



Eco-Schools and the Pod

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A reference guide

What is Eco-Schools?



Eco-Schools is an environmental award programme that puts sustainability at the heart of school life.

The programme is internationally recognised and completely free. It can set you apart from other schools and helps make environmental issues simple and easy to manage. Once registered, you can follow a simple framework to improve your environmental performance. This helps you work

towards gaining Bronze, Silver and Green Flag awards, which represent excellence in the field of environmental activity.

Pupils are the driving force behind the programme - they lead an Eco-Committee, help assess the environmental performance of your school, as well as create and take your Action Plan forward. Any school can become an Eco-School, whether you're a pre-school, primary, secondary or a school with special status.



Eco-Schools empowers young people to create a sustainable world



Why become an Eco-School?

It has huge benefits for your pupils:

- Significant improvements in pupil team working skills
- Building pupils' self esteem, confidence and leadership skills
- Giving pupils important skills for their future careers. For example, learning how to plan and deliver projects, run meetings, take minutes, interpret data and evaluate progress
- Helps pupils build sustainability into all aspects of their lives

By addressing green issues and reducing energy and waste, your school could save money, which can be re-invested elsewhere. The Eco-Schools programme has many other benefits for your school, including:



- Enhancing the curriculum
- Creating opportunities to link to parents and the wider community
- Enabling improvements to your school and grounds
- Positive publicity

Eco-Schools is a flexible, inclusive programme. It enables you to choose projects, activities, campaigns and initiatives that will fit with your own school's circumstances, interests and goals.

Enhance the curriculum

Building self esteem

Reduce energy and waste

Positive publicity

The Pod and Eco-Schools



How the Pod can help you with the Eco-Schools programme

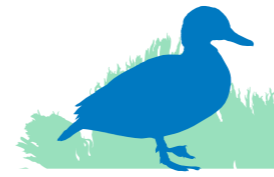
All of the Pod's activities have been accredited by Eco-Schools England and have been specifically designed to help schools progress through the Eco-Schools framework. They also help your

school to make real and measurable savings in energy and water use, to cut carbon, to produce less waste and to encourage biodiversity.

There is no limit to the number of teachers in each school that can register with the Pod. You'll need to register separately for both Eco-Schools and the Pod. To make life easier, why not set the same password for both logins?



The Pod (www.jointhepod.org), EDF Energy's Environmental Education Programme, is a free interactive online resource for Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 teachers and pupils.



Getting started with Eco-Schools and the Pod

- 1 Go online, register with Eco-Schools and register with the Pod. To make life easier, set the same password for both logins. Get other teachers to join the Pod too
- 2 Use one of the Pod's assemblies to get the whole school involved and spread the message about becoming an Eco-School
- 3 Nominate or elect your Eco-Committee
- 4 Get the Eco-Committee to hold their first meeting – make sure someone keeps records. You can use the meeting as a chance to explore the Pod together
- 5 Conduct an environmental review to see your school's current environmental performance and identify any areas for environmental action. The Pod's audits can supplement your review as you go along
- 6 Develop an Action Plan based on the findings from your Environmental Review. Decide which Eco-Schools topics to tackle (Energy is compulsory for Green Flag)
- 7 Plan which Pod activities to complete as part of your Action Plan. Record your results and progress on the Pod (through your audits) and link activities into your curriculum work and planning
- 8 Plan an activity suitable for the whole school. An easy way to do this is to sign up for one of the Pod's national campaigns like Switch-Off Fortnight or Waste Week
- 9 Read the Eco-Schools award criteria to see how much progress you've already made towards the award levels



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 Start your Eco-Schools journey, go online, register with Eco-Schools and register with the Pod

Working through the Eco-Schools award criteria and using the Pod to help with every step of your journey

