

CLIMATE COURAGE SCHOOLS



**Climate
Majority**
Project

As climate risk intensifies, climate anxiety is exploding – but without a matching rise in meaningful climate action or public support for deep change. We’re left with the widespread assumption that climate facts are inherently immobilising. **Climate Courage Schools is a campaign aimed at showing that this doesn’t have to be the case** – beginning by working with young people; the group most affected by climate distress. A collaboration between teachers, students, researchers, and mental health professionals, we’re driven by the belief that when it comes to turning climate anxiety into widespread action, there’s no better place to start than in schools.

Simply delivering the facts about climate change has never been enough. Without emotional support, information can easily lead to distress – especially in schools where teachers are responsible but not equipped for delivering alarming information. **As a society, we're failing to equip young people for the world they're inheriting** – and climate breakdown is compounding an already severe youth mental health crisis rooted in broader systemic pressures. Yet time and again they also show a strong instinct to respond to tough realities with a desire to act. Taking part in meaningful action, in turn, helps reduce distress – a powerful virtuous cycle that will become ever more critical as conditions decline.

Crucially, for both young people and adults, the journey from anxiety into agency requires the right psychological environment – helping them process difficult emotions in community – and the best place we can begin is schools. More than just centres of learning, schools are anchors in their communities – the ideal starting place for a wider shift in public engagement with climate reality. **This report argues that mainstream climate mobilisation begins with supportive education: fostering environments where deeper understanding leads to collective purpose.**

- As the gap grows between the scale of the crisis and the emotional and practical capacities of both children and adults, we're campaigning to ensure that every teacher has the time, training, and support they need to deliver climate education that is honest, emotionally attuned, and empowering. That means equipping young people to name and navigate difficult emotions, build connection with themselves, others, and the planet – and find practical, hopeful pathways to thrive in a destabilised world.

Support teachers. Face feelings. Act together.

We are supported by:



ASSOCIATION



Together for
the Climate.



CLIMATE
CARES
Mental health in the climate crisis

CLIMATE
PSYCHOLOGY
ALLIANCE

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ClimatEdPsych
Climate Resilience &
Wellbeing in Education

Interested in partnering or adding your organisation
to this list? Get in touch. We'd love to talk.

The **Climate Majority Project** works to accelerate citizen climate action towards system change and to help a potential mass climate movement to see its own power. We channel that mission into three flagship campaigns: **Climate Courage Schools**, **SAFER** (focused on strategic adaptation for climate impacts), and **Regulate Us Better** (mobilising the business community to demand stronger climate rules).

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Foreword

These are anxious times for young people.

Concerns crowd in from all directions: relentless pressure from social media, ongoing post-Covid stress and disconnection, and fresh worries about finding meaningful work and affordable homes. And on top of this, anxiety about climate breakdown understandably continues to grow, as daily bulletins chart ever higher temperatures and increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Little wonder that reported levels of mental ill-health among children and young people are rising dramatically.

This is the backdrop for the launch of a new and timely campaign, Climate Courage Schools. At its heart is the belief that young people should receive not just honest, empowering climate education but also – crucially – the support they need to process difficult feelings, to counter emotional overwhelm and to find practical pathways to thrive in a destabilised world.

A ground-breaking collaboration of teachers, students, researchers and mental health professionals is coming together to make this happen. Because they know that, when it's matched by a focus on emotional wellbeing and whole-school collaboration, honest teaching about the future can help transform overwhelm into resilience, and powerlessness into a much-needed sense of collective purpose.

The Department for Education has itself said that its aim is to equip children and young people with the essential knowledge and skills they need to enable them to 'adapt and thrive in the future'.¹ But as this report makes abundantly clear, if it is to have any chance of achieving that, it will need to radically overhaul both culture and curriculum, and start to prioritise the skills and capacities that will be needed for this new future: emotional resilience, systems thinking, civic imagination, and connection to nature and each other.

This poses a significant challenge to our education system – but also offers far-reaching opportunities to create a system that supports young people not just as learners, but as citizens growing up in a time of accelerating change. As the report says, 'With the right support, schools can become a foundation for this transformation across society, modelling resilience, action and hope'. That's an aim worthy of the fight. Our young people deserve nothing less.

Caroline Lucas



¹ Department for Education (2025) Curriculum and Assessment Review: Interim Report – Conceptual Position Paper, p. 4. London: Department for Education.

Executive summary

It is the duty of an education system to prepare young people for tomorrow's world.

Yet education in England remains rooted in assumptions of ongoing stability while the reality of rapid climate breakdown, widening inequality and systemic volatility grows ever more urgent. Meanwhile, most students describe the future as frightening.

When a school's curriculum, priorities and culture contradict lived reality, students and staff are vulnerable to emotional overwhelm. It's an entirely normal response to feeling unprepared and unsupported in the face of a pervasive threat.

Yet this worsening situation also offers a powerful opportunity. Coupled with a focus on emotional wellbeing, imagination and whole-school collaborative action, honest and comprehensive teaching about the future can help turn overwhelm into resilience, and a much-needed sense of collective purpose.

Drawing on pioneering case studies across the UK and beyond, this report calls for change in four interrelated areas. Enacted together at scale, with systemic support from the Department for Education, these proposals can equip every young person in England with the knowledge, emotional strength and practical agency to thrive in a destabilised world.

Our four calls to the Department for Education



1. Leadership

Make climate-literate leadership – encompassing climate understanding, emotional insight, nature connection, and whole-school action – a statutory duty for every headteacher.



2. Culture

Train all school staff to recognise and respond to climate-related emotions – in themselves and others – using approaches from climate psychology, relational practice and nature connection.



3. Action

Fund Sustainability Leads to support a whole school team and allocate protected time for school-based adaptation projects, co-created by students and staff and rooted in local futures and partnerships.



4. Curriculum

Weave emotionally aware climate learning, nature connection and systems thinking through every subject.

Why now: the urgency for change

Today's young people are growing up in a time of rapid and radical change.

Climate disruption, nature loss, AI, economic shocks and rising instability are already reshaping work, home, health and relationships.¹ All are symptoms of a deeper systemic crisis, rooted in a widespread culture of disconnection from self, others and world, and exploitative patterns of production and consumption.² The emotional toll of climate breakdown further multiplies every other pressure on the conditions young people need to thrive.

The Department for Education has itself stated an aim to “[equip] children and young people with the essential knowledge and skills which will enable them to adapt and thrive in the world and workplace of the future”.³ If that commitment is to hold weight, it must reckon with the nature of that future: volatile, interconnected, and profoundly shaped by ecological breakdown.

Every sector, from finance to healthcare, needs urgently to adapt to disruption, complexity, and deep uncertainty – and every young person must be taught what this means. They will also require the capacity to adapt their ways of thinking amid constant change – and to collaborate, self-regulate, and reimagine their futures with creativity, connection and hope.

Yet as it stands, education in no way reflects the scale or urgency of the challenge, or indeed the many opportunities and benefits of meaningful, effective climate action. Instead, school is preparing students for a world that no longer exists – where careers are linear, economies are stable, and “change” means small teaks to business-as-usual.

Many young people already sense this disconnect.⁴ Education that fails to reflect lived experience can leave young people disillusioned, increasing their vulnerability to anxiety, despair⁵ and perhaps even extremist

1 See, for example, What is a Global Polycrisis?, Cascade Institute, 2022, <https://cascadeinstitute.org/technical-paper/what-is-a-global-polycrisis/>; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022 (GAR), 2022, <https://www.undrr.org/gar/gar2022-our-world-risk-gar>.

2 See, for example, Bristow, M., Cooper, R., & Summer, A. (2022) Reconnection: Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out, The Mindfulness Initiative; Beery, T., Lindstrom, A., & Bell, S. (2023) ‘Disconnection from nature: Expanding our understanding of human–nature relations’, *People and Nature*, April 2023; Card, D. & Closson, A. (2023) ‘It is not just heat waves – climate change is also a crisis of disconnection’, *The Conversation*, 16 August.

3 Department for Education (2025) Curriculum and Assessment Review: Interim Report – Conceptual Position Paper, p. 4. London: Department for Education.

4 In a ten-country survey (10,000 respondents aged 16–25) 75 per cent said ‘the future is frightening’ and 59 per cent were ‘very’ or ‘extremely worried’. Distress was significantly correlated with feeling ‘ignored or betrayed by governments’. Hickman, C., Marks, E.L., Pihkala, P., Clayton, S., Lewandowski, E., Mayall, E., et al. (2021) ‘Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey’, *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), pp. e863–e873. doi: 10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3.

