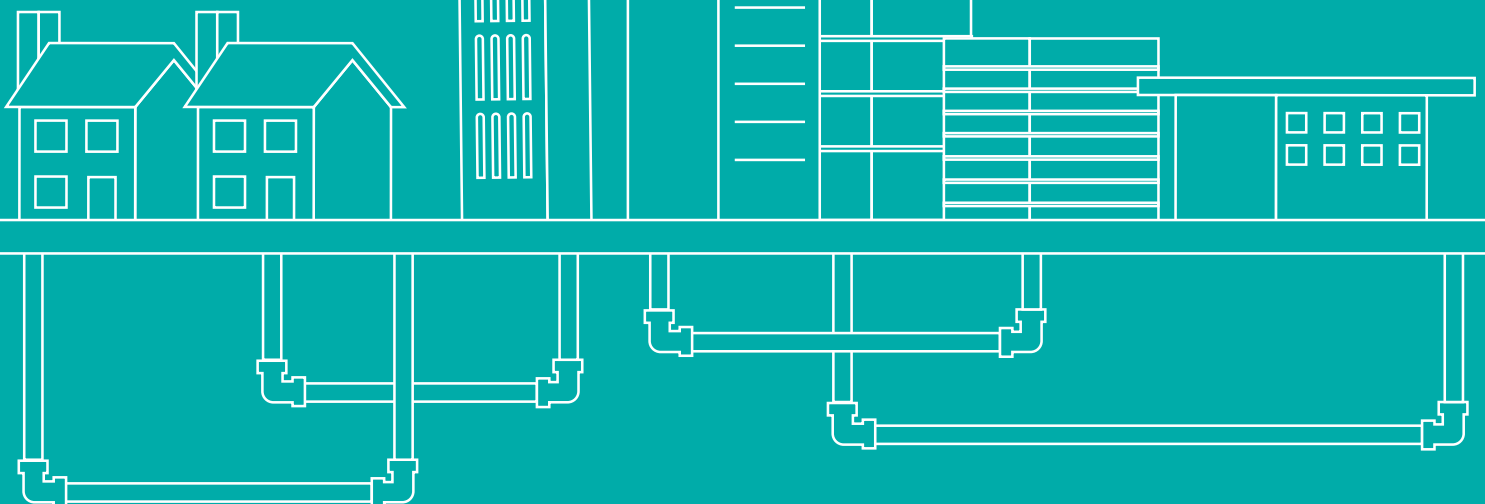




Delivering what matters

The wonderful world of water

Hints and tips for Eco-Schools



Water is precious

Water is our most valuable resource on Earth – essential for every living thing. We can't live without it.

It has become more precious than ever before, with global warming and climate change affecting rainfall and weather patterns. Droughts and floods are becoming more common.

In Northern Ireland, water is something we take for granted – we use a lot of it! We use it for drinking, washing, for industry and farming.

People mistakenly believe that the heavy rain we experience in this country means we do not need to be careful with the water we use but all that water needs to be cleaned and pumped to our homes and schools.

We each use approximately
170 litres
of water
a day!

NI Water
cleans over
605m
litres
of water
a day!

It is an expensive process to clean and transport the water we all use daily.

The water treatment process also uses huge volumes of energy. NI Water is the largest electricity user in the country and is working hard to reduce the impact this has on the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

Everyone at NI Water takes looking after the environment very seriously. Your school can join in by using water wisely and spreading water-saving messages throughout your community.

This booklet is designed to help your school on your Eco-School's journey, providing simple hints and tips on all things water.

The Eco-Schools Environmental review

What are you already doing?

Did you know that schools in Northern Ireland pay for the water they use?

Look around your school and explore your environment. We have included the water-based questions which will help you understand how water is used around your school, who uses it, what things you are good at already and what could be done better.

Becoming a water-efficient school not only helps look after the environment but can save money too.

