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## **Environmental Education Initiatives**

### **Summary of Key Points:**

- Minimum of five initiatives
- Can link into other existing relevant activities or initiatives already being run locally by other organisations
- Mix of activities
- Wide target groups
- Focus on the environment, environmental issues, Blue Flag issues or sustainability issues.
- At least some of the activities should be carried out at the beach
- Review annually
- Brief information clearly displayed on main Blue Flag notice board

### **Categories:**

A minimum of five environmental education activities must be offered and should be a mix from the following categories:

- Exhibitions, seminars, conferences, etc
- Active participation events
- Training events
- Publicity materials and media
- Blue Flag Environmental Information Centre

### **General:**

The activities should focus on the environment, environmental issues, Blue Flag issues or sustainability issues. These environmental education activities promote the aims of the Blue Flag Programme by:

- Increasing the awareness of and care for the aquatic environment by recreational users and inhabitants of the coastal zones
- Training personnel and providers of tourist services in environmental matters and best practice methods
- Encouraging the participation of local stakeholders in the coastal zone management
- Promoting sustainable recreation and tourism in the area
- Promoting sharing of ideas and efforts between the Blue Flag programme and other FEE programmes (YRE, LEAF, Eco-Schools and Green Key)

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There must be at least five distinct activities and at least some of these should be carried out at the beach and should have a direct focus on the beach or coastal environment. Ideally, all the activities should be offered preferably within the Blue Flag season. The environmental education activities should be effective and relevant and should be reviewed annually.

If specific sensitive environmental areas exist near a Blue Flag beach, it is strongly recommended that 1-2 environmental activities deal with these natural sensitive areas.

The environmental education activities should target as wide a range of groups as possible. It is important that local authorities, together with other operators in the area, organise a programme to educate and raise awareness within the many different interest groups that influence the use of the local environment. These interest groups could be visitors, locals, tourism employees, fishermen, local industries, etc.

The types, amounts and target groups of activities should match the situation. For example, in a major tourist destination, more than one activity per season should be available to the general public.

The planned activities for the coming season must be detailed in the Environmental Education Initiatives Assessment Form which is part of the Blue Flag application form.

### **Linking:**

Beach Operators do not need to create five different or new initiatives each year. Instead, it may be possible to link in with and promote relevant activities and initiatives which are already being run locally by other organisations. All initiatives should be reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant.

The activities can be part of already existing environmental education programmes, held either on-site or in the local community. It is also recommended that the local authority co-operates with local NGO's in setting up educational activities. Some examples of this are:

- Eco-Schools
- Healthy Walks and Talks Programme
- Seaside Awareness Day
- RSPB Roadshow
- Wildlife Watch
- National Tree Week
- MCS Adopt-a-Beach/Beach Guardianship

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### **Unacceptable Initiatives:**

There are a number of activities which are considered not to be acceptable. These are:

- Activities that are done to meet other Blue Flag criteria such as the general cleaning of the beach, waste management, recycling, and posted environmental information otherwise required on the information board (i.e. information on surrounding sensitive environments), etc.
- Activities focusing only on tourism without a specific focus on sustainable tourism
- Activities otherwise done by the authority as part of the standard management of health, safety, transportation or tourism

Some specific examples of activities which would not be acceptable are:

- Recycling
- Dog Wardens
- Planned building projects to improve aesthetics or facilities at the beach
- Litter picking undertaken by Council officials only

### **Examples of Good Practice:**

Below are examples of existing environmental education initiatives, some of which have been taken from the International Blue Flag website, which are considered to be examples of good practice:

- School visit workshops aimed at increasing the understanding of beach safety and the natural environment
- Beach guide for dog owners
- Activity trails/rockpool rambles
- Beachcombing competition
- Walk for Life Day
- Working with local service providers to improve public transport facilities
- Children's' illustrated booklet on environmental issues
- Blue Flag Day
- Eco-modelling with waste materials
- Environmental trail

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To view examples of some of the environmental education initiatives which have previously been undertaken on Blue Flag beaches in England [click here](#)

**Public Information:**

Details of the environmental education initiatives must be included on the main beach noticeboard, alongside all other required information. If space is limited, brief details may be included, with more detailed information being made available elsewhere. Suggested wording for these brief details is:

*As part of the Blue Flag Programme, .... Council runs a number of environmental education activities throughout the season, for example ..... For more information on these activities, contact ...*

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