

SUSTAINABILITY · Y3 TO Y6

# Eco-Committee Starter Pack

Setting up a pupil-led environmental committee

## Why Eco-Committees work (and why most don't)

The Eco-Schools framework hinges on a single idea: pupils, not adults, lead environmental change in their school. Schools that take this seriously see real outcomes — measurable reductions in waste and energy use, biodiversity improvements, lasting cultural shifts. Schools that don't end up with a committee that meets twice and dies. The difference is rarely enthusiasm. It's structure. This pack covers the practical setup that gives an Eco-Committee its best chance: how members are chosen, what they actually do in meetings, what counts as a 'real' project, and how the committee survives staff turnover.

## What works vs what doesn't

What works	What doesn't
Election by class peers (with simple manifesto)	Adult-picked 'usual suspects'
Mixed Y3-Y6 representation	Just Y6, who leave in July
Termly project with measurable outcome	Year-long 'we should recycle more' chat
Audit FIRST, then decide priorities	Picking a project before knowing the issues
A pupil chair runs the meetings	The teacher always runs the meetings
Outcomes shared with whole school	Eco-Committee = secret club
Same time slot every meeting	'When we can fit it in'

## Setup — six steps before the first meeting



1. **Senior leadership backing.** Without a named SLT champion who'll attend twice a year and protect time, the committee will not last.
2. **Named adult lead.** A teacher (or higher-level TA) with 30 mins / week on the timetable for this. Don't try to do it on top.
3. **Election process.** Each class Y3-Y6 elects 1-2 representatives. Candidates write a 30-second manifesto: 'Why I want to be on the Eco-Committee'.
4. **First-meeting calendar.** Set FOUR meeting dates for the half-term before the committee meets, so it can't drift.
5. **Audit pack ready.** Don't ask the committee 'what should we do?' on day one. Run a structured environmental audit FIRST (template included).
6. **A communications channel.** A noticeboard, a half-term newsletter slot, a half-termly assembly slot. The committee must be visible.

### Eco-Committee — terms of reference (sample)

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### Roles on the committee

Role	What they actually do
Chair (Y5/Y6 pupil)	Runs the meeting agenda. Holds members to time. Speaks for the committee in school assemblies.
Secretary (Y5/Y6 pupil)	Takes brief minutes. Distributes them. Tracks actions agreed.
Audit lead	Coordinates the environmental audit each year. Owns the data.
Communications lead	Updates noticeboard. Drafts newsletter items. Liaises with school council.
Class reps (1-2 per class Y3-Y6)	Speak for their class — bring ideas, take messages back. Run 'mini' actions in their classroom.
Adult lead (teacher/HLTA)	Holds the boundaries, books the room, ensures safety, mediates if needed. NOT the chair.
SLT champion (e.g. headteacher)	Attends termly. Provides resourcing. Removes blockers.



**First meeting — agenda template (50 minutes)**


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**Environmental audit template — first round**

Category	Questions to investigate	Method
WASTE	How much rubbish does our school produce in a week? What % is recyclable? What's most thrown away?	Bin audit on a Friday afternoon — count, sort, weigh
ENERGY	Are lights left on when classrooms are empty? Is heating on too high? When?	Walk the building during break and lunch — record
WATER	Are taps dripping? Is rainwater collected? Are urinals/toilets efficient?	Site walk-around with caretaker
LITTER	Where does litter accumulate? Why there? When is it worst?	Three-day litter count by zone
BIODIVERSITY	How many plant species in our grounds? How many animals (incl. insects)? What habitats exist?	Survey by zone — 1 hour with pencils + ID cards
TRANSPORT	How do children come to school? How could more walk or cycle?	One-week travel survey
FOOD	What's served at lunch? Where does it come from? How much is wasted?	Food waste weighing for one week
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	Where in the world is our school connected? Could we partner with another school internationally?	Map exercise + research



**What 'a good project' looks like**

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**After the project — what comes next**

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