1	Is your school free from dripping taps? How many are dripping and do you know how to fix them?	
2	Do pupils always turn taps off fully? Busy children can forget to turn taps off. Push taps can save 6 litres of water a minute.	
3	Do you have water saving devices in the toilet cisterns? How many toilets are low flush (usually button flush)? If you have high flush toilets, do you have cistern displacement devices in them such as Buffaloo Bags or Save a Flush?	
4	If you have push taps, do they dispense the right amount of water at the right speed?	
5	Do you have a water butt to collect rainwater for watering plants? Plants don't need clean water like us from the tap. In fact, they prefer rainwater. Do you collect rainwater to help yours grow?	
6	Is rainwater collected and used for anything else around the school? Flushing toilets, water play or maintaining pond levels?	
7	Do you learn about water issues in other countries? Access to water is a global issue affecting communities and environments all over the world.	
8	Is your school involved in any river or coast conservation projects?	
9	Are pupils or an adult able to take water readings from the meter or water bill?	
10	Do you use reusable water bottles ? Can you undertake a survey to find out how many pupils bring their reusable water bottles every day?	
11	Is there free drinking water available to pupils all day?	

Building your water action plan

What are you going to do and how?

Now you know what you are good at, what else can you do to help look after water around your school and in the local environment?

Simple ideas to help you on your water journey

Collecting data and producing graphs and charts can help document your progress and be used to display your achievements.

Linking water to the curriculum can reinforce learning.

Don't forget to record your starting point.

