

## Climate Action Week 2023

# Imagining Our School or Community by 2045

## Notes to Educators

This year's Climate Action Week will focus on positive and inspiring examples of people, actions and nature-based solutions that are helping us move towards becoming a net zero nation with restored biodiversity by 2045.

Scotland is working hard so that by 2045 our nation will be one in harmony with nature, and our impact on the environment and climate will be minimal. To do this we need to reduce the greenhouse gases that we emit, depend less on activities, habits and industries that have a negative impact on the planet, and support a stronger and healthier natural world.

This will involve, for example, updating our buildings to be more efficient, changing the way we transport people and things, transforming the way we grow our food and consume stuff, reducing our waste and what we do with it, and increasing spaces for nature.

### **The activity:**

We want to invite you and your class to dream big and imagine what our places should look like by 2045, and to send us your work so we can share these dreams with the government as a message of your vision for your future.

Pupils can work in groups or as a whole class, creating a poster in whichever format they would like (drawing, collage, digital, etc). The poster should describe what they want their school (as a whole or a particular room like their own classroom, dinner hall, canteen, etc) or a particular place in their community to look like by 2045 when we become a net zero nation with restored and enhanced biodiversity and ecosystems.

All posters will be displayed as part of the assembly and shared with the First Minister as young people's vision of the future they hope for.

### **Carrying out the activity:**

You could lead this activity in any way you wish, but you might want to start by:

1. Inviting pupils to discuss what net zero and restored biodiversity mean and could look like.
2. Discuss with pupils what they imagine their nursery, school or community will have in order to be sustainable and net zero. Here are some areas to explore. You can explore as many as you would like to or come up with your own:

- a) Nature
  - b) Energy
  - c) Transport
  - d) The stuff that we have and use
  - e) The food we eat
  - f) The amount of waste we make and where it goes
  - g) How we will make sure people are healthy and happy
3. In groups or as a class, create a poster that collects these visions.
  4. Take a picture of the poster/s and email them to [ecoschools@keepscotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:ecoschools@keepscotlandbeautiful.org) by Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 3pm so they can be incorporated into the assembly slides, where we are hoping the First Minister will join as part of the audience. You can continue submitting until Friday 6 October for posters to be in the gallery or reach the First Minister.

### **Some questions to prompt discussions:**

#### **What do you imagine the following aspects of your school or community will be like by 2045:**

- a) Nature: Are there many places for nature to live and thrive? Is it easy for people to connect with and enjoy nature? Are plants only outside the buildings or inside too? Do spaces for wildlife connect with each other to help animals and insects move around?
- b) Energy: Where does the electricity for your school or community come from? Where does the heating for your school or community come from? What kind of things does your school or community will have to be efficient and not waste energy?
- c) Transport: How are most people being transported to school or around your community? What do your streets and your school have to be better suited for active travel?
- d) The stuff we have and use: How many things are we buying / consuming compared to what is happening in 2023? What does reduce, reuse, recycle look like in 2045?
- e) The food we eat: What food are we eating? How is our food produced in a way that doesn't harm the planet? How do we ensure food producers around the world are able to make a living and protect the land they farm?
- f) The amount of waste we make and where it goes: How much waste are we making? What is happening to things that were thrown away in 2023?
- g) Health and wellbeing: How are we making sure people are healthy and happy? What do schools and communities have to make sure people have a chance to do sports and activities that improve their wellbeing? How are we coping with the effects of climate change in a way that achieves net zero emissions?

### **Key concepts ahead of the activity:**

**Net Zero:** Net Zero' means the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we put into the atmosphere and the amount we're able to take out will add up to zero. Our first step is to reduce emissions by changing our actions and processes, but not all emissions can be avoided. To get to net zero any emissions we create would be balanced by schemes that offset the same amount of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere, for example by planting trees, restoring peatland or using technology like carbon capture and storage. Reaching net zero is key to tackling the global

climate emergency, as well as the changes we need to make now because of the ongoing effects of climate change. (source: Scottish Government Let's Do Net Zero, [About Net Zero](#))

**Climate change:** our planet has experienced changes in its regional and global climate patterns and average temperatures throughout its history. These changes are normal and have tended to be cyclic. They have involved periods of cold temperatures and glaciation, and periods of warmer temperatures. 'Climate change' is the term used for describing these changes in the average conditions in a region over a long period of time. Despite climate change being a natural process, over the past decades scientist have been reporting unusual changes in the Earth's climate patterns, with a faster increase in the planet's average temperature and higher unpredictability of weather patterns. These changes have been linked to human activity.

**Global warming:** the term that describes the unusually rapid increase in our planet's average surface temperature over the past century, primarily linked and caused by the greenhouse gases released by human activity, particularly through burning fossil fuels.

**Greenhouse gases:** the general name for certain gases present in Earth's atmosphere which have the property of trapping heat. These gases allow the sunlight pass through the atmosphere towards the surface of our planet, but prevent the heat that comes with sunlight from leaving the atmosphere. The main greenhouse gases are: water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons.