

Climate Action Survey Insight Report 2024

School name,
Location



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What's it all about?



Successful climate-friendly actions, such as trying to stop waste from the school canteen, reducing energy use, or influencing how people travel to school, involves the whole school community - **everyone needs to be aware of the changes you are making and why it is important to participate.**

Students - and staff - have lots of different views of course, and there will be different activities that can help motivate them to support climate-friendly choices. It is therefore important to have a clear picture of these views and motivations.

This is where your school's Climate Action Survey results come in, and such a lot of great information and understanding has come from your survey.

Next steps:

- An important follow-up activity is to **share what you have found out** so that everyone, from fellow students to the headteacher and governors, can hear the views of so many students.
- **ICN follow-up workshops and activities** enable participating groups to use the survey insights, with expert mentoring support, for creating campaigns that help motivate action.

Please do get in touch if you would like to run these: Schools@interclimate.org

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Climate Action Survey overview

X in 10 students completed InterClimate Network's online Climate Action Survey sharing information about their climate action. These student insights can positively influence climate action planning in school.

Key messages



Almost 8 in 10 expressed concern regarding climate change.



3 in 4 thought Government should be doing more to tackle climate change.



8 in 10 were taking some form of climate action: action was highest in the home with their families involved.



Student action was **most inspired by**:

1. School
2. Charities
3. Social media.

Barriers to action



Top reasons preventing students' involvement in specific actions:

- Perceived lack of time
- Not caring strongly enough
- Uncertain how to carry out action(s).



2 in 10 felt included in school decision making.



3 in 10 felt they are given enough time to carry out action in school.



1 in 2 thought there was no clear way to get involved in school action.



Students had **different starting points** and views on climate change and these impact action. See segmentation of student groups (p. 4).

Students want action



1 in 3 would like to get more involved in school climate action.



1 in 2 would like school to prioritise:

- Reducing use, reusing and recycling
- Energy reduction
- Helping protect and improve nature.



Over 3 in 4 would be further motivated to act by:

- Equipment/changes for easier action
- Rewards and competitions
- Stronger rules to support change.

What helps climate action

Use our **5 steps for empowering climate action**: these were drawn from what students across the UK said would motivate them to engage further (p. 5).

What students think and do

Four groups emerged from students' feedback to the survey according to how engaged they already are in climate action: **Acting**; **Ready for action**; **Not engaged**; and **Sceptics**. Each group is also characterised by what they think about climate change and the extent of actions being taken around them. This segmentation comes into its own when thinking about how to build climate action campaigns that resonate. Further details can be found in the [Youth Climate Action Research Report 2022-2023, page 29](#)



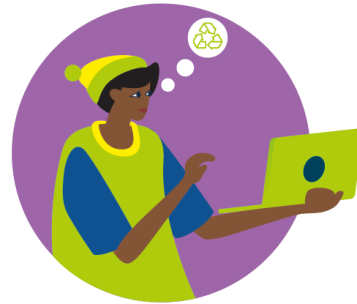
80% Acting

These students are already taking some climate action:

See pp.7-8 for action details.

- Had the **highest levels of concern** about climate change.
- Put **greater priority on causing less damage** to the environment day-to-day than the other groups.

This segment were **much more likely to have family taking climate action** (90%).



5% Ready for action

These students who are not yet acting would like to be engaged however:

40% unsure about what to do.

60% had not got round to it yet.

- They were concerned with climate change but did not feel as strongly as the acting group.

This segment were **less likely to have family acting** (70%).



10% Not engaged

These students are not acting, saying:

47% - individual actions will not make a difference.

26% - powerless to make a difference.

26% - responsibility for action lies with governments & big corporations.

- They were concerned about climate change but had a more limited understanding of how climate change is affecting people right now.

This segment were **much less likely to have family acting** (53%).



5% Sceptics

These students are not carrying out action saying they:

Do not believe in climate change.

This segment were **the least likely to have family acting** (16%).

5 steps for empowering climate action

Five steps have emerged from what thousands of 11- to 18-year-olds [told us would motivate them](#) to engage further: some are easy to start, others must become easier so that climate actions are accessible to everyone. Share this poster outlining what you can do to help support change.



