

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

ECO-SCHOOLS

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Article 1. Registration

- 1.1. Schools that wish to participate in the Eco-Schools program and obtain the Green Flag, the Eco-Schools certification label, must register by submitting a signed registration form titled "Yes, we are joining Eco-Schools!". After registration, the school will receive a welcome package. Additional products can be ordered via www.eco-schools.nl/webshop. The package includes:
 - a. A welcome letter with information and login details for the Eco-Schools website;
 - b. A folder containing the seven-step plan;
 - c. 1 enamel sign;
 - d. 10 pens;
 - e. 10 stickers;
 - f. 1 table flag.
- 1.2. After registration, the school will receive a welcome letter with further instructions for participation, including support (to shape the change process; see Article 4) and certification (to obtain the Eco-Schools label; see Article 5).
- 1.3. After registration, the school will receive a school profile on the Eco-Schools website. This profile will display the school's name, address details, and start date. Further completion of the profile is the responsibility of the school.
- 1.4. The school guarantees that the information provided in the registration form is accurate and up to date. Any changes to contact persons must be communicated by the school in a timely manner via info@eco-schools.nl

Article 2. Duration of participation

- 2.1. Eco-Schools is a continuous process, in which a Green Flag audit takes place every two years. Participation therefore lasts a minimum of two years. In the registration form (see Article 1), the school chooses whether this is based on calendar years or school years.
- 2.2. Participation is automatically renewed for one year after the end of the participation year. In the registration form (see Article 1), the school chooses whether this is based on calendar years or school years.
- 2.3. Participation may be terminated annually, unless the minimum participation period of two years has not yet elapsed. A notice period of one month applies before the start of the next participation year (calendar year or school year, depending on the school's choice at the start of participation; see Article 2.1).

- 2.4. Terminations and changes can be submitted in writing via info@eco-schools.nl or by post to Eco-Schools Netherlands, P.O. Box 43016, 3540 AA Utrecht. In the case of termination, we always request that the reason for termination be stated. The date of termination is the date on which the notice is received by Eco-Schools Netherlands via email or post.

Article 3. Financial

- 3.1. Participating schools take part under a subscription model. Upon registration, the school agrees to the costs associated with participation in the Eco-Schools program. These costs consist of annual participation fees and a one-time registration fee.
- 3.2. The annual participation fees are intended for support (guidance and use of the tools provided by Eco-Schools Netherlands; see Article 4) and certification (audits; see Article 5). The rates are as follows:
- a. Primary/secondary/VET schools: €1,600 (excluding 21% VAT)
- 3.3. The (one-time) registration fee is intended for the welcome package (see Article 1), additional support hours for the mentor in the first two years, and additional audits in the first two years—for the Bronze and Silver certificates. The rates are as follows:
- a. Primary/secondary/VET schools : €2,120 (excluding 21% VAT)
- 3.4. For annual participation, the school will receive an invoice at the beginning of the calendar year or at the beginning of the school year for the applicable participation fees. In the registration form, the school indicates which of these two moments they wish to start. Schools starting in September pay per school year (in advance). Schools starting in January pay per calendar year (in advance).
- 3.5. For the registration fee, the school will receive an invoice at the same time as the invoice for the first annual fee.
- 3.6. Any administrative costs, travel expenses, and accommodation costs are included in the rates.
- 3.7. Payment must be made within 14 days of the invoice date. After the due date, statutory interest will be charged without the need for a formal notice of default. If the client persistently fails to meet payment obligations, all costs incurred in obtaining payment will be borne by the client.
- 3.8. The Eco-Schools rates are indexed annually as of January 1 based on the CBS index. The indexation is rounded to amounts of €5 or €10.

