

## About Eco-Schools

Eco-Schools is the largest sustainable schools programme in the world, operated internationally by the [Foundation for Environmental Education \(FEE\)](#) and managed in Scotland by [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#). The programme connects 19.5 million children, young people and educators through sustainable development education with [67 countries on all five continents](#) participating.



Eco-Schools has common structural features across all operating countries. The Seven Elements, the Eco-Schools Topics, and Assessment for the Green Flag. The Seven Elements are the same in every country, although they may have slightly different names. Eco-Schools Topics vary across different operating countries

### Eco-Schools in Scotland

Eco-Schools Scotland is designed to encourage whole-school community action on Learning for Sustainability. The programme encourages young people to engage in their environment by allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it. The programme starts in the classroom and expands to the whole school, eventually fostering change in the community at large.

We are grateful for the continued support of the [Scottish Government](#) in funding the programme.

### How Eco-Schools Scotland works

The [criteria](#) of the Green Flag Award are based on the [Seven Elements](#), which are the core of the Eco-Schools programme in every participating country.

The first step is to form an [Eco-Committee](#) to represent the ideas of the whole school. The Eco-Committee then completes an [Environmental Review](#), to investigate the current situation in the school. The results of the Environmental Review are used to create an [Action Plan](#) of planned projects on litter and two other topics. Eco-Schools Scotland has [Ten Topics](#) to choose from. The Action Plan will include ways of [measuring](#) the progress of projects, and ideas for future development.

Projects should be linked to the [curriculum](#) with the whole school and wider [community](#) given the opportunity to be involved. Finally, the whole school should create an [Eco-Code](#) representing their commitment to environmental issues.

This work is recognised by the Green Flag Award - a visible indication of your school's commitment to learning for sustainability, and an internationally recognised accreditation for excellence in sustainable development education. The Green Flag Award is renewed every two years following the same Seven Elements.

Eco-Schools Scotland has linked the programme to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and you will be asked to select a goal to connect to your three topics. You can read more about the [Sustainable Development Goals here](#).

## The Seven Elements



### Eco-Committee

The Eco-Committee represents the ideas of the whole school and is responsible for keeping your Eco-Schools noticeboard up to date.

### Environmental Review

This is a tool to assess the current situation and which forms the basis of your Action Plan.

### Action Plan

This is a working document which tracks your progress against your chosen topics and Sustainable Development Goal.

### Measuring

How will you know if your topic and goal work is successful?

### Linking to the Curriculum

Linking to the curriculum integrates Eco-Schools into daily learning across subjects.

### Community

Making links locally and globally

### Eco-Code

A statement to show your school's commitment to environmental issues.

## Eco-Committee

The first step in your Green Flag journey is to form your Eco-Committee. The Eco-Committee takes responsibility for Eco-Schools projects and will ensure the whole school is involved.

Eco-Schools is a pupil-led programme so your Eco-Committee must include pupils. It can also include teachers, support staff, parents and carers, a member of the school's Senior Management Team and local contacts. Your Eco-Committee can take many forms.

We will ask you to let us know how your Eco-Committee works in your school's context when you submit evidence for your Green Flag Assessment.

Your Eco-Committee has an important role in engaging with whole school and your local community to involve them in your Eco-Schools work. To keep the whole school community up to date with your Eco-Schools work, your Eco-Committee will need to set up a specially designated Eco-Schools noticeboard which occupies a prominent position in the school and displays things like your [Eco-Code](#).

Your Eco-Committee should:

- Meet regularly (at least once every half term).
- Keep records of meetings.
- Carry out the [Environmental Review](#).
- Update the [Action Plan](#).
- Take responsibility for [Measuring](#) projects. Create an [Eco-Code](#). Promote your work with the whole school and wider community. Keep your Eco-Schools noticeboard up to date.

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### Your Eco-Schools Noticeboard

The Eco-Committee is responsible for sharing news about your school's Eco-Schools work with the whole school and wider community and one of the ways they will do that is through an Eco-Schools Noticeboard. This should be in a central location, visible to everyone in the school. You could also have a noticeboard in your community for example in a shop, a church or community hall.

Your noticeboard should include:

- Details of who is on your Eco-Committee so that non-members can contribute ideas.
- A copy of meeting notes or minutes.
- A copy of your Eco-Schools [Action Plan](#).
- Details of current projects and how to get involved.
- Examples of Measuring
- Your most recent Green Flag Award certificate.
- A copy of your [Eco-Code](#)

# Environmental Review

This next stage in your Green Flag journey is to carry out an Environmental Review. The Environmental Review is a tool designed to help the Eco-Committee decide what is going well in the school and what topics to work on. Conducting an Environmental Review will enable you to set realistic targets and measure your success.

