

50 Eco-Projects

50 activities, events and ideas
to help you on your journey
to becoming an Eco-School.



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“I want to do something, but I don’t know where to start.”

This quote from an Eco-Coordinator is one we’ve heard many times. All schools and nurseries want to act on climate change. From pupils to teachers, SLTs to site staff, everybody wants to make their sites more sustainable, greener and cleaner places for all.

However, developing or finding practical projects to achieve this can be tough. “Where do we start?” Sometimes, it helps to have a little inspiration and support to help focus our activity.

This document lists 50* activities, events, and ideas that can be delivered on your site by pupils and staff. Some are created by us, but most come from our amazing partners and friends from across the environmental and education sectors. All are great evidence for your Eco-Schools Green Flag application.

We’ve listed them under our 10 Eco-Topics and alongside each one is a small key. Detailed on the next page, the key will help you decide if they’re right for your pupils, resource, time, and capacity. Each activity also includes a link, taking you to the host page of the project, where you can find more information, delivery guides and resources.

We hope you find this list helpful and it supports your Eco-Schools journey!

Don’t forget, we’re always here to support you and answer questions and queries. So, if you need a little help or advice, contact the Eco-Schools Team at: eco-schools@KeepBritainTidy.org

The Eco-Schools Team

*It’s actually 53 projects as we couldn’t decide which projects to cut!



“I want to
make a difference.”

Eco-Committee member, 2023

Key

FREE	there are no costs involved in delivering this project
£	there are potential, or small, costs involved in this project
££	there are significant costs involved in this project
1	requires minimal preparation and is easy to deliver
2	requires some preparation and maybe some extra staff support
3	requires significant preparation and staff support
➞	click this icon to be taken to the project

You will also see indication of when to deliver each project, noted by a month or season.

Cut Your Carbon

FREE | 1 | November | ➡

Cut Your Carbon is Eco-Schools' annual carbon-reduction campaign. It takes place across November and this year it's bigger and better than ever!

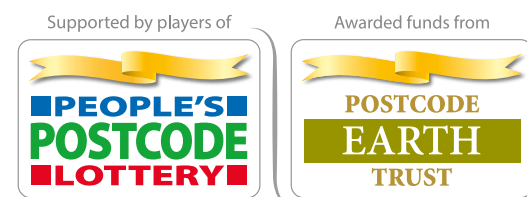
The campaign creates a national moment, spotlighting various aspects of our lives that result in a carbon footprint. It challenges pupils to take positive action, raise awareness and cut their carbon.

The challenge is simple: throughout November, Cut Your Carbon by completing 9 simple actions with your friends and family.

Each action relates to an area of everyday life that contributes to your carbon footprint, including travel, energy, food, and waste. Completing the activities prompts families to consider sustainable alternatives and give them a go. It's a great way to raise awareness, change behaviours, and take positive action on climate change.

Upon registering for Cut Your Carbon, you will receive all the resources you need to deliver and promote the campaign. This includes an assembly PowerPoint, the Cut Your Carbon 9 Challenge print-out, and a teacher delivery guide. With competitions, online events and social media takeovers, there will also be plenty more to get your teeth stuck into.

To get involved, visit the Eco-Schools website from September 27th when Cut Your Carbon will officially launch.



Supported in 2023-24 by
the People's Postcode Lottery



Add your voice to Let's Go Zero

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Let's Go Zero is the national campaign uniting teachers, pupils, parents, and their schools as they all work together to be zero carbon by 2030. Every school that signs up is pledging to work towards a more sustainable future while calling for much-needed government support to help all schools reach their zero carbon goals.

Whatever topic you're working on, it's worth signing up!



**I WANT MY SCHOOL TO BE
ZERO CARBON BY 2030**

Calculate your school's carbon footprint

FREE | 2 | Year-round

Launching in late 2023, 'Count Your Carbon', developed by Eco-Schools, with support from Let's Go Zero, is a comprehensive online carbon footprint calculator for schools, mapping across all 3 emission scopes.

Schools can input a series of data points and information, prompted by a pathway of questions. This will then be used to produce a report that includes your carbon footprint figure, itemised along key emission strands, and a personalised set of recommendations, outlining how you can bring down your emissions.

**COUNT
YOUR
CARBON**

Take part in a national nature survey

FREE | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Nature Overheard is an exciting and innovative programme, co-created by school students and Natural History Museum scientists.

Until now, we have not been able to investigate on a large scale how traffic noise affects insects. But new technology makes studying this easier. We can now work together to make our roads better for nature by sharing what we learn with road developers, councils, and others. Take action for nature by simply choosing a road, looking for insects, making a five-minute sound recording and then submitting your data!

Take the interactive Eco-Schools Quiz

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Explore 6 different areas of a school and answer 30 multiple-choice questions. Each question highlights a great example of how you and your school can make a difference across your site, whilst increasing your knowledge on climate change and sustainability.

The quiz can be taken on quiz single-handedly, in small groups or even as a full class exercise. It's fun, full of facts and will leave you feeling inspired! Good luck!



Biodiversity

Take part in the RSPB Big School Birdwatch

FREE | 1 | Spring | ➞

Contribute to the World's largest wildlife survey by taking part in RSPB's Big Schools Birdwatch which happens during Spring Term every year.

This survey is designed to help understand how birds are faring in the face of a nature and climate crisis in the UK.

Learning About Forests

FREE/£ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Learning About Forests (LEAF) is Eco-Schools' "award within an award". This fun, bitesize programme is designed to give younger learners a deeper connection to green spaces by challenging them to deliver 3 of the outdoor LEAF activities across an academic year.

Schools that complete the activities will get a LEAF certificate alongside their Eco-Schools Green Flag award.

Help a hedgehog

£ | 2 | Autumn / Spring | ➞

Hedgehogs hibernate during the winter, so they need shelter from the cold and protection from predators. This simple video guide from the Natural History Museum will help you create the perfect home.

Alternatively, why not make some holes in walls and fences to allow hedgehogs to pass freely through your school. Google 'hedgehog highway' for advice.

Create a bee corridor

£ | 2 | Spring | ➞

Bee corridors support pollinators by providing interconnected areas of bee-friendly plants for bees and other pollinators to travel through.

Head to the RHS School Gardening website to find out about bee corridors, why they're essential to bees, and how your school can help create one!

Build a pond

£££ | 3 | Year-round | ➞

Creating a pond is one of the best things you can do to support biodiversity on your school grounds.

This guide from Wild About Gardens covers the basics and is a great starting point. But remember, you'll need to carefully consider how to keep your pond safe, and complete a full risk assessment before work begins!



Energy



Set an energy-efficient window policy

FREE | 1 | Autumn, Winter | ➞

Increase sunlight in your classrooms, reduce the need for artificial lighting and save energy by implementing a simple, 3-point window policy in your school.

This straightforward activity creates a great opportunity to work with your school's site manager.

Celebrate Earth Hour

FREE | 1 | Spring | ➞

Every year in late March, millions of people around the world show they care about our planet by switching off for an hour, in 2024 this will be on Saturday 23rd March between 8:30 and 9:30 pm.

Encourage your school community to get involved by sharing or using the WWF's Earth Hour school resources. You could even think about holding your own Earth Hour during school time in the build up to the big event.

Set an energy-efficient heating policy

FREE | 1 | Autumn, Winter | ➞

Heating a school can account for 45% of a school's energy costs and nearly 60% of a school's energy use, so it's important to heat efficiently!

This simple, 4-part heating policy contains simple changes that will reduce radiator-use, save energy and cut carbon emissions.

Challenge your school community to calculate their carbon footprint

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Another great resource from the WWF, this online carbon footprint calculator helps individuals to understand and map their carbon emissions. Alongside energy, the calculator also explores other emissions areas like food and travel. Challenging your school community to complete a calculation will prompt positive self-reflection and inspire them to make change.

'Traffic light' to save energy

FREE | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Do all the lights in every classroom need to be constantly switched on? Do whiteboards, computers or printers need to be left on when not being used?

This activity directs you to create a 'traffic light' system for your school, clearly identifying which switches should be on and which can be off. It will raise awareness, change behaviours and reduce unnecessary energy-usage.



