environmental topics including litter and waste minimisation. The waste minimisation topic deals in detail with the zero waste principles of reduce, re-use and recycle (the three Rs)².

There are three levels of award for eco-schools. The first two levels of award are the Bronze and Silver Awards. The Bronze and Silver awards are based on school self-assessment, The top level of award is the Green Flag award, which is assessed by the Eco-Schools Scotland team and must be renewed every two years. The assessment criteria for the Green Flag award can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/documents/GfCriteria.pdf>.

According to Eco-Schools in Scotland:

“We now have over 3,700 schools registered with the Eco-Schools programme in Scotland, which includes over 98% of Scotland's local authority schools, as well as independent and early years establishments. Over 40% of our local authority schools - as well as many more independent and early years providers - have attained the highest award level: the Green Flag”³.

General Teaching Council Consultation

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC) is currently consulting on a proposed revision of professional standards for teachers. Included in the social values section it proposes teachers are required to:

“Embrace the educational and social values of sustainability, equality and justice and recognise the rights and responsibilities of future as well as current generations”⁴

Under this standard, teachers would be expected to:

- understand the environmental, social and economic conditions of learners to inform teaching and learning;
- have a critical understanding of the ways in which natural, social/cultural, political and economic systems function and are interconnected;
- Connect learners to their dependence on the natural world and develop their sense of belonging to both the local and global community.

The consultation closes on 31 October 2012.

² <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/page.asp?pg=40>

³ <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/>

⁴ <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/standards-for-registration-draft-august-2012.pdf>

Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government laid the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in the Scottish Parliament.

Curriculum for Excellence

According to the Scottish Government the Curriculum for Excellence is a key part of the Scottish Government's Action Plan for the second half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development "Learning for Change"⁵.

Included within the Curriculum for Excellence is a section on sustainable development which aims to help develop "children and young people as global citizens through sustainable development education."⁶

The information provided on the Education Scotland website in relation to Curriculum for Excellence appears to make no reference to recycling.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee considered the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Details are available at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/43961.aspx>

No schools contributed evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committees consideration of the Regulations and the issue of how the Regulations might affect schools was not raised with the Committee.

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⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/4215/4>

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<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/themesacrosslearning/globalcitizenship/about/sustainabledevelopment/introduction.asp>