5 Interviews with 18–24-year-olds in Australia recalled climate lessons that lacked honesty or agency; themes included ‘stripped of power,’ ‘stranded by the generation gap,’ and ‘daunted by the future.’ Jones, C.A. and Davison, A. (2021) ‘Disempowering emotions: The role of educational experiences in social responses to climate change’, *Geoforum*, 118, pp. 190–200.

narratives.⁶ Meanwhile, teachers are expected to steady classrooms while grappling with their own unanswered questions, often without support.

But these same difficult feelings can become a catalyst for collective purpose. By treating emotional wellbeing as a core approach rather than a nice-to-have, schools can help students identify and process difficult emotions, cultivate resilience, and learn to direct their energies towards the future they want.

We're calling for an education system that is serious about helping young people navigate this reality – and builds their capacities to thrive amid disruption: emotional resilience, systems thinking, civic imagination, collaboration, and connection to nature and each other. We want to see a culture change around climate education; where responding to our reality doesn't have to be depressing. It's a chance to reimagine jobs, food, energy, care, community and more – not just surviving, but flourishing.

This campaign focuses on the English schools system, where the wellbeing need is critical, change is urgently needed and devolved powers apply. But the principles and practices set out here can be applied far more widely. We hope this approach can offer inspiration to other education systems, from early years to universities, and to other sectors entirely. With the right support, schools can become a foundation for this transformation across society, modelling resilience, action and hope.

⁶ Research indicates that when schooling feels irrelevant or dismissive, some students seek belonging in extremist spaces. See: Stahl, G., Keddie, A. & Adams, B. (2022). 'The manosphere goes to school.' *Educational Philosophy & Theory* (school alienation and the online manosphere); Doosje, B., Loseman, A. & van den Bos, K. (2013).

What we mean by Climate Courage

At the heart of this campaign is a commitment to collective responsibility: to support young people not just as learners, but as citizens growing up in a time of accelerating change. Climate Courage is about what schools, educators, and policymakers do to create the conditions in which young people can stay connected (not dissociated), grounded (not overwhelmed) and active (not apathetic) in the face of uncertainty.

For us, climate courage means:

- Understanding how global crises affect everyday life – from mental health to housing, from inequality to opportunity
- Learning how to process difficult truths and uncertainty with compassion, creativity, and collective care
- Developing the skills and capacities to find agency, foster imagination and take action – emotionally, practically, and ethically
- Fostering connection – love and understanding of nature, community, and a sense of shared purpose
- Supporting deeper, systemic understanding of climate needs, including the need for both prevention and adaptation.



Key statistics

Global climate context: average temperatures have already exceeded the 1.5°C 'safe' limit agreed at the Paris 2015 climate summit, marking the beginning of a chaotic new climate era.¹

Future risk: under current policies, people born in 2020 will be two to seven times more likely to experience extreme weather events – especially heatwaves – than those born in 1960.²

Youth distress:

62% of UK young people say climate change makes them anxious; 67% say it makes them afraid, and 28% report their worry interferes with daily functioning.³

56% of young people globally believe “humanity is doomed” because of climate change.⁴

57% of UK young people feel betrayed by government inaction on climate.⁵

57% of child and adolescent psychiatrists in England report seeing young people distressed about the climate crisis and the state of the environment.⁶

Early worry:

78% of primary-aged children in England worry about climate change, and yet ...

70% of primary teachers say they lack the time to support student eco-anxiety

82% want lesson plans and resources to help.⁷

1 Tollefson, J. (2025) 'Earth breaches 1.5 °C climate limit for the first time: what does it mean?', *Nature*, 637, pp. 769–770.

2 Thiéry, B.W., Lange, S., Rogelj, J., Schleussner, C.-F., Gudmundsson, L., Seneviratne, S.I., Andrijevic, M., Frieler, K., Emanuel, K., Geiger, T., Bresch, D.N., Zhao, F., Willner, S., Büchner, M., Volkholz, J., Bauer, N., Chang, J., Ciais, P., Dury, M., François, L., Grillakis, M., Gosling, S.N., Hanasaki, N., Hickler, T., Huber, V., Ito, A., Jägermeyr, J., Khabarov, N., Koutroulis, A., Liu, W., Lutz, W., Mengel, M., Müller, C., Ostberg, S., Reyer, C.P.O., Stacke, T. and Wada, Y. (2021) 'Intergenerational inequities in exposure to climate extremes', *Science*, 374(6564), pp. 158–160. doi:10.1126/science.abi7339.

