St. John Bosco Junior Boys’ School

Geography Policy

**Introduction**

This policy was formulated by the Principal and teaching staff of St. John Bosco Junior Boys’ School in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Primary School Geography Curriculum. As a whole school plan it will guide and organise the teaching of Geography as part of the SESE curriculum and ensure consistency throughout the school. This plan will also serve as the basis for all long and short term planning in Geography in Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First class.

It will also to provide clear guidelines for teachers and inform new and temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in the teaching of geography in our school.

**Rationale**

We believe that SESE, of which the study of Geography forms an important dimension, enables children to make sense of their surroundings and the wider world.

By studying their local environment and other areas, children learn about people, places and the interrelationships between them. They come to understand the natural and human processes and patterns present in these environments, and they can learn to appreciate the similarities and differences between places. Geography also provides opportunities to acquire a range of skills such as investigative and graphical skills. It is our intention that this plan will benefit teaching and learning within our school.

**Vision**

Geography is a valued part of the curriculum in St. John Bosco Junior Boys’ School.

It provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world in which we live and how it has evolved. Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people. It promotes environmental awareness and our duty of care to our surroundings. It gives us an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and peoples of the world and teaches us to respect those differences.

Geography stimulates curiosity and imagination and we aim to build upon the child’s ‘personal geography’ by developing geographical skills, understanding and knowledge through studying places and themes.

We encourage children to learn by experience. We value working in the natural school environment, and school grounds. We visit other local habitats e.g. The Phoenix Park and Ashtown Castle, as an integral part of the Geography Curriculum. We recognise that Geography is an integral part of the S.E.S.E programme and as such is never an isolated aspect of it.

**Aims**

The aims of Geography are

* To develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their inter-relationships
* 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 graphics (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

**Curriculum planning**

Teachers are aware of the need to

* Adopt a pace of Curriculum development which is both challenging and realistic
* Ensure that the whole-school process links with and influences, teaching and learning in individual classrooms
* Monitor the implementation of the plan with particular references to the learning outcomes for children

**The structure of the Geography curriculum for Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First class**

The structure of the Geography curriculum for infant classes is presented in two sections

* A skills and concepts section which describes the geographical skills which children should develop as they encounter topics in the curriculum
* A number of strands which outline the geography programme. The topics within each strand are referred to as strand units

**Skills and concepts development**

**Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First class**

**A sense of place and space**

* A sense of place
* A sense of space

**Maps, globes and graphical skills**

* Picturing places

**Geographical Investigation Skills**

* Questioning
* Observing
* Predicting,
* Investigating and experimenting,
* Estimating and measuring,
* Analysing
* Recording and communicating.

**Children’s Ideas**

We recognise the importance of using the children’s ideas of place and space as a starting point for all geography activities. We use strategies such as talk and discussion, questioning, listening, problem solving tasks, drawings and teacher designed tasks and tests to discover the ideas that the children may have

**Strands and Strand units**

There are three strands in the Primary Geography Curriculum for Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class