The results from your review will form the basis of your [Action Plan](#) and once you have completed the review, you should be able to identify the two topics, as well as Litter, that your school wishes to focus on over the next two years.

The Environmental Review should be carried out on an annual basis to support your work towards devising your Action Plan. This will then act as a checkpoint to see if anything in your community has changed and hence if you need to add any additional items to your Action Plan. Comparing your new responses with those that you originally made will give an indication of progress and will help you to plan future Eco-Schools work.

The Environmental Review should:

- Be done for all ten topics.
- Involve as many pupils as possible.
- Be done in a way that best suits the school's context.
- Be used to form your [Action Plan](#) for the two years of your Green Flag journey.

## Environmental Review Template

Please use our template to complete your Environmental Review. There are two versions to choose from in a variety of formats suitable to use with an interactive whiteboard, for printing, or for an assembly. Thanks to Tobii Dynavox, our Pictorial Environmental Review includes Boardmaker Symbols. [Download the version that works best for your context here.](#)

Litter					
				Yes	No
1. Is Litter a problem at your school?					
Notes					
2. Which of these images is most similar to the level of litter at your school?					
A	B	C	D		
Litter Free	Mainly litter free except for some small items	Litter is clearly visible but not widespread	Litter is both clearly visible and widespread		
					
3. What kinds of litter do you find most often? (i.e. cans, crisp packets)					
Notes					
4. Is dog fouling a problem at your school?					
Notes					

 

Litter				
1. Is litter a problem at your school?				
  				
2. How tidy do you think your school is? Circle your choice:				
No litter	A little bit of litter	Litter in some places	Lots of litter everywhere	
				
3. What kind of litter do you find?				
     				
4. Is dog dirt a problem at your school?				
  				
5. Are there enough bins?				
  				

# Action Plan

The Action Plan is the core of your Eco-Schools work and should be developed using the results of your Environmental Review. It should list projects for Litter as well as the two other topics you choose to focus on.

This plan will detail how projects will be Measured, how the Community will be involved, and any links to your chosen [Sustainable Development Goal](#).

Your Action Plan is a working document and should be updated throughout your Green Flag journey. Please use the template we provide as this is the easiest way to gather the information required for your application.

Remember that work on other initiatives such as the [John Muir Award](#), [Rights Respecting Schools](#), or [Fair Trade Schools Award](#) can all be included in your Action Plan under relevant Eco-Schools topics.

Your Action Plan should:

- Be developed by pupils using the results of your [Environmental Review](#) and suggestions from the rest of the school.
- Include projects for Litter and your chosen two topics.
- Be a working document, updated regularly by pupils as much as possible.
- Be displayed on your Eco-Schools noticeboard in a pupil friendly format.
- Include how your projects will be [Measured](#).

## Making Your Action Plan Visible

In order to keep everyone in the school up to date with your Eco-Schools projects, your Action Plan should be displayed on your Eco-Schools noticeboard. You might also consider a pupil-friendly display, like the one made by pupils at Toronto Primary School where current actions are displayed on the leaves of an Action Plan tree.

## Action Plan Template

Please use our template to create your Action Plan. This is the easiest way to gather the information required for your application. [You can find both a PDF and Word version on our website.](#)

																									
<b>Eco-Schools Action Plan</b>	SCHOOL NAME _____																								
Eco-Schools Topic: Litter	Date Range of this Plan: _____ to _____																								
Your school's Sustainable Development Goal:																									
Our overall aim for this Topic and Goal:																									
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></div>																									
<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Action What are you going to do?</th><th>Responsible Who's in charge?</th><th>Timescale When will it be done by?</th><th>Progress How can we measure it?</th><th>SDG How does your action link to your chosen SDG?</th><th>Evaluation/Development Was the action successful? How will you build on this in the future?</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr></tbody></table>	Action What are you going to do?	Responsible Who's in charge?	Timescale When will it be done by?	Progress How can we measure it?	SDG How does your action link to your chosen SDG?	Evaluation/Development Was the action successful? How will you build on this in the future?																			
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## Measuring

To find out whether or not you are successfully achieving the targets set out in your Action Plan, you must measure your progress. Pupils must carry out one example of Measuring for Litter plus each of your chosen two topics.

If you have been participating in Eco-Schools for a while, you might remember the Measuring element being called Monitoring and Evaluation.

You will also need to consider how this information will be collected and shared. Will pupils weigh recycling or read electricity meters? What will you need to put into place in order to measure progress? Perhaps purchasing resources or arranging meter access.

Measuring might involve:

- Graphs or tally charts.
- Before and after photographs.
- Video or written diaries.
- Feedback from questionnaires or surveys.
- Calculating bill savings.
- Meter readings.
- Mapping.
- Weights - for example: litter, recycling or food waste
- The results of a waste audit.
- Your school's travel survey (Hands Up survey).
- Traffic light indicators - for example: playground cleanliness
- Totalling funds raised.