Eco-Schools framework	Eco-Schools award criteria			How the Pod can help with every step of your Eco-Schools journey
	Bronze	Silver	Green Flag	
Forming your Eco-Committee	You have an Eco-Committee consisting of pupils and adults. It meets at least every term and records of meetings should be kept.	<p>The level of responsibility expected depends on the age and ability of the pupils involved.</p> <p>You have an Eco-Committee consisting of pupils and adults which meets at least every half term. It includes a parent and/or governor and records are kept of meetings. Pupils share the responsibility with adults for running the Eco-Committee.</p>	You have an Eco-Committee consisting of pupils and adults which meets at least every half term. It includes a parent and/or governor and records are kept of meetings. Pupils take significant responsibility for the running of the Eco-Committee.	Your Eco-Committee can be the perfect group to run the Pod's activities and campaigns. They can lead on the activities, keep the whole school informed, inspire others to get involved and organise celebration events.
Completing your Environmental Review	At all levels of Eco-Schools, you should carry out an Environmental Review once a year covering all nine Eco-Schools topics to evaluate progress			All Pod activities incorporate an audit at both the beginning and the end to identify the impact of the school's work. These audits provide great support and further develop the Environmental Review Eco-Schools need to undertake.
	Your Eco-Committee has discussed the results of the Environmental review.	Results of the review have been discussed by your Eco-Committee and communicated with the whole school.	Pupils were involved in carrying out the review. Results of the review were recorded, have been discussed by the Eco-Committee and communicated to the whole school.	
Creating your Action Plan	<p>Your Eco-Committee has produced a basic Action Plan influenced by the Environmental Review. They have shared the plan with the rest of the school community.</p> <p>Your Eco-Committee can identify progress towards achieving elements of the Action Plan.</p>	Your Eco-Committee has produced a detailed Action Plan including timescales, targets and who is responsible. They have shared the plan with the rest of the school community. Your school has completed in-depth work on at least one of the nine Eco-Schools topics.	Your school has produced a detailed Action Plan, including timescales, targets and responsibilities, how monitoring will be undertaken and the plan has been shared with the school community. The Action Plan is a working document and is updated based upon subsequent reviews. Your school has completed in-depth work on at least three of the Eco-Schools nine topics (one must be energy), with two extra topics for each renewal. In-depth work means that the school has an understanding of the project topic, recognises its importance to sustainable development within the school and wider community and has implemented change. Projects should last at least half a term. From 2013 schools will need to develop a green procurement policy.	Each Pod activity is Eco-Schools accredited and can be used to deliver aspects of the Action Plan. The Pod covers energy, waste, water, transport and biodiversity topics, as well as a new climate science topic. With energy a compulsory topic, the Pod's Switch-Off Fortnight Campaign and related energy activities are the perfect way to work on this topic. Schools can use the Pod to upload photos and blog about the progress of their activities. A fantastic way to keep everyone informed!
Involving your whole school and wider community	Eco-Schools is a whole-school programme. Although the rest of your school does not have to be as involved as the Eco-Committee, they should be kept informed. A notice board dedicated to Eco-Schools is a minimum requirement. Involving the wider community is also a requirement.			The Pod's campaigns and assemblies are great ways to introduce sustainability ideas to your pupils and achieve a whole school approach. In the Pod's Schools Area, you and your pupils can blog about your progress while completing activities and campaigns. You can upload photos to celebrate the success of activities. The Pod's Inspire pages are full of ideas to inform and involve your local community. There are a range of 'take it home' worksheets to get families involved too.
	Your school has a prominent, designated notice board detailing Eco-Schools activities.	The school has a prominent, designated noticeboard detailing Eco-Schools activities. The Eco-Committee regularly communicates Eco-Schools activities to the whole school and wider community (e.g. via assemblies and newsletters).	Your school has a prominent, designated noticeboard, which details Eco-Schools activities. These are also reported in assemblies and at governors' meetings, as well as being regularly communicated to parents and the wider community. Your school has shared good practice with other schools.	
Linking sustainability to the curriculum	You can show that environmental issues have been covered within curriculum work.	You can show that some environmental issues have been covered within curriculum work in most year groups.	Sustainability issues have been covered in at least three curriculum areas by most year groups. Eco-Schools should be incorporated within curriculum planning.	All the Pod's activities and lesson plans have cross curricular links. Every lesson plan clearly states how each activity can be used in the curriculum. The Pod's handy curriculum guide provides a complete overview of how the activities link to different subject areas.
Monitoring and evaluation	Not required for the Bronze Award.	Schools will have to describe how pupils were able to lead on monitoring and evaluating the success of the Eco-Schools activities. This evidence can include data collection and analysis (graphs, etc). There is a minimum standard required for cleanliness in school grounds at Green Flag level. Schools are encouraged to monitor their litter levels as they progress through the award scheme and be proactive about tackling any litter problems.		The Pod is a great way to measure and record the impact of your activities, as well as to track progress of your projects. Each Pod activity starts and ends with an audit; savings are measured and tracked through the pod-o-meters on an ongoing basis. Schools can win medals and certificates for running any of the Pod's activities. These can be viewed on the Pod and also uploaded to your school's own website.
		Your Eco-Committee monitors the effectiveness of Eco-Schools work (e.g. via data collection, before and after photographs etc). From this monitoring your school has addressed at least one of the Eco-Schools nine topics.	Your Eco-Committee monitors the effectiveness of Eco-Schools work (e.g. via data collection, before and after photographs etc). From this monitoring, your school needs to have worked on at least three Eco-Schools topics to gain its first Green Flag. Some monitoring data has been used in curriculum work. Your school is monitored for litter and is mainly litter-free (guidance is available on the Eco-Schools website).	
Developing your Eco-Code	Not required for the Bronze Award.	Your school has an agreed, adopted and displayed Eco-Code.	An agreed, adopted Eco-Code is displayed in every classroom. The whole school should be aware of the Eco-Code and understand its meaning.	If you need to develop or refresh your Eco-Code, running a Pod campaign provides a great opportunity to include the whole school. Schools can share and promote their Eco-Code by uploading it onto the Pod's schools page.