3 Hickman, C., Marks, E.L., Pihkala, P., Clayton, S., Lewandowski, E., Mayall, E., et al. (2021) 'Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey', *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), pp. e863–e873. doi: 10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00278-3.

4 Labarthe, I.Z. & Marks, E. (2024) "When they're saying what is completely opposite to what you morally believe: (in)action on climate change by state authorities and powerful bodies drives moral injury and eco-distress in UK young people", *The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist*, 17, e32.

5 Hickman, C., et al (2021). Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), e863–e873.

6 Royal College of Psychiatrists (2020) 'The climate crisis is taking a toll on the mental health of children and young people', *RCPsych News*, 20 November.

7 Greenpeace UK (2025) 'Majority of under-12s worried about climate change, survey shows', Greenpeace UK, February 3.

Teacher confidence gap

4 in 5

English teachers see climate chaos as young people's biggest challenge.¹

51%

of secondary teachers in England and Wales say climate issues aren't meaningfully embedded in their curriculum.²

Fewer than 13%

of English teachers had any climate-change training during their initial teacher education.³

In a global survey of 58,000 teachers across 144 countries, fewer than 40% felt confident teaching the severity of climate change; 32% could explain its local impacts; and only 23% felt ready to teach climate action – even though 95% believe it's important to do so.⁴

As far as **parental support** is concerned, 72% of UK parents agree climate change should be taught in schools and discuss it with their children more than any other social concern.⁵

1 Schools Week (2023) 'What do teachers think of teaching climate and sustainability?', Schools Week, 13 November.

2 Students Organising for Sustainability (2022) 'Climate Education and the Secondary Curriculum', SOS-UK.

3 Greer, K., Sheldrake, R., Rushton, E., Kitson, A., Hargreaves, E., Walshe, N. (2023). Teaching climate change and sustainability: A survey of teachers in England. University College London. London, UK.

4 UNESCO (2021) Getting Every School Climate-Ready: How Countries Are Integrating Climate Change Issues in Education.

5 Public First (2023) Polling on Climate Change and Sustainability Education.

What's already working

The good news is we already know how to help young people thrive in a volatile future.

The changes that can embed climate courage in practice are already underway in pioneering schools across the world, many of them in England. They are grounded in what young people and teachers say they need, and what schools and educators know can work when given the time and support.

Here's how teachers, schools, trainers, psychologists and more are leading the way:

case study **Our City, Our World**

Whole school, whole city strategy

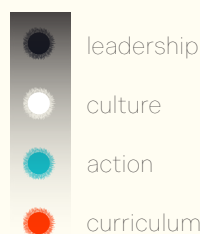
This sees the integration of environmental education across Brighton & Hove schools, led by the headteacher and with an emphasis on all staff being involved and trained.

Integrated environmental curriculum

School are supported to gradually and systematically green the entire curriculum and to support the development of green skills while developing a close connection with nature.

Operations

Schools also supported to build organisational systems and practices that support sustainability and net zero and align with city-wide goals.



[Find out more](#) about Our City, Our World



Where a case study reflects elements of our four calls to the Department for Education – on leadership, culture, action, or curriculum – we indicate as much.

What's already working

case study **Force of Nature**

Youth-led support

Force of Nature provides climate cafés, training sessions, and an online network where young people and teachers are supported through eco-anxiety into collective action.

Inner-dimension research

It also provides free training for teachers and youth, plus contributions to research on the inner dimensions of the climate crisis.

Culture of care

Highlights the importance of prioritising emotional wellbeing, enabling open exploration of feelings and responding to an uncertain future. This allows young people to translate climate anxiety into action, and teachers and other climate educators to support them appropriately.



culture

action

[Find out more](#) about Force of Nature

case study **HEART Academies Trust**

Leadership

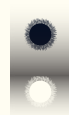
Chief Finance and Sustainability Officer Paul Edmond embeds sustainability into budgets and operations, making climate a board-level priority.

Triple Wellbeing

He centres [ThoughtBox Education](#)'s framework of self-care, people-care and earth-care.

