Eco-schools is a fantastic programme for schools and the awards are a brilliant achievement for both the pupils and the school as a whole.

At the moment 32 schools in Bexley are registered as Eco-schools –
- 11 have a Bronze Award
- 20 have a Silver Award
- 1 has managed to achieve Green Flag Status.

Below is an information pack to give you the main information you need to complete eco-schools. Lots more information is available on the website – http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/.

There are seven steps to the eco-schools award. These are listed below along with tips on how SWAC can help you with each step;

Seven Steps

1. Eco-committee (action team)
2. Environmental review
3. Action plan
4. Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Informing and Involving
6. Linking to the curriculum
7. Eco-Code

1) Eco-committee
An Eco-Committee should meet formally at least once every half term and informally a little more often to get stuck into the project work. Try to make sure at least one pupil from every year group is on the committee; it is great if schools can get a school governor, a parent or guardian and a site manager on board too. An Eco-Committee is supported by an adult Eco-Coordinator but led by pupils. Any member of staff can be the Eco-Coordinator, but it can be a shared role and it is good to get several teaching staff involved if possible.

SWAC: Are happy to be part of the school’s eco-committee
2) Environmental Review
The school gains a realistic picture of their current environmental and sustainability performance inside and outside of the classroom by doing an Environmental Review. The review is led by the Eco-Committee and should enable them to see how well (or not) the school is performing across all nine Eco-School topics.

**SWAC:** Can work with the eco-committee to do a waste audit. This means we go through all the schools waste and look what is being thrown away and how much is recycled. This can form part of your review.

3) Action plan
The Environmental Review will have sparked a lot of ideas for potential projects. The Eco-Committee now needs to draw up a workable plan with details of the projects they want to take action on:

- For Bronze and Silver Awards- one topic
- For 1st Green Flag- three topics
- For all Green Flag renewals- five topics

Your SMART Action Plan will include lists of tasks, equipment needed and people to involve for each project. The Eco-Committee might also want to outline a timetable and, if necessary, draw up a simple budget. Copies of the Action Plan should be made available for the whole school to see; the more that people are aware of what the Eco-Committee is trying to do, the more likely they are to get involved and play their part.

**SWAC:** After the waste audit SWAC can work with the children to come up with an action plan to reduce the amount of rubbish thrown away and increase recycling.

4) Monitoring and Evaluation
In making any project successful it is important to monitor whether things are changing or have changed. There are lots of different ways to do this: before and after photos; knowledge and attitude questionnaires; meter readings; analysis of electricity and water bills; transport surveys; litter counts; biodiversity surveys; waste audits and so on. Eco-Committees need to lead on design and implementation of their monitoring and evaluation but they might want to ask their science, maths and ICT teachers for help. School site managers, bursars, business managers and head teachers can probably help too.

**SWAC:** If SWAC have done a waste audit they can provide data on the amount of waste the school produces and the recycling rate. After you have carried out your action plan they can come back and repeat the audit and see where there are improvements. We can also help eco-councils create questionnaires and surveys to monitor impact and change especially around litter and waste.

5) Informing and Involving
To maximise the impact of their Eco-Schools work, the Eco-Committee will need to get as many people involved as possible, pupils may also want to get involved with larger community environmental projects. The Eco-Committee can let people know about their Eco-Schools work by; having a prominent, eye-catching Eco-Board, holding assemblies and class presentations and by organising fun school events and competitions. By involving the wider community, the Eco-Committee will be helping even more people to get involved in looking after the local environment.

**SWAC:** Would be pleased to be kept up to date with the work you are doing (if you are covering a waste topic) and we can promote this through social media. We can also help to organise events where the school can take part in larger community environmental projects such as litter picking as
we have some excellent links in the community. We are also happy to support eco-councils in delivering assemblies to the school and can lead activities in which an eco-board is created.

6) Linking to the curriculum

Pupil-led projects designed to improve the school’s environmental performance are a great example of action-learning, but learning about the environment can happen in a variety of ways at school. Teachers will be able to highlight, within the existing curriculum, opportunities to promote environmental awareness and understanding. For example, within English persuasive letter writing could be used to address MPs on local environmental issues. Everyone within the school will benefit from the Eco-Schools programme – real-life projects can help bring every subject to life.

**SWAC:** We have a programme of fun and interactive activities and assemblies around waste and recycling all with strong curriculum links. These are available free of charge to all schools in the borough and are adaptable to all age and ability groups.

7) Eco Code

The Eco-Code is the Eco-Committee’s mission statement. It should demonstrate – in a positive, clear and imaginative way – the school’s commitment to improving its environmental performance. It is worth reviewing and updating the Eco-Code every year or two. It is a great way to get people thinking about the work the Eco-Committee is trying to do and why it is trying to do it. The Eco-Committee could create a song, statement, poem, rap, acronym, acrostic, limerick or something even more creative!

**SWAC:** Are happy to support eco-committees in creating an eco-code and offer ideas in how they can promote and encourage it.
The nine Eco-Schools topics are distinct and are broad enough to allow your pupils to run projects that they are passionate about. Whatever project your Eco-committee comes up with, it should sit neatly under one of our nine topics.

To gain your first Eco-Schools Green Flag you will need to demonstrate that you are doing three different pieces of project work, covering three different Eco-Schools topics.

For renewals, we ask that you focus on a further two topics, and for each renewal after that swap another two – meaning you will always need to be covering five topics and will have done work on all nine by your fourth flag.

- **Biodiversity**
  Although it is extremely hard to determine the exact number of species that we share the planet with, we know that it is a lot and that there is a great diversity. How do you promote Biodiversity at school?

- **Energy**
  School’s have two main uses for energy: heating and electricity. Can you address both to help lower your school’s impact on climate change?

