



# ECO-SCHOOLS TIME-SAVING HACKS



## STEP 1: ECO-COMMITTEE



- Don't start with a new Eco-Committee, invite members of your existing school council to join a supporting eco-group and share your workload with the member (or members) of staff who is (are) already responsible for running the school council. If you are the member of staff currently running the school council, alternate meetings between regular meetings and Eco-Schools meetings/or include monthly 'green' meetings.
- Be organised, book a room for Eco-Committee meetings for the entire academic year at once. As soon as you have booked the room, advertise when each Eco-Committee meeting will take place throughout the entire year. This gives your colleagues plenty of notice, so they can attend, providing you with their help and support.
- Don't recruit a new Eco-Committee each year, instead invite new members to join the existing Eco-Committee annually, so that your group will gradually expand over time. This also helps with Step 5 Informing and Involving.

## STEP 2: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW



- Split the Environmental Review into 10 topics then allocate each of the topics to a different year, form or subject group. In a Primary School year 1 might tackle the Biodiversity section, Year 2 Energy etc. In a secondary school the Science department might tackle Transport, Languages Global Citizenship, PE Healthy Living etc. This also helps with Step 5: Informing and Involving.
- Set a clear date when you want the Environmental Review to be completed and the results collated - time will pass quickly during the first term.
- Place a copy of the Environmental Review in your staffroom(s), so your colleagues are aware of the work your Eco-Committee are undertaking. This will also help when asking them for Step 4: Curriculum Link evidence. You could even combine Steps 2 and 4, by asking staff members to add their Curriculum Link ideas at this point... remember the Seven Steps do not always have to be completed in order, some of the most successful Eco-Schools adopt a more holistic approach to their Eco-Schools journey.

## STEP 3: ACTION PLAN



- In your Action Plan include all the other charity/environmental campaigns, projects and events your school is already involved in, especially if you are already coordinating these!
- Don't try to take on huge projects for your first Action Plan! Remember that sometimes smaller actions can be just as engaging and effective, whilst being more manageable and saving you time.
- Get in touch with your Local Authority, many have lots of resources and projects that schools are able to access for free. They will also have great local knowledge, which might include possible funding opportunities.

## STEP 4: CURRICULUM LINKS



- Use the Curriculum Links Gathering Resource we have created, and pin it up in the staff room as soon as possible! Think about your placement - high-traffic areas near the kettle, microwave or sink are ideal, and don't forget to tie a pen or pencil on a string nearby to make it as easy for colleagues to add examples as possible.
- Ask your Eco-Committee to gather evidence on your behalf. Request they make a note any time their learning relates to one of the ten Eco-Schools topics. Collate (or ask an Eco-Committee member to) these notes and display on your Eco-Board.
- Grab a five minute slot at the end of a staff meeting to quickly list the 10 Eco-Schools topics, asking colleagues to think of examples from their teaching curriculum that relate. Ask them to write their example on a post it note for you to gather.

## STEP 5: INFORMING & INVOLVING



- Keep your Eco-Board up to date throughout the academic year, to avoid a big job prior to applying for an Eco-Schools Green Flag. You could even appoint a member (or members) of your Eco-Committee to have this as their specific role over the school year.
- If you have an existing school e-newsletter or e-newspaper, at the start of your journey, enquire whether you can add an Eco-News section.
- Volunteer Eco-Committee members to help out during parent's or open evenings... make sure they highlight the environmental credentials of your school and casually point out your Eco-Board as they accompany parents on a tour around the school.
- Approach your PTA for help and support - see if you can run an Eco-Stall at school fairs selling upcycled, reused, or eco-items made by young people in your school.

## STEP 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION



- Start thinking about this as soon as you have decided on your 3 topic actions, as you may need to gather baseline data. Set realistic targets early, so you and your Eco-Committee have a clear goal to aim for.
- Redo the Environmental Review during Summer Term 2, to see if your scores have improved. Save time and only redo the questions for the 3 topics you have picked to work on in your Action Plan.
- Remember when coming up with actions for Step 3, that one action can relate to several topics. Therefore consider whether one action could have multiple targets that link to two or even three topics.

## STEP 7: ECO-CODE



- Launch a whole-school, Eco-Code competition at the start of Summer Term to decide on your Eco-Code (pencil this in as soon as possible). This will help involve your whole school in this step, also helping with Step 5: Informing and Involving.
- Place an Eco-Code suggestion box under your Eco-Board as soon as possible, inviting young people to post their ideas for an Eco-Code. Allow your Eco-Committee to pick a winner from the suggestions.