Science

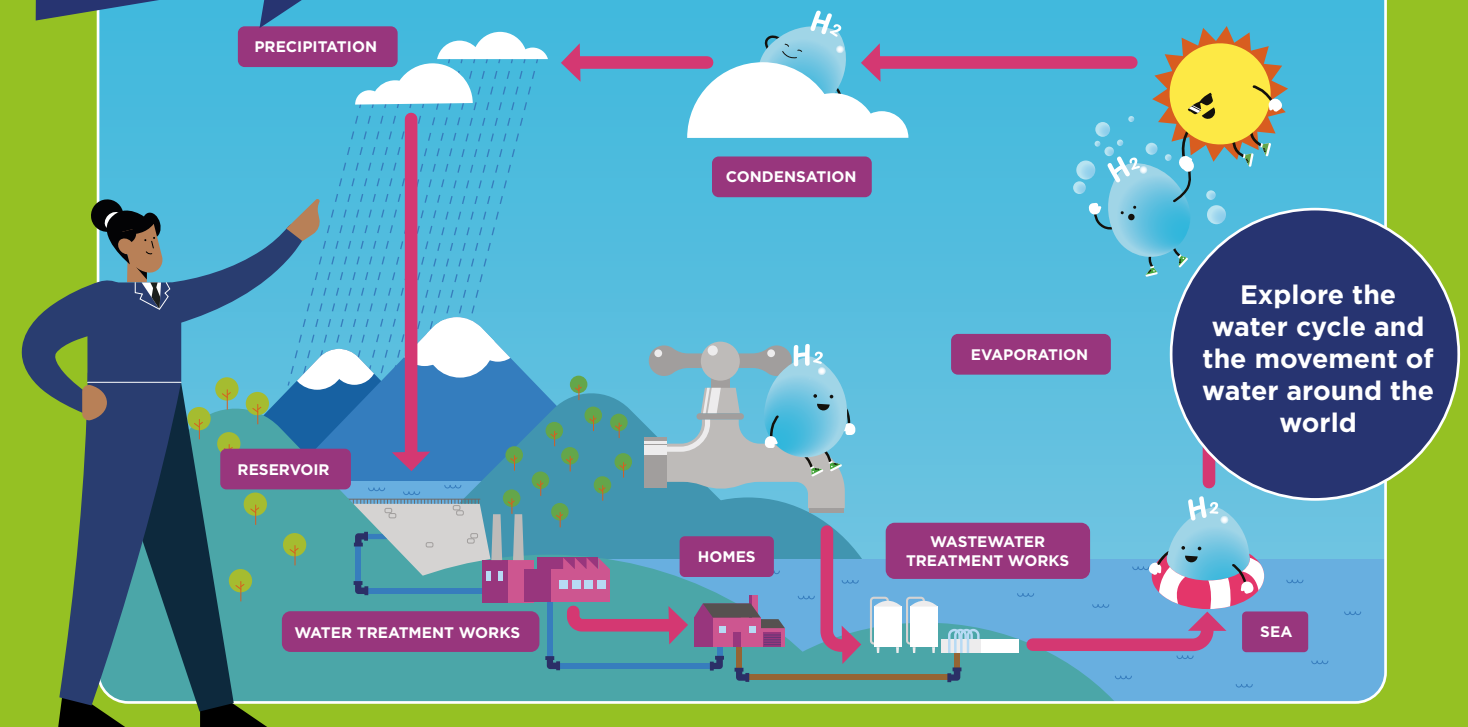


Uncover the importance of science in the water treatment.

Scan here to watch our 'Science of Clean Water' video



Geography

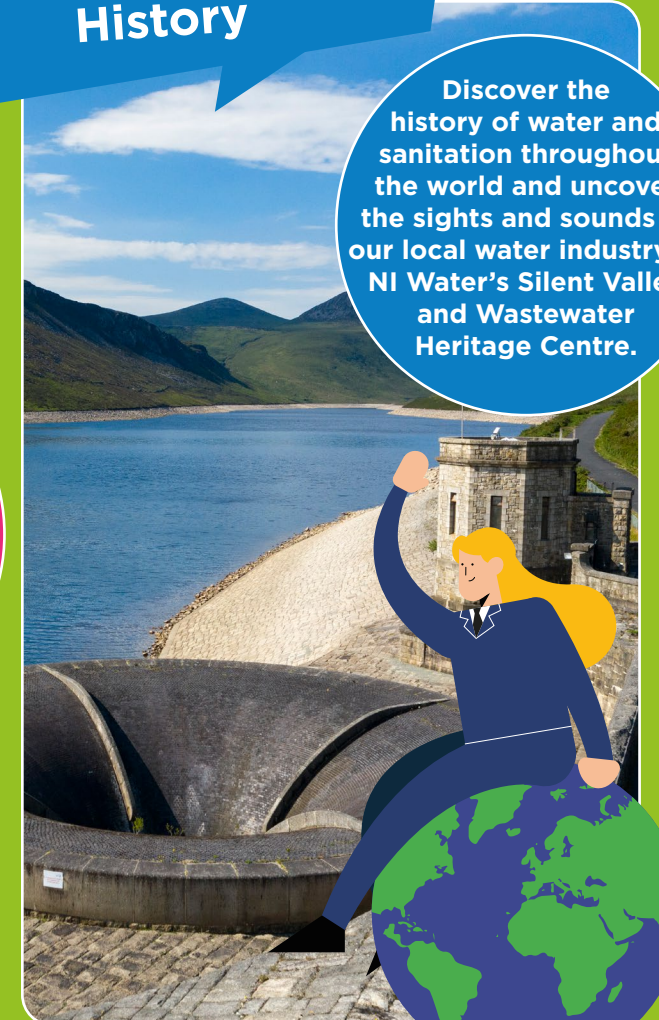


Maths



Investigate volume and capacity when measuring leaks or use water meter data to produce graphs.

History



Discover the history of water and sanitation throughout the world and uncover the sights and sounds of our local water industry at NI Water's Silent Valley and Wastewater Heritage Centre.

Action plan

Taps

Turn the taps off fully – busy children can forget to turn off taps.

IDEAS:

- Design signs to remind pupils to turn off taps.
- Make a list of any dripping taps.
- Carry out a water drip experiment to see how much water is wasted - find out how [HERE](#).
- Ask the caretaker if they can fix dripping taps.
- Contact NI Water [HERE](#) to arrange a water saving presentation.
- Make **raindrop pledges** and display them around school to inspire others.

Push taps can save
6 litres
of water
a minute!

A single drip
can waste
5,500
litres a year!



Drinking water and reducing plastic pollution

Join the “Refillution” – encourage everyone in the school to switch to a reusable water bottle. Single-use plastic bottles are one of the top culprits of plastic pollution.

Switching to reusable bottles also supports other Eco-Schools topics like marine, healthy living and litter. Request a visit [HERE](#).

IDEAS:

- Carry out a survey to see how many pupils and teachers already bring reusable bottles.
- Hold a “Reusable Bottle Week” encouraging everyone to switch. Involve parents too!
- Run a follow-up survey to measure your impact.
- Use your maths skills to chart your results.

Join the **#REFILLUTION**
niwater.com/refillution



Invite NI Water to host a **Plastic Pollution Assembly** and receive **free reusable bottles** for the school.



Reuse rainwater

Plants don't need tap water – they prefer rainwater! Collect rainwater to water any plants in the school grounds or to use for water play.

IDEA:

- Make **mini water butts** and decorate them with water-saving messages - scan [HERE](#)



Request a **large water butt** for your school [HERE](#)



Toilets

Toilet flushing (although important) is one of the highest uses of water. It takes around 7 litres of water to flush a toilet, although some toilets like dual flush are better at saving water than others.

Request **free Buffalo Bags** and **Leaky Loo Strips** [HERE](#)



Add a **Buffaloo Bag** to large cisterns to **save 1 litre** per flush



LeakyLoo

Check for **leaky loos** – they can waste up to **200 litres** a day!

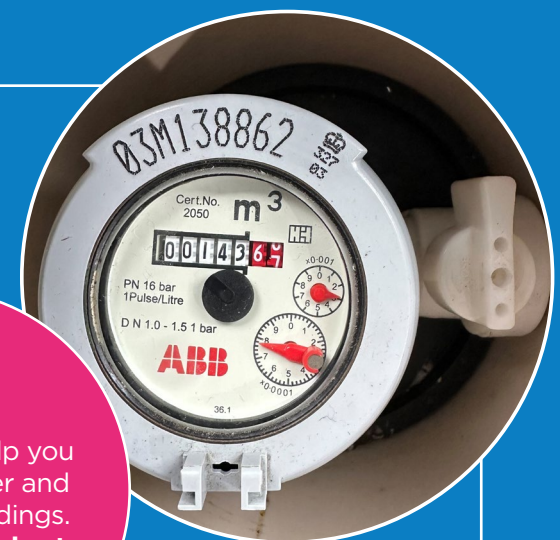
Water meter

Schools pay for the water they use. The meter measures how much is used, and checking it regularly helps spot leaks and waste.

Read the meter at the end of the school day and again the next morning. If the reading changes overnight, there may be a leak.



NI Water can help you locate your meter and provide past readings. Email education@niwater.com for details.



Water around the world

Climate change, growing populations and changing behaviours can all affect how much water we have available and how we use it.



Water is a human right and **Sustainable Development Goal 6** aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

IDEAS:

- Discover how people around the world get their water.
- Learn about WaterAid, a charity supported by NI Water, providing clean water to communities globally.

This supports the Eco-Schools topic **Global Perspective**.

Did you know
1 in 10
people worldwide
don't have access
to safe water?

Scan the QR
code to visit
www.wateraid.org
or invite a WaterAid
speaker to your school.



