

Press Release – Planting Some Positivity!

Event: Green-Schools Woodland Day

Date: Thursday the 17th of November 2011

Location: Ballinreeshig Nature Farm, Ballygarven, Co. Cork

This year An Taisce are celebrating the success of the **Green-Schools programme** in Ireland and **International Year of the Forests** by planting a Green-Schools Woodland. We will begin to plant the Green-Schools woodland on the 17th November at Ballinreeshig Nature Farm, Co. Cork in conjunction with Will and Away Outdoor Education Company. In total, 3,560 native trees will be planted to represent each school in the Green-Schools programme. An Taisce have invited a number of Green Flag schools from Cork City and County to kick start the planting on the 17th of November.

Students from pre-schools up to university level will be present on the day, representing the wide-ranging impact of the Green-Schools programme.

Rachel Boyle, Green-Schools Officer with An Taisce said, "For a number of years schools across Ireland have been leading the way when it comes to tackling environmental challenges. This year we wanted to celebrate all their hard work. As Ireland has very little native woodland left we felt that planting a tree to represent every Green-School in Ireland was the perfect way to celebrate! The Green-Schools woodland hopes to serve as a symbol for the programme, representing both the flourishing of the environment that the programme promotes, and the flourishing of all those involved who will be enriched by developing values and attitudes that protect our environment and ourselves. Thanks to William O'Halloran of Will and Away outdoor education company this was made possible"

The Green-Schools programme is coordinated in Ireland by An Taisce, operated in partnership with Local Authorities and is supported by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority. The programme is sponsored by Repak and the Wrigley Company Limited. The Green-Schools programme would like thank Cork County Council for their assistance with the event.

EDITORS NOTES

Green-Schools, (known internationally as Eco-Schools), is an international environmental management education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment. Green-Schools is an initiative of FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education). Green-Schools began as a pilot project in the UK, Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal in 1994. Currently over 50 countries from Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and Oceania are participating in the Eco-Schools Programme. There are now more than 40,000 schools participating in the programme worldwide and over 14,000 have been awarded the Green Flag.

The An Taisce Green-Schools programme is now into its 15th year in Ireland, and the programme continues to grow from strength to strength. There are currently 3,560 schools registered on the Green-Schools programme and 2,310 are flying the Green Flag. Over 700,000 students are involved and nearly 50,000 teachers. Each of these schools is working very hard to improve their environmental performance and proactively manage their carbon footprint as well as having a positive impact on their local communities.

The Green-Schools programme is based on a seven step environmental management system and continual improvement process which is very much student led and also involves the wider community. The programme also promotes good citizenship among participants. Green-Schools is a themed programme with schools initially working on the theme of Litter and Waste and then moving onto themes such as Energy, Water, School Travel and Biodiversity. Schools that successfully implemented the programme are awarded the Green Flag. The award must be renewed every 2 years.

This is the 15th year of Green Schools in Ireland and recent research on the economic value of the programme to schools in Ireland has revealed that the programme has saved schools in Ireland over 2 million euro in waste, electricity, water and fuel costs over the school year 2009-2010. The results reveal a minimum of 12 tonnes of waste diverted from landfills in Ireland every school day by schools undertaking the programme, 7.5 million units of electricity saved, 250 million litres of drinking water saved, and around 600,000 litres of transport fuel saved over the school year. These are conservative estimates and considering the programme also involves the wider community, the overall savings could be several times the 2 million euro saved by the schools.

For more information please contact:

Name: Rachel Boyle

Title: Green-Schools Officer

Contact Details: 086-3765466

Email: rboyle@eeu.antaisce.org

OR visit our Website: www.greenschoolsireland.org