

Climate School 180

Options for changes to policy and practice

Introduction

This document will provide you with a range of actions and ideas to connect your policy and practice across climate adaptation and climate education.

This policy and strategy piece is the foundation of embedding climate change into the life of your school. We encourage all school leaders to prioritise creating workable policies to support the practice and practical changes which are needed to deliver climate change education.

Policy

All schools should have:

- A Climate Action Plan. In England this is a requirement, whereas in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales it is recommended. You can see an example climate action plan [here](#), and find more resources at [Sustainability Support for Education](#)
- [An Outdoor Learning Policy](#) – you can find an exemplar [here](#).
- [A Play Policy](#) – you can find an exemplar.
- A maintenance plan and budget for the outdoor areas of the school. [The Polli:Nation Maintenance Plan](#) is a good starting point.
- A way of communicating these policies to staff, pupils, parents and community.

Curriculum

Whilst science and geography are the most obvious curriculum subjects in relation to climate change, every subject should look to identify where the climate can become part of the learning. Many schools look at where maths and English are contextualised into other subject lessons, so the same could be done with climate change. The aim of



creating a 'green thread' through the total expanse of the curriculum should be your aim here, rather than creating an 'extra', 'optional' or 'seasonal' expansion of the curriculum.

Change can be as simple as the choice of books pupils read or pictures they paint, the themes for music they compose or the drama they perform. For some subjects it will require a new approach which could include outdoor learning, maybe measuring the area of your site or calculating the cost of creating and planting raised beds, or considering life choices in personal development. It could also be developing cross-curricular projects as part of your Climate School 180 grounds developments.

Using the outdoors for experiential learning, for building a local context for how climate change will affect your school and community is important. Even more important is finding opportunities for learners to take action on climate adaptation for themselves. This is important so that we can develop a 'curriculum of hope', showing our learners that while climate change is an important and frightening topic, we have positive actions we can take. There is growing evidence that a quality climate education has to have elements of local, of experiential learning and of whole community action.

Community

There are many ways you can involve your local community in your Climate School 180 project. Below are a few suggestions of the type of organisation you might engage with and a few ideas for how you might work with them. But remember each school is unique as is your local community so this list is just a starting point to get you thinking.



Who they are	How this might get involved
Parents, carers and grandparents	They might have skills they can offer such as ecology, gardening, painting or construction
Governors and others with links to the school	They may have contacts in the local community that they can introduce to the project – whether for practical support, resources or even funding
Staff – teaching and non-teaching staff	You may have staff with hidden skills that they can share as part of the project or just show their general support for the project
Allotment holders	Often keen to share their knowledge of horticulture
Wildlife and horticulture organisations	Local groups may be able to help you plan and deliver your project through their knowledge and practical expertise
Faith groups	Creation, care, and environmental stewardship are important for many people of faith, and they may be able help the school celebrate the natural world
Community orchards	Community orchard groups can bring specialist knowledge and skills
Transition town organisations	With their own focus on climate and sustainability they may be able to bring local people to help out with your grounds' developments

Culture

The following are areas you might investigate to help with this aspect of change:

- Developing a whole school approach – where everyone in the school has a chance to get involved and is actively aware of what is happening. This starts first and foremost with leaders in the school. To be successful, you must have the full backing of your headteacher, and without this you are likely to fail.
- Following this is a consideration of how you take all your colleagues on a journey with you. This will fundamentally come down to opportunity for professional development, for professional dialogue and connecting to others with shared challenges and opportunities. This does not happen by accident so co-planning with your school leaders the first practical steps will get you started.
- Networking opportunities are important – for example in England you can join the National Education Nature Park, in Scotland visit the Scottish Outdoor Learning Directory or the GLOW Learning for Sustainability Groups. Many local authorities and regions also have outdoor learning or sustainability groups for teachers.



- Many schools also consider wider achievement and enrichment opportunities as a way of involving pupils. These can be formal, such as the John Muir Award but can also be informal, such as taking on a local allotment and becoming part of community consultation groups or ensuring that classes or pupil council take the lead on your changes to the school grounds. Wherever and whenever possible make sure your pupils are the ones that lead the way when researching, planning and making any changes to your grounds. This will provide them with new skills and knowledge as well as help reduce climate anxiety as they discover they are able to make a difference.
- In the future there will be many opportunities for pupils to take up 'green' careers. This might include ecology, landscape architecture, engineering, research science or horticulture. These are the type of career that can be introduced through your Climate School 180 project. There are other careers that might not at first appear to be green careers but need people with knowledge and skills who care about the environment. Given the climate emergency, green knowledge will be welcome in any career paths, from journalism to art. Your careers education can be part of your climate journey.

Campus

The rest of the resources in the Climate School 180 project are focused on the campus, and so we will not repeat those resources here.

Resources

We recommend reading the report from [Climate Adapted Pathways in Education](#)
Example framework from [Sustainability Framework for School Leaders - Oxford International Curriculum](#)
[Weaving a 'green thread' of climate change education](#)