1 Talk about action

- **Start the conversation**
Build on trust in teachers, families, or well-known figures for more climate conversations, even if they seem difficult.¹
- **Discuss practical action**
Share and support practical ideas and approaches, including both young people and adults to strengthen impact.²



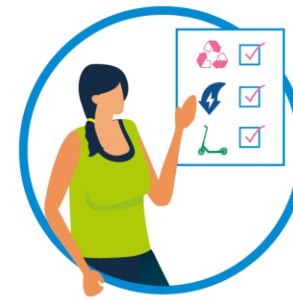
2 Take views seriously

- **Engage in decision-making**
Increase 11–18-year-olds' say in decision-making to influence rules and targets and ethical consumption choices.
- **Make sure its relevant**
Think about different starting points and tailor approaches to different needs, values and contexts.³



3 Be positive

- **Build positivity and rewards**
Encourage good choices through competitions and rewards. Create a good vibe via regular positive feedback.
- **Respect and link to priorities**
Harness co-benefits that link with top priorities such as the tie with nature as an every-day essential for wellbeing.
- **Encourage stepping-stones to change**
Assure students that getting part way is better than no action.



4 Embed climate action

- **Co-design activities and policy**
Ask students, staff, parents and governors to co-create school environmental policy, or set new targets.
- **Embed across the curriculum**
Integrate learning about solutions in all lessons, from computer modelling of impact to exchanging views in French.
- **Value school's social power**
Celebrate how far climate-friendly actions are becoming every-day and normal.

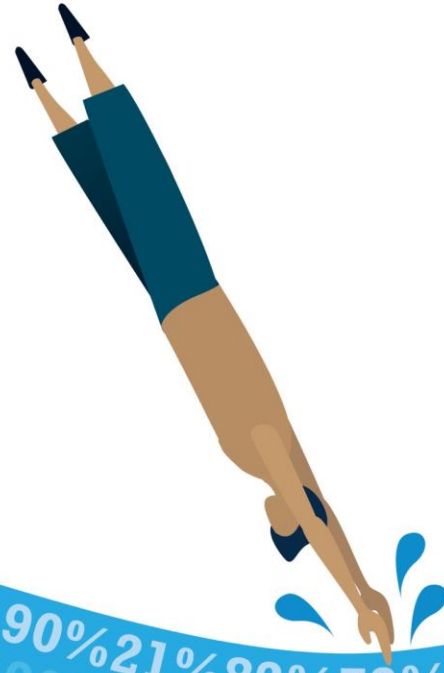


5 Change the environment

- **Make action easier**
Install more equipment and create environments that make good choices easier.
- **Make sure it's accessible**
Remove barriers to action and ensure physical and social access is considered so changes are accessible for all and are affordable.

Diving into the data

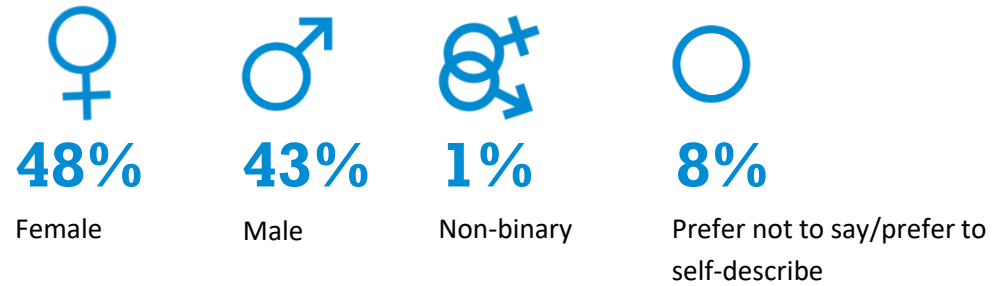
In this section we set out **key insights** from the Climate Action Survey about **students' views and action on climate change.**



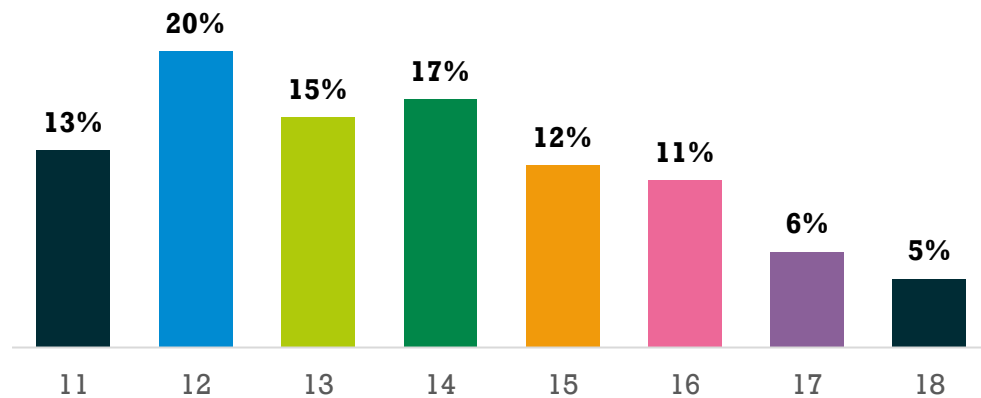
Who participated?