* Human Environments
* Natural environments
* Environmental awareness and care

Each strand contains the following strand units

Human Environments

* Living in the local community
* People and places in other areas

Natural environments

* The local and natural environment
* Weather
* Planet earth in space

Environmental awareness and care

* Caring for my locality

| **Strand and strand units** | **Junior and Senior Infants** | **First Class** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Strand: Human Environments**  **Strand unit: Living in the local community** | **My family and community**   * Explore and discuss his membership of the family, school and local community * Identify and discuss the roles of people who serve the local community   **Homes**   * Recognise that people live in homes * Describe areas within the home * Associate activities with areas within the home and outside the home * Acquire some awareness of different types of homes in the locality * Make simple drawings of home, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from home * Begin to appreciate the need for shelter for a family   **School**   * Become aware of , discuss and appreciate the people in the school community * Describe areas within the school * Associate activities with areas within the school, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from school   **People at work**   * Discuss the work of people in the home, at school, in the local community in towns or countryside nearby and in wider environments * Become aware of some buildings and places where people work, especially those in the locality   **People at play**   * Become aware of and discuss play spaces e.g. at home, at school etc. * Suggest ways in which these places may be kept clean and safe * Make simple drawings of these places, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from these places | **My family and community**   * Explore and discuss his role and that of others in the family, school and local community * Become aware of and learn to value the diversity of people who live in the local community and the contribution they make * Begin to recognise the interdependence of individuals and groups in the local community * Develop some awareness of people living in other areas and of the links between them and the local community   **Homes and shelter**   * Recognise that people live in a variety of homes * Describe his home, its location and surroundings * Record some of these features using simple drawings, plans, displays, models and sketches * Investigate materials used to construct homes and identify materials of local origin * Discuss and record simply journeys to and from homes * Develop an awareness and appreciation of different types of homes in the locality and in other areas * Develop an awareness of homelessness   **People at work**   * Investigate the work of people in a range of locations in the locality * Investigate the work of people involved in transport and communications * Discuss and record simply the buildings and places where people work, especially those in the locality * Discuss and record simply journeys to work-places * Become aware of the work of people in other areas who supply food and other products to us   **People at play**   * Appreciate the roles of people who help at play * Describe location and features of play spaces * Discuss and record simply, journeys to and from play spaces |
| **Strand unit: People and places in other areas** | * Develop some awareness of people living in other areas. * Acquire some awareness of different types of homes in places outside the locality * Become aware of some links between the school or local community and people in other places. | * Become familiar of some aspects of the lives of people and especially of children in Ireland , Europe and other areas * Appreciate ways in which people in different areas depend on one another and on people living in other parts of the world. |
| **Strand: Natural environments**  **Strand unit: The local natural environments** | * Become aware of, explore and discuss some aspects of natural environments in the immediate locality of the school * Observe , discuss and investigate water in the local environment * Observe, collect and investigate a variety of natural materials in the local environment * Record and communicate experiences and observations using oral language and pictures | * Identify, explore and discuss aspects of some major natural features in the local environment * Observe , discuss and investigate water in the locality * Observe, collect and investigate a variety of natural materials in the local environment * Record and communicate experiences and observations using simple drawings, plans, displays, models and sketches |
| **Strand Unit: Weather** | * Observe and discuss a variety of weather conditions using simple vocabulary * Record weather observations using a weather chart or diary * Become aware of some of the effects of different weather conditions on human, animal and plant life in the local environment * Discuss the suitability of different kinds of clothes for different weather condition   Recognise that some weather patterns are associated with seasonal change and distinguish between summer and winter | * Observe and record varying weather conditions using appropriate vocabulary and simple equipment * Begin to associate cloud cover and other conditions with different types of weather * Begin to make and test simple weather predictions * Identify ways in which weather influences the lives of people * Observe and record the influences weather and seasonal changes have on people, animals and plants in the locality * Contrast weather in the locality with that in other areas |
| **Strand Unit: Planet earth in space** | * Identify and discuss the sun, the moon and stars * Recognise the difference between day and night | * Recognise the sun as a source of heat and light * Identify the sun, the moon, stars, day and night * Develop familiarity with the spherical nature of the earth |
| **Strand: Environmental awareness and care**  **Strand Unit: Caring for my locality** | * Observe , discuss and appreciate the attributes of the local environment * Appreciate that people share the environment with plant and animal life * Develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the environment * Identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment | * Identify, discuss and appreciate the natural and human features of the local environment * Observe and develop an awareness of living things in a range of habitats in local and wider environments * Observe similarities and differences among plants and animals in different local habitats * Develop an awareness that air, water, soil, living and non-living things are essential to the environment * Begin to realise that people, animals and plants depend on each other * Realise that there is both an individual and a community responsibility for taking care of the environment * Identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment * Identify and help to implement simple strategies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the environment * Become aware of ways in which the environment can be polluted or harmed |

**A Spiral Approach**

Our Geography plan is based on a spiral approach as per the curriculum. For this reason, it is not intended that all strand units will be taught in each class. Some units will be taught during Junior Infants only, some will be taught in Senior Infants only while others may be taught in each class each year with more complex details as appropriate. The units may be supplemented by extension work at the discretion of the class teacher. A two year plan is in place for Junior Infants and Senior Infants while First class has a one year plan.

