



# **Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS**

**Rathmore, Naas, Co. Kildare**

**Telephone:** 045 862145

**Fax:** 045 862952

**Email:** office.rathmorens@gmail.com

**Web:** www.rathmorens.ie

**Principal:** Mr. Robbie Jameson

**Deputy Principal:** Ms. Caitriona Lancaster

## **Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore National School**

### **Geography Policy**

#### **Introductory Statement:**

This policy was initially formulated by the Staff of Scoil Chéile Chríost in 2007. Reviews of the policy were carried out in September 2012 and September 2016 and the content sections of the plan were revised. This plan will form the basis of each teacher's long and short term planning in Geography and so will influence the teaching and learning in individual classrooms. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of our approaches and methodologies in this subject area. The plan was drafted in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Primary Curriculum in consultation with all the staff.

#### **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 for the child to explore investigate and develop an understanding of the human, social and cultural environment in which he/she lives and of those in the wider world. The distinct role that Geography plays in SESE is one of helping the child to appreciate the physical and human features of their immediate and wider environments. This plan is drawn up in response to the 1999 Primary Curriculum, to conform to the principles outlined in this curriculum and to review our practices in light of these principles. As a whole staff it guides the organised teaching and learning in Scoil Chéile Chríost.

This policy was devised:

- To provide clear guidelines for teachers
- To insure consistency throughout the school
- To comply with legislation

This Geography Plan will be addressed under the following headings:

## **Vision and Aims:**

1. **Vision** - We believe that the Geography Curriculum enables children to make sense of the natural and human environments in which they live and the wider environment. We care for our community, each other and for our planet earth. As such Geography is pivotal to each child's rounded environmental education. Environmental activities encouraged through the Green School project will foster a positive attitude and sense of responsibility among our pupils for the natural environment and its relationship with the human environment. The Geography Curriculum fosters children's responsibility for the immediate and wider environment.
2. **Aims**
  - 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.

This Geography Plan will be addressed under the following headings:

### **Curriculum Planning:**

1. Strands and strand units
2. Approaches and methodologies
3. Linkage and integration
4. Multi-grade Teaching
5. Assessment and record keeping
6. Children with different needs
7. Equality of participation and access

### **Organisational Planning:**

8. Timetable
9. Resources and ICT
10. Health and safety
11. Individual teachers' planning and reporting
12. Staff development
13. Parental involvement
14. Community links
15. Success Criteria
16. Implementation

#### **1. Strands and strand units**

- Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant classes.
- Teachers for all classes have allocated time for geography lessons according to the specified time as laid down by the curriculum.
- There is continuity and progression in the geography curriculum from class to class. As there is a core curriculum each teacher has a detailed outline plan for the standard they teach, therefore avoiding gaps and undue repetition. Records of the different areas of the Geography curriculum covered by each class will be collected at the end of June and passed on to the next teacher. There is a balance between personal, local, national and international geography. Geography is selected from the local environment and the locality of our school.

**The content section detailing the strands and strand units for each class is attached to this policy.**

#### **2. Approaches and Methodologies**

- Active learning
- Problem solving
- Developing skills through content
- Talk and discussion
- Co-operative learning
- Use of the environment

Teachers follow the recommended sequence for geography - local, regional, national, European and global and reflect it back to their own location. We believe the children's awareness of their local area is paramount however so too, is their understanding of the wider world.

- In learning about places teachers use the following methodologies:  
Photos, Story, ICT, Maps, globes and atlases, Interview, Survey, Artifacts.
- In learning about the environment teachers use the following methodologies:  
Photos, Story, ICT, Maps, globes and atlases, fieldwork.
- In learning about human environments teachers use the following methodologies:  
Photos, Story, ICT, Maps, globes and atlases - Google Earth, Interview, survey, models and simulations.
- In learning about natural environments teachers use the following methodologies:  
Photos, Story, ICT, Fieldwork, maps, globes and atlases, models and simulations, Artifacts.
- In learning about other places teachers use the following methodologies:  
Photos, Story, ICT, Maps, globes and atlases, Interview, artifacts, survey.