Wellbeing focus

Emphasis on reducing environmental impact while fostering staff and student wellbeing.



leadership

culture

[Find out more](#) about HEART Academies Trust

What's already working

case study **St Ebbe's Primary**

Relationship-first model

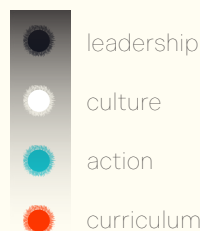
Led by Tina Farr and Clare Whyles, the school shifted from a top-down to a relationships-first approach, where learning is driven by real-world-connection, not just academic outcomes.

Triple wellbeing

Another school supported by [ThoughtBox Education](#), they emphasise bonds with nature, community and self as the foundation for healthy decision-making and problem-solving.

Shared purpose

Children gain confidence and autonomy, teachers collaborate freely and the whole school shares a vision of resilience and purpose.



[Find out more](#) about St Ebbe's Primary

Green Schools Revolution Climate Action Plans

case study

Youth-led Climate Action Plans

This programme has worked with pupil groups in 24 secondary schools in disadvantaged coastal areas to co-design whole-school Climate Action Plans.

Supported by training

SOS-UK delivers training to upskill student groups, featuring content including a module on climate psychology and emotional regulation.

Hands-on support and partnerships

Pupil teams are supported by SOS-UK, professional energy audits, local climate organisations, biodiversity support from The Wildlife Trust, and visits from climate scientists.



[Find out more](#) about Green Schools Revolution

What's already working

case study **Cegin y Bobl**

Food–climate–health nexus

Partners schools with local Welsh farms through immersive food education, literacy and leadership workshops which emphasize the links between climate, food, health and mental health.

Holistic wellbeing

Food security, health, mental health, biodiversity and cost-of-living challenges are addressed through school programmes.

Whole-school involvement

Parents, teachers, staff and students are engaged in sustainable cooking and community activities, and food and cooking are integrated into the curriculum.



[Find out more](#) about Cegin y Bobl

case study **The University of California
Climate Resilience course**

Campus-wide course

A new course offered at eight UC campuses integrates group climate discussions, mindfulness, resilience and careers planning into learning, with a focus on supporting students to share and understand their emotions.

Measured impact

Participants saw [significant reductions](#) in climate distress, increases in collaboration, nature-connectedness, belonging, and altruism – and reduced loneliness.

Action orientation

Encourages students to translate emotional insight into meaningful climate responses.



[Find out more](#) about the University of California Climate Resilience course

What's already working

case study **Professor Chamkaur Ghag**

Lived experience

Environmental science course lead combines hard science with emotional engagement, treating students 'as people, not just scientists.'

Emotion-integrated teaching

Students are encouraged to connect with the polluted state of their direct (central London) environment, share their emotional reactions in small groups and discuss how they can be part of climate response, including studying global solutions.

From grief to agency

Creates a space where grief and anxiety become catalysts for constructive climate action.



culture

curriculum

[Find out more](#) about Professor Chamkaur Ghag

case study **Generation Wild**

Nature connection

A creative programme targeted at schools in economically disadvantaged areas that uses storytelling, puppetry and technology to connect children with nature at WWT wetland centres and local community spaces.

Sustained teacher support

Goes beyond a one-off visit, providing tools and confidence for teachers to continue nature-based learning back in the classroom and local community.

Wellbeing impact

Research by Cardiff University shows that children's wellbeing improved post-participation, as did their levels of nature connection and the amount of time they spent in nature. And 78% of teachers report a long-term positive effect on pupils' mental health, with 71% now doing more nature activities with their classes.



curriculum

[Find out more](#) about Generation Wild

Help us showcase more innovators

As we prepare for our full launch in autumn 2025, we'll shine a spotlight on many more schools, teachers and grassroots initiatives nurturing climate courage. If you're already embedding emotionally supportive climate education, co-creating adaptation projects or weaving systems thinking into your curriculum, or know others who are, we'd love to hear your story – and feature it.

[Please tell us about your work.](#)

Our four calls to action

Teaching young people about the climate crisis and the impact it will have on their lives is essential.

But holding space for the full sweep of emotions this brings – anxiety, grief, anger, numbness – is hard work. Most teachers don't have the guidance, protected time, training or peer support to do it well, so the topic is often rushed, minimised or avoided altogether.

Together, our four calls to action represent the foundations teachers need to deliver in-depth, emotionally supportive, empowering climate education – ultimately helping young people identify and process difficult emotions, connect with themselves, others and the planet, and find practical pathways to thrive in a destabilised world.¹

Leadership

Make climate-literate leadership – encompassing climate understanding, emotional insight, nature connection, and whole-school action – a statutory duty for every headteacher.

