

# ECO-SCHOOLS GREEN FLAG APPLICATION TROUBLESHOOTING



With the application window to apply for an Eco-Schools Green Flag opening in a few short weeks (1st of May 2022), thank you to those Eco-Coordinators who have got in touch with the Eco-Schools Team and pointed out two slight bugs in the new Eco-Schools Portal and Green Flag application process. Whilst the Eco-Schools Team works with our website developer to fix these bugs, you can still submit your Eco-Schools Green Flag application easily by following the simple advice below.

## BUG 1: YOU ARE UNABLE TO MARK ONE OF THE SEVEN STEP SECTIONS AS 'DONE'

Some Eco-Coordinators have noticed that they are unable to mark one, or more, of the Seven Step Sections (e.g. Step 1: Eco-Committee) as 'Done' because the 'Done' button is greyed out on their application form. This may even be despite the section appearing fully complete with the point total achieved (e.g. 15/15 for Step 1: Eco-Committee). If this is the case, please look through the section and ensure that all answer boxes in the section have text inside, even if the text is as simple as 'N/A'. The system will not allow a section to be marked as 'Done' unless all answer boxes have at least some text in.

## BUG 2: YOU HAVE COMPLETED EACH OF THE SEVEN STEP SECTIONS, BUT ARE UNABLE TO SUBMIT YOUR ECO-SCHOOLS GREEN FLAG APPLICATION

If you have completed each of the Seven Step sections and marked them all as 'Done,' but still can't submit your Eco-Schools Green Flag application, it is likely due to an issue with the Bonus Educational and Bonus Environmental Impact sections. Even if you are not planning on applying for an Eco-Schools Green Flag with Merit or Distinction, these sections need to be opened and marked as 'Done' before an Eco-Schools Green Flag application can be submitted. They can be marked as 'Done' without answering any of the questions.



# ECO-SCHOOLS SEVEN STEP MYTH-BUSTING!



## STEP 1: ECO-COMMITTEE

Don't worry if you don't have an Eco-Committee member from every year group, we realise that COVID has continued to disrupt Eco-Schools work this year, so we are again taking a flexible approach to this aspect of the Eco-Schools criteria.

We love seeing messy meeting minutes, because this usually means that young people have been involved in taking them! Never feel like you need to type up meeting minutes, or add additional detail to them – remember the Eco-Schools programme is intended to be pupil-led!

## STEP 2: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

If you scored lowly on the Environmental Review – don't worry! You have signed up to the Eco-Schools programme to improve the environmental performance of your school and we anticipate many low Environmental Review scores due to the disruption COVID caused in the previous academic year.

The best way to upload your Environmental Review is by placing it in the top of your school's photocopier and scanning it all in one go before uploading as a PDF – again don't worry about neatness!

## STEP 3: ACTION PLAN

Remember, your Action Plan is a working document – if one of the projects you decided on earlier in the academic year is no longer feasible, you still have time to adapt it, or think of an entirely new project (at a smaller scale). This is not giving up or failure, it's adaptation!

If you're worried a project may not be completed by the end of this academic year, don't worry! As long as the project has plans in place it can still be used as evidence on your Eco-Schools Green Flag application. Remember, some larger Eco-Schools projects can be used as evidence for this year's Eco-Schools Green Flag application and next year's (and perhaps the following year's too if it's a huge project)!

Projects in your Action Plan can be as big (or small) as you like, as long as you work on three Eco-Schools topics. It's our view that every Eco-Coordinator is going above and beyond to protect our planet simply because they care, so we trust that you have decided on projects that are effective and manageable in your setting.



## STEP 4: CURRICULUM LINKS

Curriculum Links do not have to correspond to the topics you have chosen to work on in your Action Plan and like the projects in your Action Plan, a curriculum link can be as big or small as you like. An acceptable curriculum link example might focus on a single lesson taught to one class, or it might focus on a whole school project delivered over a term – it's entirely up to you!

When completing this section of your Eco-Schools Green Flag application 2-3 sentences is more than enough to explain each of your curriculum links – don't feel like you have to write paragraphs!

## STEP 5: INFORMING & INVOLVING

With the disruption caused by the COVID Pandemic this academic year, it may have been difficult to organise Eco-Schools projects involving the wider school community and that's absolutely fine, again we are taking a flexible approach to this aspect of criteria.

Remember that if you have completed work as part of another charity project e.g. Fairtrade Fortnight or RSPB Wild Challenges, we categorise this as 'Involving,' there is even a question on the application form relating to this!

## STEP 6: MONITORING & EVALUATION

This is perhaps the most daunting section of the Eco-Schools Green Flag application... but don't be intimidated by it! On the application form, select the three topics you have chosen to work on. Each topic has 6 questions to answer based on the most common Eco-Schools projects we have seen schools undertake. It was important for us to include these questions as we wanted to demonstrate the positive environmental impact young people are having. However, we never dictate the projects a school should complete - so we don't expect you to be able to answer all 6 questions! Any questions you can't answer simply write 0, this will not count against your Green Flag application as we will be able to see exactly what projects you have worked on by looking at your uploaded Action Plan!

If you have completed environmental actions outside the topics chosen on your Action Plan, you are free to show off by ticking more than three topics and answering additional questions to demonstrate your school's true impact!

## STEP 7: ECO-CODE

Don't overthink this step – it's designed to highlight and celebrate your Eco-Schools work – the most common format of Eco-Code is an acrostic poem, but you can be as creative as you like!