Geography is often integrated with History and Science. Please see appended SESE overview

**Approaches and Methodologies**

In Geography class teachers strive to:

* Use the child’s personal knowledge and experiences as a starting point to develop a lesson.
* Design activities which help pupils answer the geographical questions such as:- Where is it? What is it like? How has it changed? Why has it changed? How will it change next? What will happen to it? How might it be better? What can be done? How do I feel? What am I learning?
* Share with pupils what they are expected to learn and how to learn it.
* Provide a variety of learning activities that are used regularly including observation, enquiry, investigation, games, puzzles and problem-solving.
* Encourage pupils to critically evaluate information, ideas and different viewpoints.
* Encourage pupils to describe, explain, predict and evaluate geographical patterns, processes and environmental changes.
* Plan for pupils to make and use maps, to research through atlases and globes regularly, in order to locate places being studied and make use of models for exploration.
* Provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to work individually, in pairs and in groups.
* Encourage discussion so that pupils clarify their thinking.
* Provide pupils with regular feedback about their work and about what they need to do next in order to improve and further understand.
* Use assessment, through teacher observation, correction of pupils’ work and the use of focused questions to determine the pupils’ knowledge and understanding, before, during and after units of work.
* Expect pupils to record their work in a variety of ways, including diagrams, illustrations, pictures, letters, posters, annotated drawings and maps, reports and accounts. As appropriate, pupils make oral presentations of their work.

**Linkage and Integration**

English

Work in Geography provides opportunities for pupils to apply their language and literacy skills. In Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class the pupils are expected to extend their technical vocabulary, to talk about what they see and read and communicate this in different ways. They are expected to look for similarities and differences and engage in finding out answers to questions about where and why. They will use basic geographical language and draw simple maps and diagrams to communicate geographical information

Mathematics

Geography provides an excellent context for mathematical investigations. In addition, many tasks in geography require numerical skills such as collecting numerical information, data processing, data presentation. Pupils can apply their numerical skills when working on map reading and analysis of data.

ICT

ICT is used in various ways to support teaching and motivate children’s learning. We have interactive whiteboards, visualisers, cameras, computers, laptops and audio-visual equipment. The Internet is used judiciously to find information, to expand on research and to enhance the learning experience

Religious Education

Geography provides many rich opportunities for spiritual development, for example, to appreciate the beauty and scale of geographical features of the world in which we live, the influence of natural phenomena on our lives and in the lives of others.

SPHE

Geography contributes significantly to the teaching of social, personal and health education. Firstly, the subject matter lends itself to raising matters of citizenship and social welfare e.g. children study the way people re-cycle material and how environments are changed for better or for worse. Secondly, the nature of the subject means that children have the opportunity to take part in debates and

**Assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment may be based upon teachers’ judgements of pupil attainment and progress. It is built in to the planning of learning experiences and clearly related to the learning outcomes that are proposed. Assessment activities will be wide ranging and matched to the pupils’ ability. It will be differentiated by task or by outcome, through appropriate support and resource provision.

Activities resulting in written or oral work, project material, models, practical fieldwork, role-play, video/audio presentations, factual recall (KWL charts and learning logs), observations and display work may provide a basis for assessment. Pupils will be encouraged to evaluate their own work as this is a most beneficial learning progression.

The assessment of pupils’ work will provide information for pupils, teachers and parents:

* To enable pupils to reflect upon and celebrate achievement.
* To help plan for progression, continuity and to inform planning for future work of whole classes and individual pupils.
* To communicate achievement and identify areas for future development to pupils, parents and teachers.
* To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

**Children with differing needs**

The class teacher will ensure that each geography lesson is appropriate for all pupils through differentiation. Children benefit from participating, watching and listening to other children demonstrating and explaining their ideas. Some pupils may need to be supported with peer pairing or extra help from the SNA or class teacher.

**Equality of Participation and Access**

We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning where each child is valued and respected.

**Time Allocation**

The time allocated to the teaching of Geography for Infant Classes is forty five minutes per week and one hour per week for First Class. Geography is a cross curricular subject and is integrated with most subjects throughout the day.

**Resources**

Our school has many natural resources in the locality and a variety of resources for teaching Geography such as folders, reference books, globes, maps, photographs, DVDs and posters. These resources are stored in the staffroom and the Library and are shared between classes as required. Each classroom has full internet access and uses many recommended websites on the interactive whiteboards.