Global Citizenship

Raise money for a charitable cause, like JUST ONE Tree

FREE | 2 | October / Year-round | ➞

Many Eco-Committee's fundraise for green charities as part of their Eco-Schools work. This might be to support people with limited access to clean water, sponsor a conservation project that protects endangered animals, or simply to fund their own Eco-Projects.

We're particular fans of JUST ONE Tree, who plant one tree for every £1 raised. Their annual JUST ONE Tree non-uniform day is on October 13th, 2023. But if you can't make that date, you can join in at any time throughout the year.

Twin with an overseas school

FREE | 2 | Year-round | ➞

The British Council can help you partner with a school abroad, with resources, guidance, and their free Schools Partner Finder. You could then work together on an environmental project. We like British Council's suggested Climate Change and Girls' Education Pack, or you could even create your own project.

Write to your local MP to ask for climate action

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Inviting your local MP to visit your school is a great way to showcase your environmental achievements, whilst communicating your pupil's concerns about climate change, biodiversity loss, and a myriad of other environmental issues.

This simple resource from Catholic Education tells you how to find the contact details of your local MP and the best days to invite them to your school. If you can't get them to visit, why not write them a passionate letter, asking for action instead?

Fairtrade Fortnight

FREE | 1 | Autumn | ➞

Fairtrade Fortnight runs every year for two weeks and is an action-packed campaign that brings people together whilst raising awareness of Fairtrade products.

This year the campaign is celebrating its 30th Birthday and as part of a year-long celebration they will be beginning the fortnight on Monday 9th September, as opposed to its usually February slot. Check out their website for further details and other resources.

Attend the UKSSN Summit

FREE | 1 | April | ➞

The Transform Our World Youth Summit brings UK schools together online through a programme of collective learning, inspiration and climate action. Previous Summits have covered topics including power, eco-anxiety, youth action and more. The next Transform Our World Summit will take place in spring 2024. Keep your eyes peeled for more information!

JUST
ONE
TREE®



Healthy Living



Foundation

Supporters of the Healthy Living topic in 2023-24

Introduce Meat Free Monday

£ | 3 | Year-round | ➞

Meat Free Monday is a great way for schools to help their students become healthier, informed citizens who can contribute to a more sustainable future. The Meat-Free Monday website contains plenty of advice and resources to help you get started!

Plant a sensory garden

££ | 3 | Spring | ➞

Sensory gardens should appeal to all 5 senses: sight, touch, sound, scent, and taste. They allow young people to connect with nature and become more aware of their surroundings - providing a great foray into the world of mindfulness!

This helpful guide from the RHS lists plants which appeal to each sense.

Teach outdoors

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

If you want to encourage outdoor learning in your school, but are in need of inspiration, Learning Through Landscapes have created free outdoor lesson ideas for every age and subject area. Leafing through their ideas is a great way to stimulate your own creativity.

You could also celebrate Outdoor Classroom Day, which usually takes place in May!

Take part in Children's Mental Health Week

FREE | 1 | February | ➞

2024's Children's Mental Health Week will take place from 5-11 February. This week shines a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health. Organised by Place2Be, every year has a new theme and resources developed by their expert team, including activities, assembly guides and videos.

Check out their website for lots more information.

Promote plant-based options

FREE/£ | 1 | Year-round | ➞

School Plates from Proveg is a free-to-download resource that contains simple tips to promote plant-based options on school menus. Advice ranges from creatively labelling plant-based options to introducing Planet-Power Days. You can also download 35 plant-based recipes created specifically for schools.



Litter



The Great Big School Clean

FREE | 2 | Spring | ➞

The Great Big School Clean is part of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean - our nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign, which usually takes place in March.

Last year #LitterHeroes litter-picked more than 400,000 bags of litter, can you help get that total higher this year?

Get Loud on Litter

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

This Eco-Schools project encourages young people to understand and raise awareness about the impact of littering on their school, community, and wildlife.

From a poster campaign, to an art exhibition, podcast or an awareness march, the project can be adapted by students to connect with their interests and passions. It's positive, fun, and proactive, allowing young people to understand and appreciate peaceful forms of climate action.

Recycle difficult-to-recycle items

£ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Reduce litter by recycling!