Article 4. Support

- 4.1. Upon registration, Eco-Schools Netherlands assigns a mentor to the school. Mentors are professionals employed by the implementing partners of Eco-Schools Netherlands. These are organizations that are (locally) active in the fields of sustainability and education. The mentor's contact details are provided in the welcome letter sent to the school (see Article 1). The mentor will get in touch with the school to start the Eco-Schools process.
- 4.2. The mentor supports the school in implementing the seven steps; see <https://eco-schools.nl/en/get-started/the-steps>. The seven steps of Eco-Schools are fixed, but the content is flexible. The Eco-team can make their own choices within this framework, see <https://eco-schools.nl/en/get-started/themes>.

- 4.3. The mentor and the school will agree on when the mentor will visit the school. In the process toward obtaining the first Green Flag, this is preferably at the following times:
 - a. Initial meeting
 - b. After completing steps 1 and 2, to review the next steps toward the Bronze certificate (the Bronze certificate is awarded after the successful completion of step 4; see Article 5)
 - c. After achieving the Bronze certificate, to award the certificate and discuss the next steps toward the Silver certificate (the Silver certificate is awarded after the successful completion of step 5; see Article 5)
 - d. After achieving the Silver certificate, to award the certificate and discuss the final steps toward the Green Flag (the Green Flag is awarded after the successful completion of step 7; see Article 5)
 - e. After achieving the Green Flag, to award the flag and discuss how the school will continue the sustainability efforts in education, organization, and environment.
- 4.4. Eco-Schools Netherlands reserves the right to assign a new mentor, provided the quality of the services remains unaffected. A change of mentor may also occur at the request of the school.
- 4.5. Eco-Schools Netherlands provides materials and products that the school can use independently and with the guidance of the school mentor during the sustainability change process, such as:
 - a. Welcome package for Eco-Schools upon registration (see Article 1)
 - b. Access to the toolkit with the seven-step plan and associated materials, such as the Eco-Scans (which allow students to discover what is going well and what needs improvement in sustainability) and a guide for curriculum analysis
 - c. Access to a school profile on the website where a portfolio can be kept (supports tracking and monitoring progress in the school's sustainability efforts)
 - d. Access to knowledge and inspiration through newsletters and participant updates; these channels keep schools informed about activities, tips, blogs, and news from Eco-Schools Netherlands
 - e. Access to inspiration days organized by Eco-Schools Netherlands, where Eco-teams share experiences and are inspired by experts
 - f. Access to the webshop: see www.eco-schools.nl/webshop
 - g. Access to additional options; see Article 6
- 4.6. The support services provided by Eco-Schools Netherlands are exclusively for participating schools. Nothing may be used in any way without prior permission from Eco-Schools Netherlands
- 4.7. If desired, Eco-Schools Netherlands can offer additional support. Any costs for these additional options will be added to the annual participation fees of Eco-Schools; see Article 6.

Artikel 5. Certification

- 5.1. Schools participating in Eco-Schools work according to the seven steps of Eco-Schools. To be eligible for certification, it must be demonstrated that the steps have been followed and that the school meets the criteria associated with these steps.

- 5.2. In the process toward obtaining the first Green Flag, there are three certification milestones: the Bronze certificate (after step 4), the Silver certificate (after step 5), and the Green Flag (after step 7).
- 5.3. Ideally, the process from start to obtaining the Green Flag takes about two years: one year to achieve the Bronze certificate, then half a year to achieve the Silver certificate, and another half year to achieve the Green Flag. The school will make every effort to meet this timeline.
- 5.4. An auditor conducts the audit. Audits are provided by Eco-Schools Netherlands. The school's mentor will never be assigned as the auditor.
- 5.5. Eco-Schools is a process certification, which does not certify based on the absolute sustainability level of a school, but rather on the efforts the school makes to shape a continuous change process in sustainability within its own context.
- 5.6. The auditor applies the internationally agreed evaluation criteria and the rules for granting certificates. In case of ambiguity regarding criteria, the interpretation and assessment of the auditor are decisive.
- 5.7. Audits for the Bronze and Silver certificates are paper-based. For the Green Flag audit, an on-site visit to the school will take place. This visit is prepared by the school and the auditor based on the submitted documents.
- 5.8. Audits are based on the submitted information from the school and, in the case of the Green Flag, the on-site audit visit.
- 5.9. After an audit, the school will receive an audit report, including an assessment and recommendations for the next steps.
- 5.10. After an audit and the awarding of a certificate, the school will receive a certified copy of the certificate. The mentor and the school will agree on whether the certificate will be sent by mail or handed over in person.
- 5.11. When the school is certified with the Green Flag, the school will receive student certificates and one Green Flag. For subsequent Green Flags, it is assumed that the previously awarded Green Flag can be reused. If the flag is in insufficient condition to be reused, the school will receive a new Green Flag. Additional flags, for example in case of wear and tear, multiple flagpoles, for indoor use, or for PR purposes, can be ordered via the webshop: www.eco-schools.nl/webshop
- 5.12. The Green Flag is valid for two years after it has been awarded. Once the Green Flag has expired, this certification may no longer be used by the school, including in communications. After two years, the school must undergo another audit to renew the Green Flag.

