



Climate Ready School Grounds Technical Area: Learning, Play & Community

Our efforts to adapt for our changing climate and aim of reducing climate change are for the benefit of our children and future generations. It is therefore inconceivable that a school would address the pressing issue of our age without taking advantage of the learning opportunity.

We believe that there is a need for quality education on climate change for all children and young people. This requires the adults around them to learn and develop a quality curriculum, and to develop a quality of learning experience so that the lessons are not ignored or forgotten.

It is also important to note the rise of eco-anxiety among our children and young people, many of whom feel unable to influence or take practical action. For many, the usual tropes of flying less, choosing an electric car, eating more sustainably, and more are an irrelevance. Either they are part of a family who do not have the wealth or opportunity to make those decisions, or as children they have little influence on parent or school leadership decisions.

To seek opportunities for all children to feel that they have contributed positively is of utmost importance. Climate change will impact children, minority communities, and poorer communities disproportionately. Those same groups also will have fewer opportunities to contribute through practical action. School grounds, a place where all children and young people are equal, can deliver an equity of experience and opportunity, as well as high value impact for a modest budget.

Even where practical action is minimal, schools can facilitate excellent learning around climate change and a rights-based approach to engaging with the authorities and politicians who can facilitate greater change.

We also know that many communities would benefit from accessing spaces which are adapted to our changing climate. The OASIS Paris work has demonstrated this well, and it is a growing theme globally for school grounds.

To revolutionise our school grounds is to create an opportunity to transform the future for all.

Why would you prioritise learning, play, and community?

We would suggest that all schools should prioritise this area, and this should be a priority particularly for the adults who facilitate learning and lead the school.



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Solutions

Our strong recommendation here is that schools engage with learners and community at all levels to create a strong vision for the future. The suggested solutions below are generic. Each school site and community will vary so, unlike the other technical areas, we expect that unique approaches will be required. We also expect that in many ways schools will learn as they go, as creating Climate Ready School Grounds is new territory for us all.

| | Time | Benefit |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|
| School Development Plan: A pre-cursor to much of this work is to ensure that Climate Change and Action is included on the School Development Plan across all areas of teaching and learning. | + | **** |
| Workshops and surveys: Developing a baseline through the Climate Ready School Grounds workshops is an important first step. Involving a variety of learners across age groups, as well as the adults in the school, is required to create a valid audit. From here, we make important decisions over what the priorities are and where we can have most impact. | ++ | ***** |
| Plan: Developing and publishing a practical plan with the whole school is an important step. This provides opportunities for pupils to learn about communication and marketing, as well as designing processes to positively influence others. | ++ | **** |
| Taking first steps: | | |
| Curriculum: Where and how do pupils learn about climate change, impacts, and adaptation in your curriculum? | +++ | **** |
| Influencing - policy and practice: Ensuring that pupils, perhaps as part of English literacy lessons, learn to communicate their work and learning with policy makers. Pupils can write to site owners or to local press to share their work and ambitions. | + | * |



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| Influencing – decision makers: As with policy and practice above, pupils can learn to write to local councillors or parliamentarians to influence policy around school grounds and climate change. | + | ** |
| Fundraising: All learners can be involved in fundraising to afford changes, from planning and hosting fundraisers at school to applying for grants and donations. | ++ | **** |
| Awareness raising – in school: All the work into policy and practice should be shared in the school using notice boards, assemblies, newsletters, etc. | + | ** |
| Awareness raising – community: The work being undertaken in the grounds and around climate education is of benefit and interest to the local community. How will you share this with the wider community? | + | * |
| Out of hours use – children and young people: School grounds which are safe and sheltered from the worst impacts of climate change should be available for as many hours in the week as possible. | ++ | ** |
| Out of hours use – wider community: The wider community use of school grounds can help with maintenance and protection from vandalism, as well as creating varied opportunities for collaboration. | + | ** |
| Community benefit/intergenerational learning: Schools are a totemic space within our communities. Working with local communities to increase their involvement in developing the school grounds leads to a long-term valuing of the space, and indeed the importance of climate adaptation as communities. | ++ | ** |
| Maintenance plans: These are significant and should be developed in collaboration with the site owners and maintenance contractors. | +++ | ** |



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More resources and information

[Climate Ready School Grounds: Challenges to change](#)

[Use of school grounds for play out of hours](#)

[The Good School Playground Guide](#)

[Outdoor learning: the extended classroom \(Architecture & Design Scotland\)](#)

[Learning for sustainability: action plan 2023 to 2030 \(Scottish Government\)](#)

[Climate Change in Scottish Education \(Education Scotland\)](#)