- **Litter**
  In the same way that Keep Britain Tidy sees litter as a symptom of wider social problems, OFSTED see litter as a sign of students’ respect (or lack of it) for their learning environment. Is your school litter free?
• **Waste**  
Waste comes in many different forms – food, paper, electrical, metal – it can all be reduced, reused or recycled. How can your school manage waste better?

• **Water**  
Water; the stuff of life. What can your school do to use this precious resource wisely?

• **School grounds**  
A school’s grounds are a fantastic environment in which to let the imagination run wild. How will your school make the most of its outside space?

• **Healthy Living**  
People are a part of the environment. We want both tp be healthy. How does your school promote choices that are good for us and good for the environment?

• **Transport**  
Schools can do a lot to improve the way their staff and pupils travel. Can your school encourage pupils to try new modes of transport?

• **Global Citizenship**  
Join our International Eco-Schools Twinning Programme

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**Awards**

**Bronze**

Once you have made some progress on your Eco-Schools journey and told the rest of your school about your good work, you will be ready to apply for the Eco-Schools Bronze Award. On average schools take between 3 – 6 months to move from registration to Bronze as this first stage is about setting the foundations to becoming a fully fledged Eco-School.

This is **self-assessed online** and focuses on the activities you are undertaking. If you feel you have met the criteria listed below, **celebrate** and login to your account to complete the free self-assessment!

**STEP 1: Your Eco-Committee**

- Pupils volunteer and are then nominated by their peers to be on the Eco-Committee. This includes all KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 year groups in the school. Nurseries, colleges and specialist schools can adapt their Eco-Committee to suit their setting. **NB.** It is not necessary to re-elect the pupils on the Eco-Committee every academic year, allow pupils to remain on the Eco-Committee if they wish, so they are able to see the impacts of their actions.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to invite along non-teaching staff to join their meetings to help them with a particular topic they have chosen to work on.
- There is a representation from the parents or governing body on your Eco-Committee.
- The committee meets at least once every half term.
- Pupils share responsibility with adults for running meetings and keeping a record of the meetings.
- Minutes are displayed on your Eco-Board.
- Reports of your Eco-Committee meetings are made available to the Board of Governors and PTA.
• Pupil representatives ensure that there is communication to and from the Eco-Committee to the rest of the school.

**STEP 2: Your Environmental Review**

• An informal Environmental Review covering **all nine topics** is carried out by pupils (with adult supervision).
• A copy of your Environmental Review must be displayed on your Eco-Board and communicated with the whole school along with detailed plans for activities for improvement.
• It is compulsory for the Green Flag award that your Environmental Review be updated every two years to coincide with your renewal application, however can be carried out every year as best practice.

**STEP 3: Your Action Plan**

• **For one Eco-Schools Topic only**
• Your Eco-Committee produces an Action Plan influenced by their Environmental Review.
• Pupils on the Eco-Committee take responsibility for leading the actions.
• The Action Plan contains timescales, who is responsible and how targets will be monitored and evaluated.
• The Eco-Committee has shared the Action Plan with the whole of the school.
• A copy of the Action Plan is displayed on your Eco-Board

**Silver**

After achieving their Bronze Award, your Eco-Committee will be eager to progress towards the Silver Award, on average this will take around 6 months.

The Silver Award is **self-assessed online** and focuses on the activities you are undertaking on the one Eco-Schools topic you have chosen. If you feel you have met the criteria listed below, please login to your account to complete the free self-assessment.

**STEP 4: Monitoring action and evaluating progress**

• Your Eco-Committee monitors the effectiveness of their Eco-Schools work: via data collection or before and after photographs etc.
• This evidence is communicated to the whole school and on display on your Eco-Board.
• Some monitoring data has been effectively used in curriculum work for example creating graphs and charts on energy and water usage to be used in maths lessons (this also supports Step 6).
• Evidence and data collected has been analysed and evaluated to help pupils develop further actions.

**STEP 5: Involving your whole school and wider community**

• Your school has a prominent and designated Eco-Board detailing all Eco-Schools activities, including a copy of your Environmental Review, Action Plan, minutes, before and after photographs and photographs of Eco-Committee members (or list of student names if photos not possible)
• Your Eco-Board should be kept up to date.
• Your Eco-Committee could use a variety of mediums to help communicate their actions; newsletters, school website, the school’s Twitter account – be inventive!
• The wider community is involved in activities going on in and around the school, for example parents, carers, local businesses, environmental organisations, local churches and residential groups and homes.

STEP 6: Linking to the curriculum

• Environmental issues have been covered in at least three areas of the curriculum by most year groups; this is clearly evident in schemes of work and lesson plans.

    Remember to maintain the excellent progress you made during Steps 1, 2 & 3 also!

Green Flag

To progress from your Silver Award to Green Flag Status there are two key areas which your Eco-Committee will need to focus on; work on 3 Eco-Schools topics and develop an Eco-Code for your school.

For those applying for their 2nd Green Flag and beyond, your school should be focusing on 5 Eco-Schools topics. We have listened to your feedback and will never ask our Eco-Schools, regardless of their Eco-Schools experience, to work on more than 5 topics for a Green Flag renewal. We only ask that you swap 2 of your topics with each renewal so that eventually you will have covered all 9 of our topics: just not in one go!

Your Eco-Committee will need to continue all of their hard work on STEPS 1-6

STEP 7: The Eco-Code

• There is an agreement on an environmental statement for the school drawn up by the Eco-Committee
• Your Eco-Code must reflect the Topic project work which you are working on for your Green Flag
• The Eco-Code is displayed on the Eco-Board
• The Eco-Code is also displayed around the school – in classrooms, school halls, even the toilets!
• The Eco-Code is known and understood by the majority of pupils and staff