

HOW TO BECOME A SCHOOL FOR BIODIVERSITY

WHY PUT BIODIVERSITY AT THE CENTER OF AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE

Nature is the greatest teacher we have at our disposal, although very often we are not aware of it. Giving it space within the school, through some simple activities such as those listed below, can be a source of teaching and inspiration for students of all ages.

Here are **10 reasons why it is worth becoming a 'School for Biodiversity'**. Each Institute will be able to extend and customise the list together with the students.

- 1. It teaches patience and waiting.** In a world where we want, and often get, everything and everything now (but at what cost?), tending to the greenery, the ability to observe the transformations in a plant or to wait with curiosity for a bird to perch on the feeder, remind us that everything has its time. Nature, with its seasons, its migrations, its phases, has rhythms that are indifferent to our haste and frenzy.
- 2. Educate respect for differences.** In nature there is no such thing as beautiful or ugly, right or wrong: the environment teaches us that every living being, whether large or tiny, is unique, extraordinary and has immense value. In addition, that there are no living beings that are more valuable than others are, because all are essential to the balance of ecosystems.
- 3. It feels good.** There are many academic studies that confirm this: the greater the contact with nature, especially in children, the greater the physical and psychological well-being of people. Strengthening students' bond with the environment means helping to raise adults capable of grasping its value, of seeking closeness to nature and living better.
- 4. Train in care.** The perseverance and attention required in caring for greenery helps strengthen everyone's ability to take responsibility, on which the ability of other living beings to grow and flourish depends. And when spring finally arrives, repaying efforts with its beauty, everyone will discover the sense of fulfilment and satisfaction that dedication and commitment can bring back.

5. **It facilitates teamwork and participation.** The preservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the school can be achieved by fostering collaboration between classes, but also with families and the entire educating community: it can become a way of showing how alone a tree can be planted, but with everyone's participation a forest can grow.
6. **It is an exercise in perspective.** Observed from space, our planet, our home, is a unity: a globe without borders, containing all the diversity of life, including our own. Nature teaches us that we all must be a bit of an astronaut, every day, and become capable of having an overall view, remembering that everything that happens on Earth affects us, because everything is connected, linked, in a great network of which we are part.
7. **This is also stated in the Constitution.** Since 2022, Article 9 of the Italian Constitution has been supplemented to recognize the primary and constitutionally protected value of protecting the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, also in the interest of future generations. In addition, Article 41 was amended to ensure that any private economic initiative does not harm the environment and health.
8. **It is consistent with the 'Sustainable Development' pillar Civic Education.** The topic of biodiversity lends itself to many of the themes of Civic Education, for example it is at the heart of Goals 14 (Life Under Water) and 15 (Life on Earth) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
9. **It concerns all school subjects.** Since time immemorial, the variety of life on earth has been a source of inspiration for scientists, poets, artists and researchers in all branches of knowledge and all over the world. This is why biodiversity can facilitate the connection between numerous teaching subjects: from literature to mathematics, from art history to geography, from philosophy to chemistry, and so on.
10. **We owe it to them:** biodiversity takes care of us. The richness and variety of life on earth guarantees us clean water, air to breathe, food, medicine and everything else our species needs to thrive. At the same time, the many man-made environmental crises of our time (climate change, pollution, land consumption, etc.) end up having serious consequences on biodiversity, i.e. on life itself. This dynamic must be stopped.