

National Assembly for Wales  
Petitions Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

09/01/17

Dear Mr Hedges AC/AM

Thank you for your letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> December and the opportunity to respond further to the petition regarding the Wildlife Warriors.

Firstly, Caerphilly is a great county for Eco Schools, with every school registered on the programme and over a third of schools at Platinum status. This figure shows that schools view the Eco-Schools programme as an important mechanism for engaging pupils in a wide range of environmental issues/projects, which includes the protection of wildlife.

The Eco-Schools programme is strategic; however, it encourages many projects and initiatives to be included as part of the individual modules that pupils tackle to make environmental improvements. The framework of the Eco Schools programme enables schools to focus and gives structure. This umbrella approach means a variety of activities can be presented as evidence in a holistic way towards International Eco-Schools status. A club such as the Wildlife Warriors would be a perfect example of what schools could include as evidence for Eco Schools status for the biodiversity and school grounds modules. (other activities may include energy usage, waste minimisation or healthy living).

In answer to some of the points raised by the proposed Wildlife Warriors Club:

- ***be different from schools eco committees as it would allow anyone to join at any age. Children would not need to be elected to the club***

Whilst Eco Committees are encouraged to include a democratic element, whether it's in choosing Eco Committee members or roles on the committee, many schools encourage extra children to attend meetings. Eco Committees are encouraged to have members from all year groups throughout the school, and many schools do. Teachers often say that the Eco Committee enables students who would never think of being on the school council (for various reasons), to have a chance and play a part. There is a great video of a student from Rhymney Comprehensive, who was in year 11 and just about to leave last summer, saying that being on the Eco Committee helped him overcome his

shyness, helped him make friends and gave him confidence to do lots of things he never would have done.

A crucial point is that one of the cornerstones of Eco-Schools is that it is a **whole school** programme, with all students involved in a particular aspect. The Eco Committee simply acts as

a hub to coordinate ideas. All pupils within the school can suggest ideas and activities, whether it's directly in meetings, helping with the Environmental review, being involved in a particular themed action (for example energy monitors or mini beast inspectors) or just simply posting something on the Eco Board. It is one of the Eco Schools essential criteria that the whole school community contributes towards the attainment of Eco Schools.

One recent great example: Cwmfelinfach Primary run an after school Eco Club for anyone to attend, with the committee as the hub. The students in the club realised that not many Foundation Phase children were coming, so they decided to run their own 'Mini Eco Club' (their name) on a Friday lunchtime for Foundation Phase children to attend. This is Year 4,5 and 6 children organising and running a club for any Foundation Phase student to go to. They even set eco challenges to do at home with parents/guardians!

This work would be part of the Eco Schools Action plan and would be used as evidence for Eco Schools work.

- ***be active all year to help protect wildlife***

Eco Committees / club meet all year round, with the school grounds topic being one of the most popular topics tackled. There are countless examples of schools carrying out habitat creation, pollinator plants being planted, wildlife surveys etc... Just look at the Eco Schools twitter feed.

- ***be hands on in their community and do practical activities to help protect wildlife. These activities could include, cleaning rivers, building wildlife homes, planting flowers and trees.***

Most Eco schools, at any stage in the awards structure, undertake environmental projects out in the community. As part of the Platinum criteria (4<sup>th</sup> Flag schools) schools have to show these activities as part of their evidence. Recent projects carried out by schools have included beach cleans, litterpicks, fence construction, planting for pollinators, surveys and monitoring. Please see the attached case study of a litterpicking and bulb planting project carried out by Plasyfellin, Park and Tyn y Wern Primary Schools within Caerphilly County.

- ***be flexible so different people can join at different times.***

As mentioned, all schools involved on the Eco Schools programme have a core Eco Committee. The main role of that committee is to involve and encourage other pupils to join in, or run additional eco type clubs (wildlife club, gardening club) or to hold events such as Eco Week, where many activities/projects are carried out. But the really important thing is that Eco Schools is a whole school project with inclusivity at its heart.

Essentially, Keep Wales Tidy supports initiatives like Wildlife Warriors as part of action to deliver the Eco Schools programme.

I hope this has answered all the questions raised. Please get in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Bacon  
Regional Manager  
Keep Wales Tidy