Textbooks and work cards can be used during Geography lessons to support active investigative work.

Resources have been created to support the teaching of each strand. Pupils are facilitated to become aware and knowledgeable of the subject area and to explore it in a “hands on” way.

These resources include

* Photocopiable Masters
* Work cards
* Relevant equipment (excluding consumables)

It is hoped that all resource materials will be included in the evaluation of the geography plan.

**Display of Pupils’ Work**

Stimulating and interesting displays of Geography topics will communicate learning processes and celebrate pupils’ achievement. Our notice boards often portray the children’s work.

**Organisation**

All our classes are single classes with mixed ability and lessons are planned from the strands and strand units from the Revised Primary School Curriculum for Geography. Within these lessons there will be a good balance between whole-class work, group teaching and individual practice.

**Health and Safety**

In their planning of activities, teachers will be mindful of safety issues. They will also explain the reasons for safety measures and discuss any implications with the children. Children will always be encouraged to consider safety for themselves, others and the environment and the resources they use, when undertaking geographical activities.

During practical work teachers should be aware of the safety implications of exploratory or investigative work to be undertaken. Children should be encouraged to observe safety procedures during all tasks. There are many safety issues to consider including:

**Plants and Animals**

Disposable gloves should be used when investigating hedgerows. Children should never handle unknown or unfamiliar plants, especially fungi. Gloves must be worn also when handling birds or animals. Hand washing should be encouraged after handling plants and animals.

**Eyes**

Children should never use lenses, binoculars or other lenses devices to look directly at the sun or other intense source of light. This includes dark glass and plastic.

**Polythene Bags**

Children should be warned of the dangers of using these bags as they may cause suffocation.

**Cleanliness and Hygiene**

The teacher should explain that anything the children are asked to smell or taste has been carefully chosen for that activity. The sharing of utensils should not be permitted. Hand washing should be encouraged before food activities.

**Environmental Education**

Environmental Education forms an integral and important part of the Geography curriculum. Within the strands and strand units there are units that lend themselves to developing the children’s knowledge, understanding, concern and care for the environment.

**Staff Development**

All staff members are encouraged to take part in courses or to do Summer Courses in SESE/Geography. Teachers are encouraged to share their interests and expertise.

**Parental Involvement/ Community Links**

Parents are encouraged to contribute to our Geography/SESE programme. People in the locality who have an interest and knowledge of the local area may be invited in to speak to the children.

We foster links with the community by using the facilities in the locality e.g. Dublin Zoo. We use the expertise of schools advisors in Dublin Zoo, Ashtown Castle and also the Phoenix Park. Our school has been actively involved with the Junior Achievement programme for a number of years and the children have benefitted greatly from participating in the scheme.

**Individual teachers’ planning and reporting**

The whole school plan and curriculum strand and strand units for Geogpaphy/SESE will provide the information for individual teachers for their class planning, both long and short term planning. A thematic approach for some aspects of the Geography programme may be employed. A thematic approach may be reflected in the teacher’s planning. Work completed is recorded in the Cuntas Miosuil and available on the Naz Drive internal computer system.

This record is available for the next teacher of the class at the end of the school year. This ensures that concepts and skills are developed from year to year and that the looking and responding activities are not repetitive for the children. Children’s progress is recorded in the individual school report cards.

**Equality of Participation and Access**

Equal opportunities will be given to all children in the school, across all geography strands and activities.

**Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be measured by:

* Teacher observation of the child’s progress by observing, questioning and monitoring.
* The child’s response in a variety of ways to geographical tasks.
* The child’s ability to evaluate his own work, and the work of others.
* The child’s commitment and involvement with the assigned tasks.
* Teacher assigned tasks to see how the child responds to a set task, and choice of medium and materials.
* Samples and projects of the child’s work.
* Collaborative and project work.

**Implementation and Review**

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Geography/SESE programme within St. John Bosco Junior Boy’s school and class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the Geography/SESE programme for their own classes.

It will be necessary to review this policy on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the SESE curriculum in our school. Any amendments will be noted and acted upon. This review will be carried out by all teaching staff.

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2013

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_