

Carbon Calculator Helps Green-Schools Save over 7,700 Tonnes of Carbon

- Repak launches schools carbon calculator with the Green-Schools office of An Taisce.
- 346 new schools achieve their Green Flag status over the last year.
- Green-Schools programme helps contribute to savings of over €2 million for participating schools and saves over 200 million litres of water.
- Repak's sponsorship of An Taisce's Green Schools programme helps it grow with 420 new registrations during the last school year bringing the total number of schools participating to 3,109.

(05.03.09) Green-Schools throughout the country have helped save enough water to fill 85 Olympic sized swimming pools, enough petrol to power a car for 5 million kilometres, enough energy to power a light bulb for 1.4 million days and enough waste to fill over 1,000 bin trucks. These statistics were revealed at the launch of the Repak Green-Schools Carbon Calculator (<http://www.greenschoolsireland.org>) which took place in Croke Park and coincided with the awarding by An Taisce of a number of Green- Flags to schools that have successfully implemented the seven step programme.

The free online tool helps schools calculate and reduce their carbon footprint and was developed as part of Repak's €1 million sponsorship of the Green-Schools programme. The web based programme allows schools to easily input their recycling and waste data along with water and energy consumption to produce an overall carbon footprint report. The report details the schools and individuals footprint and also shows how it compares against the national average figure. It also gives detailed breakdowns for the carbon footprint for each of the different areas (waste, energy, water).

Repak's sponsorship of the Green-Schools programme aims to help An Taisce increase participation from the current level of 75% of all schools in Ireland to over 95% over the next 5 years. In 2008 there were 420 new registrations to the Greens-Schools programme with 346 new schools awarded the prestigious Green Flag. There are now a total of 3,109 schools participating representing 645,000 students and 44,000 teachers.

It is estimated that the Green-Schools programme for the current school year has helped save:

- 7,700 tonnes of carbon emissions.
- €2 million in direct costs.
- 3.5 million units of electricity.
- 200 million litres of water.
- 2,100 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill.

Commenting on the launch of the carbon calculator, Andrew Hetherington, CEO of Repak said "An Taisce's Green-Schools programme is one of the most successful Eco-Schools programmes that take place in 55 countries. We recognise this and the greater impact the programme has on the wider community in changing behaviour. It is estimated that the programme achieves a 'home impact multiplier effect' which means that the impact in student's homes and in the wider community is probably a factor of 5-10 times the reduction achieved in the schools. This calculator was specifically designed for schools as a tool to help them assess their impact on the environment and to take steps to achieve real change. Students take home the knowledge they have learned in school such as recycling and energy reductions and pass this onto parents and other family members. This tool is part of our commitment to environmental education and builds on our publically assessable household carbon calculator available on www.repak.ie."

The success of the Green-Schools programme and the Repak Schools Carbon Calculator is being enjoyed by Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal in Lanesborough, Longford. After implementing the water theme of their Green-Schools programme they are saving over 2m litres of water per annum. This is over 90% of their previous water usage. By using the Repak Schools Carbon Calculator they can calculate that the water saved amounts to 200 tonnes of carbon, the equivalent weight of 40 bull elephants.

Cathy Baxter Green-Schools Manager for Ireland added "We are delighted with the ongoing success of the Green-Schools programme in Ireland and the support we are receiving from Repak and our other partners and sponsors; the Department of Transport, Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Local Authorities, ESB Independent Energy and the Wrigley Co. Ltd. The research data on waste, energy, water and transport that we have recently collated and we estimate at a minimum value of over 2 million euro per year really does show the value of the programme not to mention the impact on the students involved and their wider communities"

In 2007 Repak managed to recycle 603,000 tonnes of packaging resulting in the equivalent of 463,000 tonnes of carbon savings. Since Repak was established in 1997, over 3 million tonnes of used packaging has been diverted from landfill, resulting in approximately 2.2 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent savings. The organisation also launched the first Irish publicly accessible online carbon calculator in 2007 available on www.repak.ie.

Notes to editor

- Green-Schools, (internationally known as Eco-schools), is an international environmental education and management programme, and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment.

- The programme is an initiative of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and is operated in Ireland by An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland).
- The programme currently operates in over 50 countries and has over 27,000 schools participating.
- In Ireland the Green-Schools programme to date has achieved:
 - Over 3,100 schools participating
 - Over 1,500 Green-Flags awarded
 - 645,000 students and 44,000 teachers in the programme
 - 500,000 litres of petrol are saved per annum from the transport theme of Green-Schools
 - In total 75% of Irish schools are part of Green-Schools

The Schools Carbon Calculator is available from (<http://www.greenschoolsireland.org>) and www.repak.ie.

Ends

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and also met the 2005 target of 50%. The 2011 EU target for Repak is 60% which has already been met and exceeded with a result of 64% of packaging recycled in 2007.

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