Culture

Train all school staff to recognise and respond to climate-related emotions – in themselves and others – using approaches from climate psychology, relational practice and nature connection.

Action

Fund Sustainability Leads to support a whole school team and allocate protected time for school-based adaptation projects, co-created by students and staff and rooted in local futures and partnerships.

Curriculum

Weave emotionally aware climate learning, nature connection and systems thinking through every subject.

These are not separate initiatives. These mutually reinforcing changes must be implemented together as a whole-school, whole-system response to the challenges young people face.²

¹ All of these points are covered in length in: Newberry Le Vay, J., Cunningham, A., Soul, L., Dave, H., Hoath, L. & Lawrance, E.L., 2023. Integrating mental health into climate change education to inspire climate action while safeguarding mental health. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. (Centralising mental-health support; participatory leadership)

² The importance of leadership is supported very well in CAPE's 2024 report: Hoath, L., Dave, H. 2024. Implementing Climate Change Education in Schools: Constructive Hope in Action. Leeds: Climate Adapted Pathways for Education and is an integral part of the whole schools approach.



Leadership

Current situation

When school leaders aren't on side, change stalls and advocates burn out.

Requirement

School leaders with the knowledge, skills, space and governmental support to practice a participatory, climate-aware, emotionally literate leadership style that models authenticity, curiosity, imagination, shared decision-making and genuine care for one another and the planet.



Our call

Make climate-literate leadership – encompassing climate understanding, emotional insight, nature connection, and whole-school action – a statutory duty for every headteacher.

Embed climate leadership standards

Issue statutory guidance requiring head-teachers to embed climate facts, emotionally informed practice, nature connection and whole-school action into school priorities and policies.

Mandate and design CPD

Fund the design and delivery of a compulsory leadership module on climate risk, climate psychology, climate justice, systems thinking, positive adaptation and participatory leadership, co-designed with researchers, pioneering schools and mental-health experts.

Align and amplify support and resources

Integrate DfE initiatives (e.g. Climate Ambassadors) into a cohesive package of support and signpost existing high-quality toolkits and case studies so leaders can access locally tailored resources and peer insights.

Cultivate peer learning

Convene head-teachers in each region to share successes, challenges, youth-led innovations and lessons from pioneering schools

the VISION

Every school is led by participatory, emotionally literate leaders who understand the crisis, know how to navigate its emotional impact, and work alongside students to build resilient, joyful, creative school communities.



Culture

Current situation

Schools can't teach climate courage if their culture silences emotion. Fear, anxiety, apathy and overwhelm are normal, collective responses to cascading crises – and left unacknowledged they shut down learning.¹

Requirement

Schools must make emotional literacy a core practice – ensuring every educator has basic understanding in climate psychology and wider support structures for handling strong emotions. Emotional wellbeing and nature connection should be placed at the centre of school life, woven through leadership, policy and daily practice. Staff, as well as students, need support: their work is too heavy to carry alone.²



Our call

Train all school staff to recognise and respond to climate-related emotions – in themselves and others – using approaches from climate psychology, relational practice and nature connection.”

Mandate cascade CPD

Require and fund a protected training package for pastoral, safeguarding, sustainability, PSHE/ careers, citizenship and subject leads in climate psychology, climate justice, adaptation, nature connection, systems thinking and facilitation; grant them explicit remit and ring-fenced time to go on to train all teaching staff in the same.

Embed reflective practice

Support schools to run regular, facilitated spaces (e.g. climate cafés, reflective assemblies or forest-school sessions) where staff and students can share and process their feelings about the future.

Measure impact

Enable partnerships with universities to track shifts in student attitudes and staff confidence, building the evidence base for emotionally informed practice.

Cultivate peer learning

update safeguarding and mental health guidance to recognise climate-related distress as a core pastoral concern and safeguarding issue.

the VISION

Resilient, caring school communities where students can face hard truths and meet uncertainty without becoming overwhelmed.

¹ Pihkala, P., 2020. Eco-anxiety and environmental education. Sustainability, 12(23)

² All of these points are core to the whole school approach, which is internationally recognised as key to addressing well-being and mental health challenges.. UNESCO & UNEP, 2021. Ecological Pedagogies: Learning for the Planet. Paris/Nairobi: UNESCO & UNEP, a growing number of authors are calling for this.