In total x students responded to the Climate Action Survey: x students out of on roll undertook the survey, making up x% of all students in school. This is a great return rate that provides a snap-shot of what young people at school think and do. We don't know about the views of the x% that didn't complete the survey, of course, and they shouldn't be forgotten in the school's work on climate action.

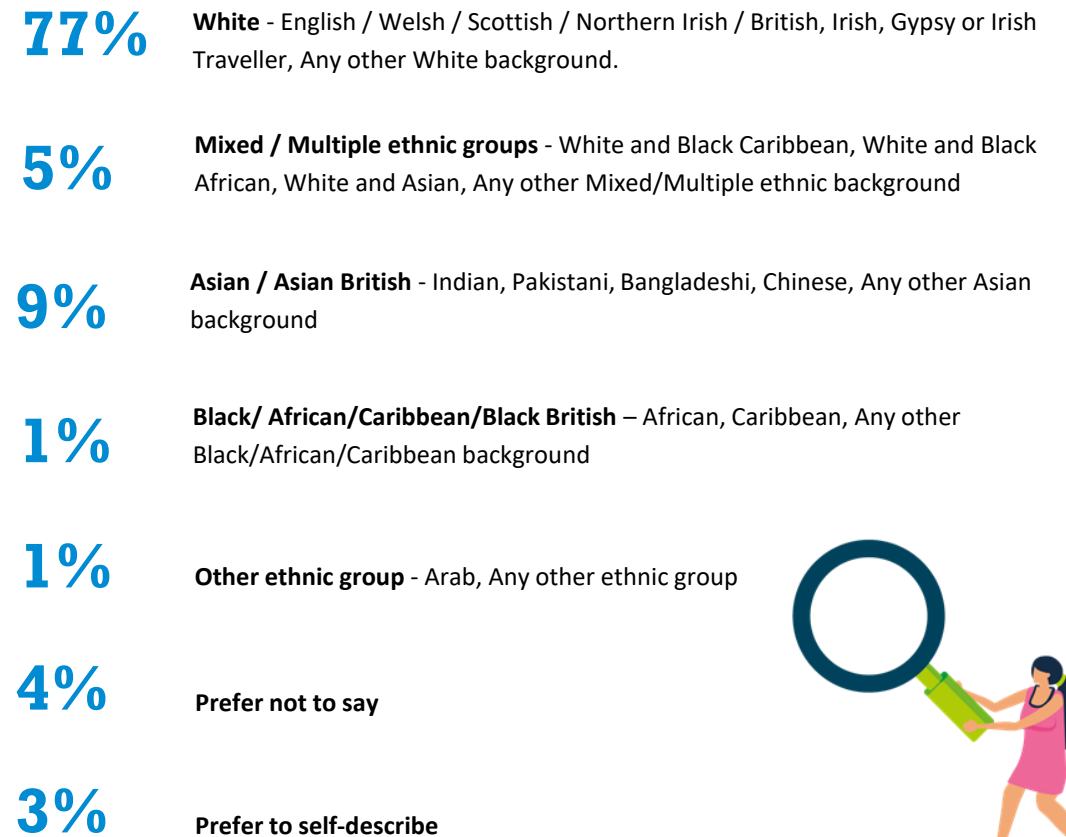
Gender Breakdown



Age breakdown

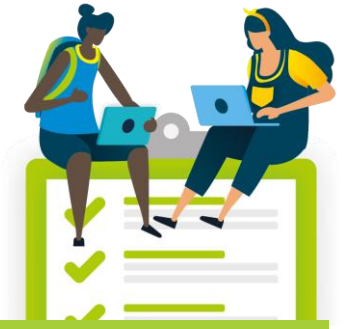


Ethnicity breakdown



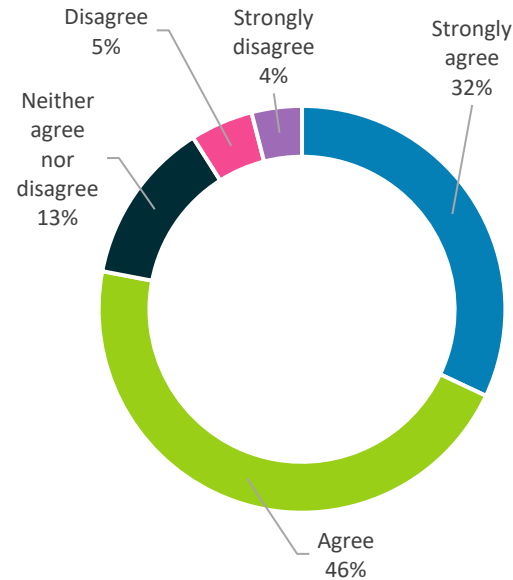
Students are concerned about climate change

Almost 8 in 10 (78%) students expressed concern regarding climate change. Looking beyond climate issues to broader life priorities, “friends and family” was a clear top response followed by education, with environment and climate change being the sixth priority. Students also responded to other survey questions about the impact of climate change: almost 9 in 10 (87%) believed that climate change is already having a negative effect on people’s lives around the world; over 7 in 10 (76%) thought that their lives will be affected by climate change. 1 in 10 (14%), however, felt the threat faced by climate change is exaggerated and the impact won’t be as bad as people say.



Student concern about climate change

Students indicated the extent to which they agreed with the statement ‘I am concerned about climate change.’



Student priorities: where does climate change fit?



Students are willing to act