Mapping skills and mapping concepts are developed using the following techniques e.g.:

We employ some of the following strategies to develop mapping:

- **Infant classes**
  - " Drawing pictures of events and places they have encountered
  - " Development of spatial language
  - " Use of story
  - " Picture maps
  - " Developing an awareness of the globe as a model of the earth

#### **First and Second Class**

- " Making plans
- " Having an awareness of aerial perspective
- " Developing language of direction
- " Plans of everyday objects and outside areas.
- " Comparing aerial photos with maps of same area
- " Awareness of land and sea
- " Map of Ireland, world and Globe

#### **Third and Fourth Class**

- " Maps and photographs, satellite images of different scales and purposes
- " Symbols
- " Key-OSI books
- " Grid references
- " Orientation-cardinal directions - linking with PE Scale
- " Learning about environments
- " Exposure to a variety of different maps - local immediate environment, regional, national, international, plans of the area, plans of house
- " Use of Globe

### **Fifth and Sixth Class**

- " Scale
- " Learning about environments
- " Exposure to a variety of different maps
- " Engage in practical use of maps of a variety of scales and purposes
- " Understanding of common map features and symbols
- " Record routes and directions in locality and wider environments
- " Scale Teacher Guidelines Pg 139
- " Co ordinates and grid references Teacher Guidelines Pg 141
- " Latitude and longitude
- " History of Maps-A sense of time
- " Map projections-effect of various projections
- " Use of Globe

**Fieldwork** is incorporated into our geography programme through the investigation of our local natural environment. We bring the children on field trips to local features of interest.

Maps, globes and atlases are selected after consultation of teachers within the middle and senior classes. All children use the same atlas within the school.

### **3. Linkage and Integration**

We acknowledge that linkage and integration is recommended within the curriculum. There are opportunities to link strands within the geography curriculum e.g. Natural Environment with Environmental Awareness and Care e.g. ways to improve or enhance the immediate environment; Human Environment with Natural Environment e.g. study of a Contrasting part of Ireland/European/ Non European country and focus on their natural features. In individual classes teachers may explore themes e.g. wind, water, energy.

Geography links naturally with several subjects e.g. Maths - graphing, grid referencing, Visual Arts through construction and drawing. It further links within the SESE subjects. Geography and Science share the common strand Environmental Awareness and Care in both the Junior and Senior Classes. Geography and History are closely linked in the junior classes. This is evident through study of the local area. In the senior classes European and Non European countries link with the Early peoples and Ancient civilisations. Teachers will refer to lists of integrated topics and the SESE Teacher Guidelines. This will be reflected in teachers own planning. Strands can also be linked using a thematic approach across the geography curriculum e.g. seasons, weather and rocks and soils.

### **4. Multi-grade teaching**

- Using a thematic approach
- Integration with other subjects: SESE – history and science; SPHE; Maths; Language programme; Visual Arts; PE
- Selection of text books
- Classroom organization.

### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Teachers assess:

- Progress in children's knowledge of the geography programme.
- Ability to use geographical skills.
- Development of attitudes

Assessment tools:

- Teacher observation.

- Teacher-designed tasks and tests.

#### Record Keeping:

- Work samples, portfolios and projects (consider use of ICT, pictures, paintings, models, story board).
- Information gained from the assessments is used to guide future learning and reinforcement where necessary. This information can also be used as a home-school link.
- Termly results are kept and passed on to the next teacher. This information is also passed on to parents at the annual Parent/Teacher meetings. A report is given to parents in the summer term in the SESE section of the school report card.

### 6. Children with Different Needs

This Geography programme aims to meet the needs of all the children in the school. This will be achieved by teachers varying the pace, content and methodologies to ensure learning for all pupils. This will be recorded in the teacher's yearly notes. The requirements of children with special needs will be taken into account when planning class lessons and related activities. The S.N.A. supports particular children and groups as directed by the class teacher. Children who experience bereavement and loss, serious illness or other major personal and loss, serious illness or other major personal situations are supported and consideration is given to meeting their individual needs in the most appropriate manner.

- Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups set tasks of various complexities.
- Planning topics so that opportunities are provided for alternative investigation for the more/less able
- Teachers will develop their questioning techniques spanning from simple recall to more complex and analytical skills so that all pupils will have opportunities for success.
- Different ways of recording and communicating findings will be encouraged: drawing, ICT, written records, oral reports and models
- Intervening to ensure that all children are given direction, stimulus and encouragement that they require.
- The exceptional ability child will be encouraged to undertake additional research and recording their geographical findings in a variety of ways.
- In the event where children are born abroad or who have lived in other countries they will be invited to share their experiences with the other pupils.
- Children with Special Needs have access to an SNA (when recommended) and will be supported by members of the SEN team.

### 7. Equality of Participation and Access

We view the Geography programme as playing a key role in ensuring equality of opportunity for all children. The programme at each class level will be flexible so that the learning requirements of all children may be addressed. We provide an equal educational experience for both boys and girls as we recognise that stereotyped expectations of gender roles can inhibit children's educational achievements. Children with special needs will be included in all activities.