Terracycle specialise in recycling items that can't always be recycled through local services, such as Pringles packaging or used Marigold gloves. You can apply for your school to become a local drop off point, or use their handy tool to find drop off points near you.



Marine

Take 9 steps to reduce plastic in your school

FREE/£ | 1 | Year-round | ➞

This simple guide from Less Plastic consists of 9 simple ways to reduce plastic use in your school, with advice and guidance for each step.

Combined, these actions could easily create a substantial and impactful pupil-led campaign for your school.

Create a piece of 'artivism'

FREE/£ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

'Artivism' is a portmanteau of art and activism. It's a piece of art that aims to raise awareness.

Lesson 6, from this Marine Litter unit by Marine Conservation Society explains what artivism is, shares examples, and then encourages young people to have a go at making their own.

Organise a beach clean

£ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

On the Marine Conservation Society's website, they have resources to help you organise your own beach clean, information about participating in one of their organised Beachwatch Beach Clean events, and you can even adopt a beach to survey 4 times a year on their behalf.

Reduce plastics in your school canteen

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

This simple guide from Plastic Free July first asks students to identify all single-use plastics used in the school canteen. They are then tasked with gradually working their way through the list until they've eliminated as many single-use plastics as possible.

We love this considered and manageable approach to a difficult task!

Become a Plastic Clever School

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Register with Kids Against Plastic and learn about plastic pollution, identify problem plastics in your school, then take action by swapping or removing them...simple!



School Grounds



Supporters of the
School Grounds topic in 2023-24

Introduce class plants

£-££ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Creating a positive learning environment is important in ensuring the development and wellbeing of pupils. Research has even shown children can learn more efficiently with plants around. This guide from Twinkl showcases 10 plants that are easy to look after and help purify air.

If you can't afford to buy an indoor plant for each classroom, you can always propagate your own. A quick Google search will find guidance on propagating a variety of house plants. One of the simplest plants to propagate is a Spider Plant – here's a [Youtube video](#) to show you how.

Start a gardening club

£-££ | 3 | Year-round | ➞

School Gardening Clubs can give young people a platform to interact with nature, develop new skills, and find a lifelong hobby, even if they have limited green space at home. However, it can seem like a large commitment - what are you going to do with these young people each week for an entire academic year? This webpage from the RHS can help - it contains 10 activities for each term, most with further links and guidance.

Make seed bombs and rewild your school grounds

£ | 1 | Spring | ➞

This simple, hands-on activity is great for young Eco-Warriors and allows wildflowers to be easily sewn, supporting insect life!

Build a bottle greenhouse

£-££ | 3 | Year-round | ➞

Creating a bottle greenhouse can be tricky, so you may need help from your site manager or DT department, but it's a lovely project that involves the whole school in collecting bottles, teaches about waste and recycling, improves DT skills, and leaves you with a fantastic new resource afterwards!

Green a roof

£-££ | 3 | Spring / Autumn | ➞

Groundwork's simple guide explains how you can turn a small flat roof in your school (think bin shelter, shed, bike storage) into a beautiful, biodiversity supporting green roof – just make sure to work with your site manager to complete a risk assessment first.



Transport

Apply for a School Street

FREE | 3 | year-round | ➞

A school street is a road outside a school with temporary restrictions on motorised traffic during drop-off and pick-up times resulting in a safer, healthier, and more pleasant environment for everyone.

The School Streets website provides plenty of information to help you get started!

Begin a walking/bike bus

FREE | 3 | Year-round | ➞

A walking bus is where a group of children are escorted to school by adult volunteers. Children and supporting adults walk in a group along an approved route stopping at set points to collect additional passengers. It's a sociable, healthy, and eco-friendly way to start the school day.

This website from Travel West includes information, resources, and videos to help you create and promote your own. Alternatively, click [here](#) to download a toolkit to learn more about bike buses courtesy of Sustrans.

Create a travel plan

FREE | 3 | Year-round | ➞

The STARS Education scheme recognises schools and other educational establishments that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel. The programme provides a comprehensive travel plan tool that helps create a plan, continue to monitor and evaluate, and recognises and rewards best practices.