Measuring should:

- Be done by pupils whenever possible.
- Be shared with the whole school and community, for example on your Eco-Schools noticeboard.

How you choose to measure progress will depend on which topics you are focusing on and the pupils involved. What information could you use to share your progress with the whole school and wider community? Maybe it is the amount of paper collected for recycling, or perhaps a decrease in the amount of energy being used.

For example, a school trying to reduce food waste might first measure the amount of waste produced on a normal day, and compare this with the amount produced after trying to reduce it. The results of a survey of which school meals are most enjoyed by fellow pupils might also be used to reduce food waste.

## Linking to the Curriculum

As an Eco-School you will carry out a self-evaluation against Education Scotland's Learning for Sustainability criteria (Whole Schools and Community Approach to Learning for Sustainability). This enables schools to identify how the various elements of Learning for Sustainability are being integrated within their own school improvement planning.

Activities undertaken as part of the delivery of the Seven Elements and the Ten Topics afford many opportunities to link to all eight curricular areas - as well as the Four Capacities - and interdisciplinary themes such as Health & Well-being, Numeracy, Literacy, Enterprise, and Learning for Sustainability.

When linking the Eco-Schools programme to the formal curriculum, schools will identify areas of the curriculum which will enable young people to:

- Achieve required learning outcomes.
- Enhance their learning experience.
- Develop informed attitudes.
- Develop core skills.
- Transfer skills across curricular areas.

Integration of Eco-Schools activities into the curriculum does not have to be onerous. It can vary from a short reference when a curriculum topic warrants it, to full-scale linking so that Eco-Schools activities fully cover particular curricular experiences and outcomes.

Linking to the curriculum should:

- Help to achieve required learning outcomes.
- Enhance pupils' learning experience.
- Support the Four Capacities of CfE.
- Help pupils develop informed attitudes.
- Develop core skills.
- Transfer skills across curricular areas.
- Enrich the curriculum with opportunities for practical learning.
- Highlight opportunities for Green Careers.

The principles contained within [Taking Learning Outdoors – Partnerships in Excellence](#) (LTS 2007) underline the many benefits of activities within Eco-Schools. The opportunity to learn more about their own environment within the school grounds, and further opportunities to suggest improvements and take part in implementing these improvements, provide young people with real life experiences in investigating, problem solving, and decision-making.

### Curricular Audit

A Curricular Audit is required for all secondary schools as part of their Green Flag journey. This provides schools with an opportunity to investigate links between curricular learning and sustainable development themes. [There are two template styles to choose from](#) - a departmental view or a whole school view - or you can make your own.

## Community

A key aim of Eco-Schools is to involve your whole school and the wider community. It is important that everyone in the school has the opportunity to be involved in your Eco-Schools projects.

Although the [Eco-Committee](#) is the group responsible for leading Eco-Schools activities, the whole school must be informed about activities and have the opportunity to be involved. Eco-Schools begins in the classroom and spreads to the wider community, giving pupils a chance to make real change. Throughout your Green Flag journey, you will have the opportunity to involve members of the community and to work in partnership with local businesses, community council, neighbouring schools and other organisations on larger projects, making your school a focal point in the community.

Involving the Community could involve:

- Presentations at assembly.
- Your Eco-Schools noticeboard.
- Joint projects with a nearby school, nursery or organisation.
- Providing information to your Parent Council.
- A display in a community spot e.g. a library or church.
- A suggestion box for pupils to share their ideas.
- Letters to parents and carers.
- Posts on social media.
- Articles in the school's newsletter or website.
- Posters displayed in your community.
- Letters to local business, government or neighbouring schools.
- A whole school day of action.
- Articles in local newspapers.
- Visitors to the school to provide advice or help.
- Sharing the results of [Measuring](#) your projects.
- Celebration to raise your Green Flag.

## Eco-Code

Your Eco-Code is your Eco-Schools mission statement, demonstrating your commitment to improving the school environment.

Your Eco-Code gives you a great opportunity to draw attention to your Eco-Schools work within your local community. The format of the Eco-Code is entirely up to pupils. It could be a list of statements, an acrostic, a mascot, a logo, a rap or song or a poem. It should be memorable and familiar to everyone in the school and reinforce the main objectives of your [Action Plan](#). As part of your Green Flag application, we will ask you to share your Eco-Code with us towards the end of your Green Flag journey.

Your Eco-Code should:

- Be created by pupils with input from the whole school.
- Be reviewed every two years to ensure that it continues to reflect your [Action Plan](#).
- Be displayed on your Eco-Schools noticeboard and prominently throughout the school.