The survey presented students with eight potential actions - at home, school and whilst out and about - towards reducing greenhouse gases and the restoration of biodiversity. **8 in 10 students (80%) were already taking some form of climate action**, showing their commitment to contribute. Significantly, over 8 in 10 were trying to **reduce waste, reuse and recycle** and **reduce their energy use**.

There was an **interest by many of those not yet under-taking specific actions to start**, notably willing to: **reduce energy use**, **help protect and improve nature**, and **reduce waste, reuse and recycle more**.



Of the 80% who are already taking action, what are they doing?



87%

Reduce their energy use



6%

Campaigning (including online)/climate strikes



60%

Think about the impact of what I buy



40%

Make their diet more environmentally friendly



45%

Help protect and improve nature



38%

Try to influence family and friends to take action



65%

Less impact in how they travel

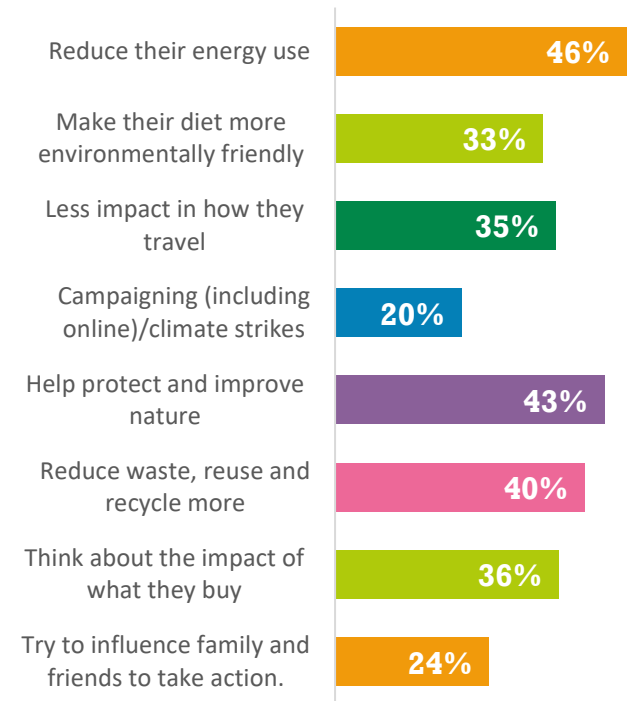


89%

Reduce waste, reuse and recycle

How willing are students to start actions?









Here are the total percentages and preferences for students who don't yet do the action but say they are willing to start.



Climate actions are not consistent

Whilst there was clear concern and intent to act, contrasts emerged between action at home and involvement in school and community. **6 of their 8 actions were dominated by changes taking place in the home**, and these actions were predominantly being done with families. The **direct correlation between families already positively changing behaviours and greater student action** is further highlighted in our segmentation (p. 4).

Of the 80% of students who are already taking climate action where are they acting and who with?