Local actions

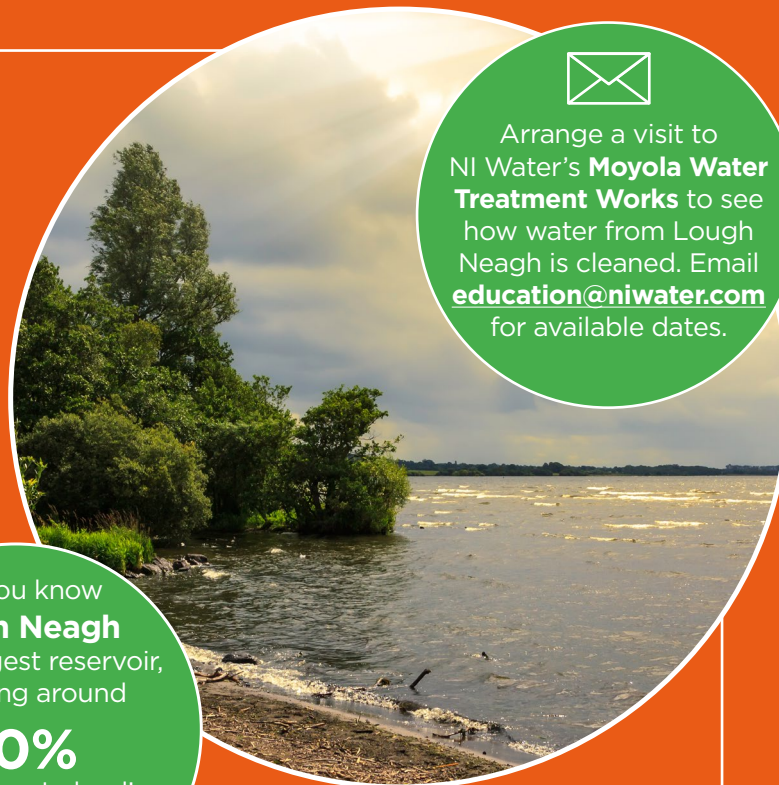
Water stress and pollution isn't just something that happens in other countries. Our rivers and water environments here in Northern Ireland need to be protected to ensure there is enough water for people and the animals they support.

Lough Neagh Partnership

NI Water are working alongside many government and charity partners to help protect the Lough. Find out more about the Forever Lough Neagh | Shaping a Shared Future Through Collaboration



Did you know
Lough Neagh
is our biggest reservoir,
supplying around
40%
of Northern Ireland's
tap water?



Arrange a visit to
NI Water's **Moyola Water
Treatment Works** to see
how water from Lough
Neagh is cleaned. Email
education@niwater.com
for available dates.

Forever Mournes

NI Water owns three reservoirs within the **Mourne Mountains**, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Scan the
QR code to find out
more about how we work
with local partners to protect
this beautiful environment and
make sure the water entering our
reservoirs is as clean and safe as
possible before we clean it at our
treatment works: **Forever Mournes
Partnership - Mourne AONB**



Visit **Silent Valley
Mountain Park** to explore
water supply history and local
wildlife. Register your interest
using our **online form**.



It's not just saving water

What we flush or pour away matters. Putting the wrong things down the toilet or sink can cause blockages, sewage spills and environmental harm.

IDEAS:

- Organise an NI Water talk on **Bag it and Bin it** – learn what can and can't be flushed.
- Request **Fab Little Bags** for toilets – a discreet way to dispose of period products.
- Talk to canteen staff about proper **fat disposal**.
- Request NI Water's **Stop and Think, Not Down the Sink** poster.

All resources are
available free by emailing
education@niwater.com



Taking the water messages home

Share what you've learned with friends, family and the wider school community.

Simple actions at home make a big difference.

Scan the QR code to visit **getwaterfit.co.uk** to discover how much water your family uses and order free water-saving devices like a **4-minute shower timer, Toothy Timer, and Swell Gel crystals for plants.**



Special water days



There are lots of days throughout the year dedicated to water – great opportunities to celebrate and learn more about this precious resource.

World Wetlands Day	2nd February
World Water Day	22nd March
World Oceans Day	8th June
World Refill Day	16th June
Global Handwashing Day	15th October
Water Night	23rd October
World Toilet Day	19th November