Action

Current situation

The DfE's Sustainability Strategy has gestured towards practical climate action. But without dedicated time, training and whole-school ownership, roles like Sustainability Leads and initiatives like Climate Action Plans (CAPs) risk becoming tick-box exercises. What's more, without linking to curriculum and involving youth, both are wasted opportunities.

Requirement

Collaboration towards shared, practical purpose can turn abstract and scary challenges into confidence, agency and community connection. By providing opportunities to contribute to real climate or nature restoration projects, schools can link learning to practical action, allow young people to become active participants in their local futures, and model the benefits of intergenerational collaboration.



Our call

Fund Sustainability Leads to support a whole school team and allocate protected time for school-based adaptation projects, co-created by students and staff and rooted in local futures and partnerships.

Ring-fencing coordination time

Ensure every school has a dedicated Sustainability Lead Team with funded, protected hours to coordinate CAP development alongside young people and oversee project delivery.

Empowering Sustainability Leads

Provide CPD, planning days and resources so these teams can collaborate with subject teachers and students – connecting curriculum learning to hands-on adaptation and nature-restoration projects, and weaving them through careers guidance and extra-curricular activities.

Forging community partnerships

Encourage schools to embed collaboration with local councils, environmental NGOs and businesses into their CAPs – bringing external expertise, resources and intergenerational collaboration to initiatives.

the VISION

Meaningful pragmatic climate action that is visible, participatory and local to every school – giving every student the skills, relationships and inspiration to face change and shape what comes next.



Curriculum

Current situation

School curricula still gloss over the truth about the world young people will inherit: climate breakdown and its relationship to widening inequality and systemic instability is generally minimised, and its deep interaction with other subjects is not represented.

Requirement

Climate-related content must be integrated across all subjects, with teachers supported through both subject-specific knowledge and the skills to hold space for difficult conversations. This includes training to handle climate topics sensitively, guidance on embedding positive action into learning (e.g. proposing changes to school food procurement after mapping local food systems in geography, or exploring how citizens can hold power to account in citizenship), and clear access to specialist help when pupils need further support.¹



Our call

Weave emotionally aware climate learning, nature connection and systems thinking through every subject.

Revise the national curriculum

to embed climate understanding, emotional insight, nature connection and systems thinking across subjects and key stages.

Spotlight exemplary schools

by creating a national registry of best-practice case studies and accrediting high-performers.

Scale effective practice

through a central hub of resources, peer-learning networks and regional workshops that help every school adopt proven approaches.

Phase in governance frameworks

that evaluate each school's progress on embedding a culture of emotionally-aware climate learning across all relevant evaluation areas.

the VISION

A future-ready curriculum that equips every student with emotional literacy, systems thinking, ecological insight and agency and every teacher with the confidence and support to guide that learning.

¹ Greer, K., Sheldrake, R., Rushton, E., Kitson, A., Hargreaves, E. and Walshe, N., 2023. Teaching climate change and sustainability: A survey of teachers in England. See also UNESCO 2021.

Where next?

Our call to the Department for Education is just the beginning.

This autumn, we'll publish our full report – accompanied by a short film – to bring Climate Courage Schools to life. We won't stop until there's a national conversation about what it takes to prepare every young person for a destabilised future – and actually allow them to **adapt and thrive**.

In the meantime, here's how you can help us turn these ideas into action:

Join the campaign: Subscribe to our newsletter to receive updates, invites to briefings and opportunities to shape the next phase.

Share your story: We need your lived experience to move politicians, educators and the public. Tell us what it feels like to teach or learn about climate change and help build the human case for change.

Share what works: Know a school, teacher or initiative integrating emotional literacy with climate education? Nominate them (or yourself) so we can link up pioneers and spread best practice.

Become a partner: If your organisation endorses our vision, let's collaborate. Email les@climatemajorityproject.com to explore endorsements or partnerships.

Spread the word: Help us reach more people: share this report, use [#ClimateCourageSchools](#) on social media and talk to your networks about why schools must act.

Want an early look or to volunteer?

If you'd like to review the full report draft or join our volunteer team, email josephine@climatemajorityproject.com.



Together, we can make England's schools the foundation of a climate-resilient society – equipping every young person with the knowledge, emotional strength, creativity and agency to thrive.

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“With the right support, schools can become a foundation for this transformation across society, modelling resilience, action and hope.”