		At home	At school	Out and about	Alone	Organisation in school	Organisation outside of school*	With family	With friends	Other*
	Percentage doing this	Where are students acting?			Who are students acting with?					
 Reduce their energy use	87%	97%	26%	21%	55%	9%	3%	73%	21%	3%
 Make their diet more environmentally friendly	40%	96%	51%	44%	42%	8%	4%	80%	15%	4%
 Less impact in how they travel	65%	N/A	<i>To and from school</i> 84%	67%	45%	18%	4%	65%	55%	3%
 Campaigning (including online)/climate strikes	6%	58%	63%	58%	32%	58%	21%	47%	47%	11%
 Help protect and improve nature	45%	70%	39%	69%	51%	14%	15%	65%	29%	4%
 Reduce waste, reuse and recycle more	89%	96%	51%	58%	57%	9%	5%	75%	33%	2%
 Think about the impact of what they buy	60%	78%	21%	64%	59%	5%	2%	68%	28%	1%
 Try to influence family and friends to take action.	38%	90%	53%	37%	51%	11%	4%	60%	39%	4%

* Other included guides and scouts (multiple responses), "Eco group within my church youth group."

Greater leadership is essential to deliver change

Almost 3 in 4 students thought the Government should be doing more to tackle climate change. 1 in 2 felt businesses and corporations alongside fossil fuel companies should do more. In the open comments, many thought governments should offer more support, rules and regulations and that without those in place, individuals and businesses wouldn't be motivated to change. Many also thought young people should be given a greater say in decisions, as it will be their responsibility to drive change.



Who do students believe should do more to tackle climate change?

- 1 National Government (70%)**
- 2 Businesses and Corporations (56%)**
- 3 Fossil fuel companies (51%)**
- 4 Every individual (44%)**
- 5 Wealthiest in society (34%)**
- 6 Local community/local council (23%)**
- 7 Schools (23%)**
- 8 Young people (11%)**
- 9 No-one (5%)**
- 10 Other (4%)**



Students told us how they feel climate change should be tackled (see [Appendix 1](#) for further comments).



"I think that **the government has the power to tackle climate change**, and I feel that we need to **pressure them into doing more about it**. I also think that **my age group should have a say in how we tackle climate change**, as we are the ones who will pay the price if we can't solve climate change."

"**Money is preventing us from taking more action**, so all I know and believe is that prices of eco-friendly stuff such as electric cars should be cheaper than non-eco-friendly ones, otherwise there is not much use, and **companies should really consider whether they care more about their money or our world.**"

"I believe that **children are the people of the future and should have a massive say in climate change.**"

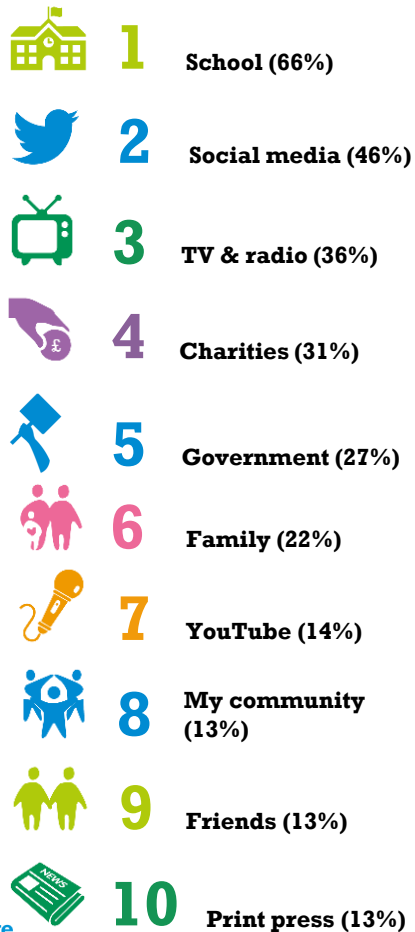
"**Government should enforce more rules and guidelines, get a prime minister that cares give people who care a voice.**"

"I feel that while individuals should try and help, **the blame for climate change has been largely put onto the everyday person by large businesses who are the real culprit.**"

Students' welcome inspiration

School has a clear impact on students, being the most trusted source of climate change information. School also provided the most inspiration, alongside charities and social media. Yet whilst social media was a key source of information and seen as representative, it was the least trusted. In the open comments ([Appendix 1](#)), students mentioned teachers and individual family members as having had a big impact, alongside climate activists like Greta Thunberg.