Artikel 6. Additional options

- 6.1. Eco-Schools schools that have a valid Green Flag (the Green Flag is applicable for a period of 2 years after the date of the Green Flag audit report), have the option to continue the program upon request, without guidance. The cost for this is €800 (excluding 21% VAT, for primary/secondary/VET schools).
- 6.2. If this option is chosen, the school can still make use of the remaining services, such as the materials in the 'My Eco-Schools' environment, communication, meetings, and certification through audits.
- 6.3. Eco-Schools offers materials that can enhance awareness of Eco-Schools both internally and externally, such as pens, stickers, table flags, banners, and fabric bags. These can be ordered via the webshop www.eco-schools.nl/webshop.

- 6.4. If desired, Eco-Schools can provide additional support in the form of training, study days, and workshops. Check the offerings at www.eco-schools.nl/aan-de-slag/workshops. It is also possible to request a custom quote for such services.
- 6.5. Projects are offered by Eco-Schools Netherlands, possibly in collaboration with partners. These projects allow the school to implement Eco-Schools' approach. Participation in additional projects is voluntary, and in most cases, participation is limited to a small number of schools. Sometimes a contribution from the school is requested. Information about projects is available at www.eco-schools.nl/aan-de-slag/projecten
- 6.6. There is the possibility to connect with another Eco-Schools school worldwide through Eco-Schools. Eco-Schools Netherlands collaborates with national coordinators for this type of 'twinning'. Eco-Schools Netherlands supports the matching process, but the implementation is up to the schools themselves.
- 6.7. In addition to PR materials, there are products that can strengthen the school's sustainability efforts, such as water refill stations or solar panels. Through the supporters program (see www.eco-schools.nl/community/supporters). Eco-Schools Netherlands collaborates with providers of such materials to further support schools.

Artikel 7. Changes to rates and conditions

- 7.1. The registration fee, participation costs, and participation conditions may be changed. Changes will be published on www.eco-schools.nl at least one month before the effective date of the change.

Artikel 8. Eco-Schools Nederland / Vereniging GDO

- 8.1. The Eco-Schools methodology is used in approximately 100 countries worldwide. In most countries, a single organization is designated to coordinate the program. In the Netherlands, the program is owned by IVN Natuureducatie. The management is outsourced to the Vereniging Gemeenten voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling (GDO), registered with the Chamber of Commerce as the Vereniging voor lokale Natuur- en Milieucommunicatie, operating under the name Vereniging GDO. Therefore, Eco-Schools Nederland does not exist as an independent organization. Everywhere where Eco-Schools Nederland is mentioned as a party, the valid legal entity is Vereniging GDO.
- 8.2. Vereniging GDO is registered with the Chamber of Commerce in Utrecht under the registration number 24431522.
- 8.3. For more information about the goals and organizational structure of Vereniging GDO, the website can be consulted: www.vereniginggdo.nl



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