### 8. Timetable

- Time is allocated at each class level for geography as per the curriculum guidelines.
- Teachers do time blocks on occasions for geography e.g. using a thematic approach, working on a project, visits to local geographical sites.
- Discretionary curriculum time can be used occasionally for SESE if needed and at the discretion of each individual teacher.

### 9. Resources and ICT

- Use of the school and of the local area as a resource.
- We use textbooks as a resource in our teaching of geography.

- Computer room
- School library
- Guest Speakers eg; Concern; Trócaire; Fairtrade: parents with knowledge of other countries i.e. China, Tasmania, Poland, USA;
- Link themes of Green School Project
- Relevant software (listed in the ICT policy document)
- 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(Outside Principals office)
  - Globes
  - Aerial Photos (Senior Classes)
- Useful Websites :
  - Primary Curriculum Support Programme; [www.pcsp.ie](http://www.pcsp.ie)
  - School Development Planning Support; [www.sdps.ie](http://www.sdps.ie)
  - Irish National Teachers Organisation; [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)
  - Scoilnet Maps; [www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie)
- There is a selection of technologies available in the school e.g. digital cameras, laptops, interactive whiteboards, visualisers.

## **10. Health and Safety**

- As per School Tours/Excursions Policy and Safety Statement
- The code of practice to ensure safe Internet usage is recorded in the school's ICT policy documents.

## **11. Individual Teacher's Planning and Reporting**

- Each teacher receives a copy of the school plan including core curriculum which informs their long and short-term planning.
- Teachers can plan using the strands and strand units or use a thematic approach depending on which is most appropriate to the lesson content and time frame needed.
- Teachers will record their content of work and assessment in the area of geography in the Cuntas Míósúil. This will serve as a starting point in reviewing and developing the whole school plan (core curriculum) and in deciding individual preparation for following years.

## **12. Staff Development**

- Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, and websites dealing with geography. Each teacher is responsible for this during preparation.
- Teachers are made aware of any appropriate geography courses available as in-service.
- Teachers are encouraged to attend courses during the school year and summer holidays. As in all subject areas teachers share their expertise etc with the rest of the staff at in-service, staff meetings and informal discussions.
- A notice board in the staffroom is used as a means of advertising all courses.

## **13. Parental Involvement**

The DES handbook Primary School Curriculum; 'Your child's learning, Guidelines for Parents' (NCCA); 'The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school', NCCA DVD (2006) have been distributed to parents within the school 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 help in the delivery of the geography programme by:

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 and Grandparents are encouraged to support the delivery of this programmed by;

- a) Participating in interviews and surveys
- b) Helping out in supervision during fieldwork when/if needed
- c) Talking with children about their lives, work, social and leisure interests
- d) Speaking to classes about their experiences of working/living in the community e.g. nurse, doctor, guard, fireman, postman, dentist to link with the Human Environment strand (this may integrate with the strand 'Story' in History).
- e) Speaking to classes about their experiences of working/living in other countries (this may integrate with the strand 'Story' in History).
- f) Participating in special days organised to celebrate the various nationalities in Scoil Chéile Chríost e.g. Europe Day; when cultural activities/foods/customs of that country are highlighted.

Parents, priests and missionaries from distant lands will be encouraged to share their heritage with the rest of the school if they so wish and if it is appropriate.

#### **14. Community Links**

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

- Coillte - flora and fauna
- Fire Brigade
- Gardaí
- Road Safety Officers
- Fieldtrips to local farms - local farmer.
- Representatives from 'An Taisce'

#### **15. Success Criteria**

We will know that the plan has been implemented if:

- Teachers' preparation is based on this plan.
- Procedures outlined in this plan are consistently followed.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include:

- Teacher/parent feedback.
- Children's feedback.
- Inspectors' suggestions/reports.
- Second level feedback.
- If the plan has promoted the key considerations when implementing the geography curriculum.
- That there is a balance between the process (how the child learns) and content (what the child learns).
- That the child must acquire skills and concepts to work effectively in the geography area.
- That the curriculum is spiral and developmental in its structure.
- That the child engages in studies ranging from personal to local, national and international geography.

- That geography is integrated across the curriculum from Infants to Sixth Class.

## **16. Implementation**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

All class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the geography curriculum in their own classrooms.

**Reviewed:** October 2016

**Next Review Date:** October 2020

#### **Ratification and Communication:**

Ratified by Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management.