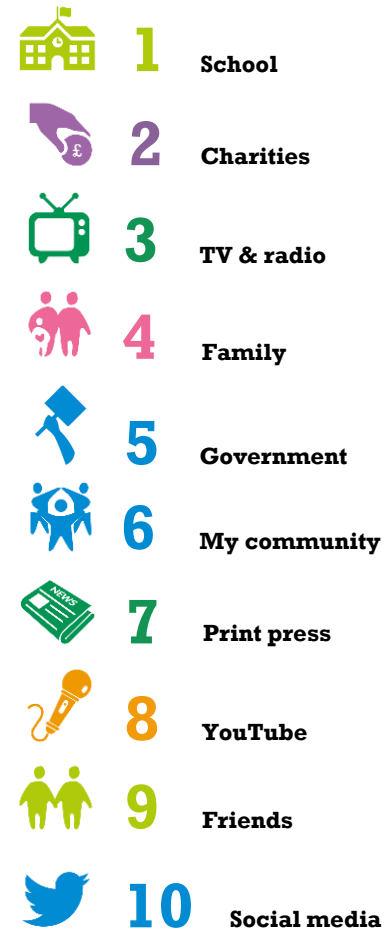
Where do students hear climate change talked about the most?



Who inspires students to get involved in climate action?



Which information sources do students trust?



Which information sources do students see as the most representative (age, gender, race)?



Transforming climate action in school

The survey asked students for their views about climate action in school, alongside barriers to action and what would motivate them to do more.

Feedback in this section **can inform plans and help shape your climate action campaigns.**

See our step-by-step toolkit for how to make use of these findings:

[Climate Action Toolkit - InterClimate Network](#)

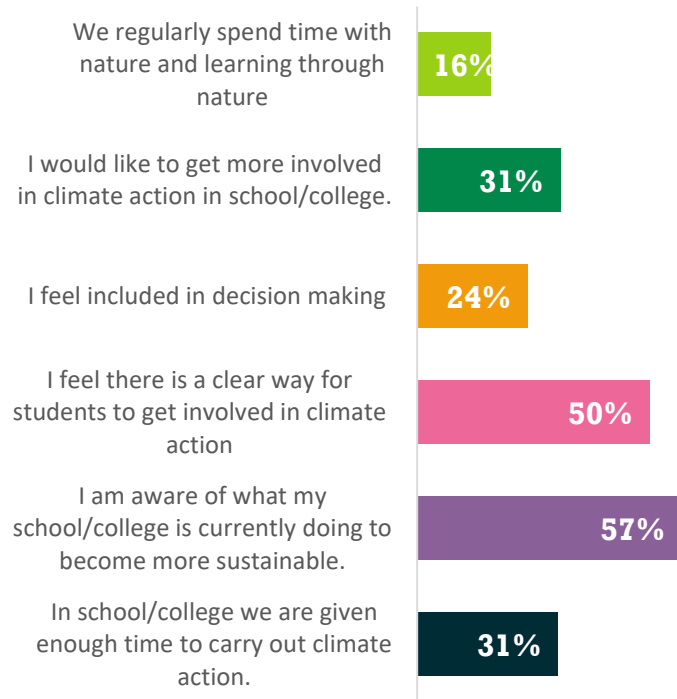


Students' view of school action

It is positive that **over half of students are aware of what their school is doing to become more sustainable. Including students in decision making, engaging with nature, and giving students more time to carry out climate action in school** would serve as good places to focus on going forward. Strong priorities emerged for more action in school, with **waste, energy use and nature** key areas of focus. More than half of the students felt that each of these three actions should be prioritised.



How do students see climate action in school?











Which actions do students think should be most prioritised in school?



Investigating barriers to action

All students outlined the challenges that they felt were preventing them from engaging in climate action, and looking to overcome these barriers can help inform your planning*. Students most frequently said that they were **prevented from doing more by a perceived lack of time**. **Not caring strongly enough and uncertainty around how to carry out climate actions** were also key perceived barriers.