Top 10 ways the Pod can help you on your Eco-Schools journey

Whether you're getting started with Eco-Schools or renewing your Green Flag award, the Pod can help you along every step of your Eco-Schools journey.

1 Helping you achieve your Eco-Schools awards

Whether you've just registered with Eco-Schools or are renewing your Green Flag award, this handy guide includes a reminder of the award criteria. Follow this guide to find out how the Pod can help you along the way.

2 Linking sustainability to the curriculum

All Pod activities and resources have cross-curricular links; from maths, science, geography and ICT to English, art, citizenship and lots in

between. You can see the specific links by using the curriculum guide in the Pod's teachers' area.

3 Covering Eco-Schools topics

The Pod's activities cover Eco-Schools' compulsory energy topic, as well as waste, water, biodiversity and transport. The Pod's inspiring information packs are a great way to get your own knowledge up-to-scratch before starting the activities with your pupils. What's more, the Pod's new climate science resources help to put your projects and lessons into a wider context.

The Pod's inspiring information packs are a great way to get your own knowledge up-to-scratch



4 Helping you deliver assemblies, lessons, activities or clubs

The Pod includes informative downloadable assemblies (with teacher notes), lesson plans and activity ideas to help you cover your eco-



topics. More than one teacher at your school can register with the Pod, so the activities can be used across the curriculum, both in class and in extra-curriculum activities.

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Pod activities are designed to help schools make real and measurable improvements and to share their successes.
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5 Helping you with monitoring and evaluation

The Pod's activities start and end with an audit. These should ideally be carried out by pupils and are a great way to collect monitoring and evaluation data. The pod-o-meters measure and track savings in energy, waste, water or carbon dioxide as well as counting the number of biodiversity or climate science projects you take part in. Don't forget to do both audits and to signpost people to your pod-o-meters so they can see what you've achieved.



6 Involving the whole school

The Pod's 'Switch-Off Fortnight' and 'Waste Week' campaigns are a fantastic, inclusive way to get your whole school involved. Everybody can take part in the activities and the assemblies, while posters and blogs can help you spread the message. Why not use the Pod's year planner to link in with other national or international campaigns?



7 Enabling your pupils to take the lead

Eco-Schools are led by pupils and the Pod is designed to help pupils too. The Pod's interactive pages, blogs, online magazine and games enable pupils to manage their campaigns and share ideas with others.

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The Pod enables parents to see the projects their children have been taking part in. They can read their blogs and see photos and films on the gallery.
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Pupils are the driving force behind Eco-Schools
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8 Celebrating your achievements

Keep up the momentum of your environmental work and the enthusiasm of your pupils by winning Pod medals and awards. Display these with pride on your eco-board and get competitive as you watch your school climb up the Pod's online medal league tables. For a limited time, the Pod will also send schools real medals and pin badges, making your achievements even more exciting!

9 Including the wider community

Did you know that many Pod activities include 'take it home' work sheets full of ideas to take Eco-Schools topics out to families and the

wider community? The Pod enables parents to see the projects their children have been taking part in. They can read their blogs, see photos and films on the gallery, track the impact of their work on the pod-o-meters and see any medals they win on your school's home page.

10 Learning from each other

Looking for ideas or inspiration? See how other Eco-Schools have used the Pod to help them achieve Eco-Schools awards. Check out the Eco-Schools case studies, newsletters and our joint on-line interactive magazine (ezine) for students.



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Eco-Schools can get the whole school united behind something important

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For more details visit www.eco-schools.org.uk
email eco-schools@keepbritaintidy.org
or call 01942 612 614

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