

Environmental Education Policy

A new Environmental Education Policy has been developed by the NSW Department of Education and Training. (www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au). This policy is based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development and replaces the 1989 curriculum statement. The adoption of this policy is mandatory for all NSW government schools.

The policy promotes active participation by students in:

- improving the school environment,
- addressing local environment issues,
- being informed about global environmental issues and
- playing an active role as global citizens in protecting the environment.

The policy sets out three major focus areas:

1. curriculum,
2. management of resources and
3. management of school grounds.

The Upper Parramatta River Catchment Education Kit supports the implementation of the new environmental education policy for schools in the following ways:

1. Curriculum

- involve students in investigating, maintaining and improving the school and local environment
- use the community to investigate practical and real life situations
- provide opportunities for students to develop into effective and committed environmental citizens
- identify the global and local dimension of threats to catchments

2. Management of Resources

- development of a school pollution prevention plan
- employ best practice and ensure compliance to new environmental legislation (POEO)
- maximise learning opportunities created by the schools management of resources
- improve the school environment
- sense of community and pride in the school
- participatory democracy in the management of school resources
- increase student confidence and skills in making decisions about environmental issues
- involvement of the local community
- sustainable management of resources during construction and demolition

3. Management of School Grounds

In implementing this focus area of the policy, schools are expected to:



- Use and develop their grounds and buildings to enhance and achieve the objectives of environmental education and syllabus outcomes.
- Use their grounds and buildings as learning areas.
- Identify and implement long-term strategies that will rehabilitate areas of the grounds and buildings and reflect best practice for sustainable management.

School Environmental Management Plan

All NSW government schools are required to develop a school environmental management plan that works to a schedule and is implemented in stages. The policy recommends that schools involve the whole school community in developing these plans. It is also suggested that schools seek to involve the local community, environment groups and local government (see The NSW Nature Conservation Council for information about local environment groups www.ncc.org.au and Department of Local Government for information about your local council www.dlg.nsw.gov.au).