	I don't have the right equipment or facilities	I (or my family) can't afford to do it	I don't always have the time	I am unsure of how to do this action	I am not allowed or supported to by my family and/or school	I don't care strongly enough to want to do it	I don't feel that my contribution will make a difference	Other**
 Reduce their energy use	15%	7%	47%	31%	2%	13%	16%	7%
 Make their diet more environmentally friendly	13%	6%	23%	20%	6%	32%	16%	20%
 Less impact in how they travel	21%	8%	29%	14%	4%	18%	10%	22%
 Campaigning (including online)/climate strikes	9%	3%	44%	34%	5%	33%	19%	10%
 Help protect and improve nature	23%	2%	59%	30%	2%	12%	12%	7%
 Reduce waste, reuse and recycle more	9%	4%	44%	20%	2%	12%	16%	9%
 Think about the impact of what they buy	4%	13%	28%	23%	3%	27%	16%	14%
 Try to influence family and friends to act.	3%	3%	25%	26%	2%	42%	21%	8%












*It's important to recognise that self-reported information has limitations. People are often biased when they report on their own experiences. For example, many are more likely to report experiences that are socially acceptable or preferred.

Other frequent reasons given included: **enjoying meat too much to give it up ("Eating vegetarian food is less pleasant and sometimes less convenient."); **meat for health reasons** ("Meat is my main source of protein" "Consumption of meat is an essential part of a human diet, any reduction in meat consumption can lead to long term protein deficiency and health issues." "Fully plant-based meals aren't filling enough for me"); **Distance being an issue for alternative transport** ("I do a lot of after school activities that are far away so we have to drive to them."); **Not having the power to change** ("My mum chooses the meals, and she doesn't really care much about climate change. I don't have much power over these type of actions." "Renting a house limits our energy efficiency."); **Monetary issues or a lack of alternatives impacting on what is bought.**

Motivating action

When it comes to changing behaviours, the way that you approach it matters. A range of techniques, from education and incentivisation to feedback and modelling, can be employed to motivate action. **Students gave their feedback about what would inspire their action.** Combining responses to the first two columns allows you to see the top motivational techniques. These can then be applied to any campaigns for action in school. Further details of how to implement these techniques can be [found on our website](#).

What techniques did students say would motivate them to take climate action?

	Would motivate	Might motivate	Would ignore	Don't know
 Limit options: Stronger rules to ensure climate friendly behaviour by everyone e.g., about cutting energy use or food waste.	38%	38%	14%	10%
 Shape knowledge: Greater engagement with students so they understand how to help e.g., provide information about what to do, have drop-in sessions.	21%	42%	25%	11%
 Compare and support: More opportunity for students to have influence and feed in ideas. e.g. climate forums, elected eco-reps, suggestion boxes.	25%	38%	25%	12%
 Feedback: Track results and let people know how well they are carrying out the action e.g., how much energy has been saved.	31%	43%	16%	11%
 Benefits: Linking climate action to other campaigns that make life better e.g., improving your health or saving money.	29%	43%	16%	11%
 Reward: Bring in rewards and competitions to encourage action.	34%	43%	16%	8%
 Limit options: Bring in a financial cost e.g., increase the price of drinks for those that do not use reusable cups.	33%	33%	21%	13%
 Have student monitors e.g. energy and recycling monitors.	0%	33%	33%	33%
 Change the environment: Introduce equipment or changes that make it easier to undertake action e.g., more recycling bins	39%	41%	12%	8%
 Compare & support: show examples of action for people to aspire to or imitate e.g. hear from inspiring people.	19%	37%	31%	13%
 Prompts: Provide prompts and cues to remind us to do the action e.g. stickers or text messages to remind us to reduce food waste.	20%	33%	33%	15%

Top 5 techniques that students said would motivate them to take climate action



80%

Change the environment: Introduce equipment or changes that make it easier to undertake action.



77%

Reward: bring in rewards and competitions to encourage action.



76%

Limit options: Stronger rules to ensure climate friendly behaviour by everyone.



73%

Feedback: Track results and let people know how well they are carrying out the action e.g., how much energy has been saved.

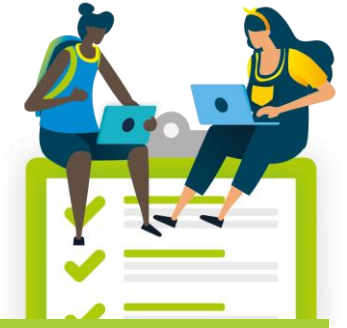


72%

Benefits: Linking climate action to other campaigns that make life better e.g., improving your health or saving money.

Appendix 1: Open comments

Students were given the opportunity to openly respond to two questions saying who most inspires them to act on climate change and who they believed had the most power to change the course of climate change for the better. Here is a selection of their comments.



Students' greatest influences for climate action

“**My school**, due the opportunities it provides for tackling climate change and the realistic suggestions it gives for young people to do.”

“Going to **climate school assemblies** have had a huge impact just showing me how many different ways you can help and how to get involved.”