In London check out [TFL STARS](#) as an alternative.

Deliver an anti-idling campaign

FREE | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Car idling releases harmful carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and it can be a particular problem for schools during pick-up and drop-off times.

This campaign from Transform Our World encourages students to raise awareness about this issue. A second resource from [Living Streets](#) also has some excellent ideas.

Take part in GAP's clean air day

FREE | 2 | Summer | ➞

Air pollution is the single biggest environmental health risk in the UK and young people are especially vulnerable to its effects.

GAP's Clean Air Day is usually in June and encourages schools to first learn about the impacts of air pollution, then take action by walking, wheeling, or using public transport, and finally ask their local politicians to support clean air measures.



Waste

Plan a pop-up, second-hand clothes shop

FREE | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Eco-Schools' (Re)LoveOurStuff project helps young people to plan and deliver a second-hand, pop-up clothing shop in their school. This project comes with a delivery guide, image bank and poster templates that will help raise awareness about the environmental impacts of the fashion industry, whilst diverting clothing from landfill.

Participate in the Big Battery Hunt

FREE | 2 | Spring | ➞

Eco-Schools is proud to support the Big Battery Hunt – in 2023 more than 23 million batteries were recycled as part of the initiative! Every year in the Spring and Summer terms the Big Battery Hunt educates and inspires young people to recycle more used batteries.

Taking part is easy: Register, download free resources, collect used batteries, get your community involved, then recycle.

Buy Nothing New Month

FREE | 1 | January | ➞

Back for its second year, Keep Britain Tidy's Buy Nothing New Month campaign takes place throughout January 2024. It's all about protecting the planet (and our pennies) by thinking more carefully about the products that we buy.

Schools that sign up will receive a free digital resource pack – including an assembly plan – designed to teach pupils about the link between what we buy, and the waste that we create.

Create your own compost

£ | 2 | Year-round | ➞

Composting in school reduces waste being sent to landfill, can help improve biodiversity in your school site, whilst providing you with homemade soil improver.

This guide from the Wildlife Trust is a good starting point for beginning to compost on your school site.

Complete a waste audit

£ | 1 | Year-round | ➞

If you want to reduce waste in your school, it's important to first understand what waste your school is producing. This will allow you to then run a targeted waste minimisation campaign.

This fantastic resource from Eco-Schools Scotland breaks the process down into simple steps and provides an easy-to-use template.



Water

Celebrate World Water Day

FREE | 1 | Spring | ➞

World Water Day is on the 22nd March and aims to raise awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. The theme for 2024 is groundwater, which contributes about 50% of our drinking water and 40% of the water we use for irrigated agriculture. Throughout the day there are usually a variety of events and resources available that encourage people to think their own water usage.

Twinkl also provides [free resources](#).

Install a Water-Butt

£ | 1 | Year-round | ➞

Sometimes schools can receive free water-butts from their water supplier, local council, or even find them for free on community groups. Once you have a water-butt it's important to install them correctly to maximise their impacts.

Check out this installation guide from B and Q!

Share water-saving tips

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

The best Eco-Schools expand the impacts of their work beyond school boundaries and into pupils' homes. Encourage your Eco-Committee to research and share water-saving tips via assemblies, social media, school newsletters and any other methods they can think of.

Here's some tips from the WWF to get their research started.

Save water with every flush

FREE | 1 | Year-round | ➞

If your school has older toilets, you will be able to save water with every flush using a cistern bag. You can sometimes get cisterns bags from your water supplier at no cost - watch this Youtube video from Welsh Water to appreciate how quick, easy, and impactful this action is!

Save water with biodegradable mulch

£-££ | 2 | Spring | ➞

Mulch is material placed on the surface of soil, the most common type of biodegradable mulch is wood chippings. Mulch can help your school grounds look neat and tidy and support the growth of trees and plants. But that's not all, mulch also helps soil stay moist by trapping water and stopping it evaporating, meaning reduced watering. It can also help rain to penetrate soil in the winter, meaning less flooding – win win.

This guide from the RHS helps explain mulch, when to apply it, and even links to a handy tool which shares other ways to save water in your grounds.





www.eco-schools.org.uk