

ACTIVITY FOUR: DEVELOPING A SCHOOL POLICY TO IMPROVE OUR WATER MANAGEMENT

During this **NATURAL SCIENCES** activity, learners develop a school environmental policy to improve water management.

A school environmental policy is a statement of intentions and principles for improving a school's educational and environmental performance. The policy development process involves learners, teachers and other stakeholders and encourages schools to audit existing practices, activities and other elements of the curriculum and to select, evaluate and review environmental education goals and management plans.

A simple school environmental policy is shown below:

At all times the staff, learners and community will try to:

- *Engage with environmental issues for more meaningful learning in a healthy, happy school*
- *Manage resources more wisely*
- *Minimise wastage*
- *Minimise water and electricity use*
- *Improve our school grounds and environment*
- *Share ideas, improve co-operation throughout the school community*

From Georgenau Primary, Pietermaritzburg

One way to further develop a school policy is to develop two sub-points for each of the main points in the policy. The sub-points should describe what you will do in more detail.

At all times the staff, learners and community will try to:

- **Engage with environmental issues for more meaningful learning in a healthy, happy school:**
 - *Through developing and teaching environmental lesson plans, and*
 - *Through creating opportunities for learners to enjoy the school's natural environment in the context of lessons.*
- **Manage resources more wisely**
 - *Reduce electricity consumption in the school*
 - *Reduce water consumption in the school*
- **Minimise wastage**
 - *Reduce the number of resources used*
 - *Establish a recycling programme*
- **Improve our school grounds and environment**
 - *Plant a food garden*
 - *Reduce soil erosion by planting indigenous water-wise vegetation in bare areas*
- **Share ideas, improve co-operation throughout the school community**
 - *Involve parents in more environmental projects*
 - *Establish an environmental club for teachers and learners*

It is useful to assess the current status of our school by means of an audit. An audit can be described as a careful look at the way things are. A policy then attempts to address what has been discovered in the audit. In the following activity, we will start with an audit and this will lead to the development of a water policy for the school.

ACTIVITY:

- Divide the class into five groups. Every learner needs a copy of the water audit worksheet on the following page. All learners need to check the water meter (if your school has one) each day. Each group needs to do the audit on a different day of the week (one group of learners will do it on Monday, the next group on Tuesday etc) and report any leaking taps to the teacher.

Name: _____

Date of audit: _____

Time of audit: _____

WATER		YES	NO	
1.	Does the school have access to water-on-tap?			
2.	Is the drinking water clean and safe for consumption?			
3.	Does the school have tanks to collect rainwater?			
4.	Are teachers and learners aware of ways to save water?			
5.	Is water management recognised and promoted at your school?			
6.	Who amongst teachers, school governing body members, learners and other staff members know how to change a tap washer?			
7.	How many taps are dripping?			
8.	How many taps including baths and showers are in the school and school grounds?			
9.	How many flush toilets are in the school?			
10.	How many toilets are leaking?			
If the school has access to municipal water, find and read the water meter in the school grounds. Record the daily use in the table below:				
DAY	DATE	TIME	METER READING	LITRES USED
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Total for the school week (Monday to Friday)				

- Now that the audits are complete, learners (individually or in small groups) need to brainstorm ideas around how the water management in their school can be improved, based on what they discovered during their audits. Water management actions can include individual learner and teacher actions and whole class/grade/school actions.



- Learners then need to write down all the ideas on paper.
- Go round the class, asking individuals (or groups) for their contributions and ideas. List these on the board. As a class, decide which (between five and ten) are the most likely that your school will be able to implement. Eliminate the rest. If necessary, expand the initial idea to include two sub-points (see example on page 14).
- Once everyone is happy with the policy, write or type it up neatly and present it to the school governing body or headmaster. Your school may already have an environmental policy so your water management policy can become part of that.

Remember, we can ALL work towards managing our water resources more wisely, whether it is on an individual, group, class, grade or school level!

Criteria to assess learners during this natural sciences lesson

Criteria	Exceeded requirements of the Learning Outcome	Satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Partially satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome	Not satisfied requirements of the Learning Outcome
The learner carried out the water audit on her/his own				
The learner contributed ideas towards better water management at the school				