“**Greta Thunberg** specifically about her speech ending with the house on fire bit.”

“I think **young climate protesters** and young people that care about nature.”

“I think on **social media people** aren't afraid to be realistic and harsher on corporations than on TV.”

“**Seeing people around me make an effort** to help the climate definitely inspired me to make a difference.”

“**My parents** as they both work for the British Antarctic survey.”

“**My mother** has inspired me to always be conscious of the way I buy things and the sort of food I choose to eat.”

“The **people who tell the truth about climate change**. The people who neither exaggerate nor deny climate change and the things that they do about it.”

“For me, charities have made a difference in my views and they have influenced me to tackle the issue that will affect me and millions of others.”

“Actually, **experiencing hotter than usual summers** and seeing graphs of climate change. It's made me worried and want to do as much as I can, even if it isn't huge things.”

Students told us how they feel climate change should be tackled

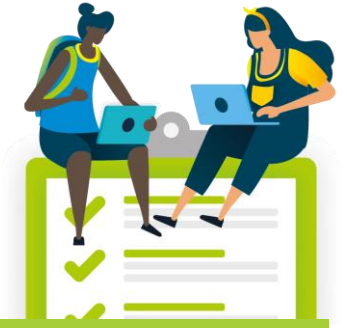
“I think it should be advertised more on things like the radio, TV, on buses, billboards, or just **anything really that could educate people more without losing attention span**. Short adverts would be better and make prevent people from losing interest. There are climate change talks at school, but they're so long that I get bored and just pray for it to end. It's just repeating the same things for 50 minutes.”

“**Individuals also really do just need to want to help**. I understand how easy it is not to care about your actions when you feel that “you're just one person and you can't make a difference” and “well, it doesn't really affect me”. **The truth of the matter is that you may be far from the issue, yet largely you are part of the issue. “I can't make a difference, I'm just one person,” said 8 billion people.** In poorer countries, whole populations are suffering because their lands are being polluted with the waste we produce and don't even consider where ends up.”

“**I think everyone should be given money and be forced to buy solar panels with it, and that using non-renewable energy should be illegal** unless there is no other energy available.”

“**We should all get our say.**”

Appendix 1: Open comments



Students told us how they feel climate change should be tackled

"We as a species need a strong leader who knows what they are doing, that leader will be someone from my generation, we can't have that leader unless we are educated in this growing problem."

"I believe that everyone makes a difference, but we only recognise this when we see a positive change. I think those with the most power, influence and wealth in society have the most power to make a difference. I think those individuals and governments, organisations and businesses should take responsibility and lead the rest of us in becoming more climate-friendly, as many people are unmotivated as they don't think a single person or household could make a difference unless these wider corporations do it too, as they have a greater impact. **I feel that my age group is very aware and vocal, but we simply don't have as much power as we need. All we can do is influence those in power."**

"I think those in power and in the government need to take greater action and try and influence the public into helping tackle climate change. A lot of people would help if certain people would tell them what to do and that they need to do it. Individuals have a lot more power together and those in charge can help give that a boost."

"I think the government needs to take a lot of action to reduce climate change. We need to make the government to make bigger decisions."

"I think that it's clear our government isn't doing nearly enough to try to tackle climate change. If they truly cared for future generations they would simply try a lot harder."

"I feel like in order to get people to help make a difference, **rules should be 'enforced' by people with power in order to push people to take action.**"

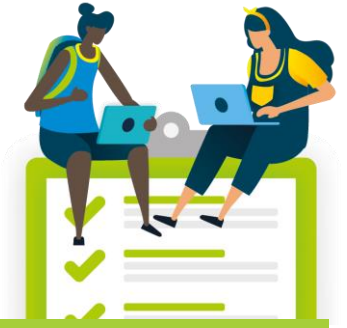
"I think that the local government should make rules for the schools."

"I think that people in power or who have a lot of money have the power to make the most positive difference, but they don't really do it too much yet. I think the government should make some strict laws about ways to tackle climate change for example banning reusable coffee cups and reusable plastic bags etc. I think that those interested in my age group should be given a greater say on tackling climate change but many people I know don't really care too much."

"Tax the rich and fossil fuel companies until they can't survive."

"Big companies and corporations also have a lot of influence over people's decisions. If some big trusted brand tells people that they need to do more of something in order to be clean, healthy, etc, many people will listen. This causes so much product waste. **If they were simply honest with the public (a massive ask, I know) so many societal conventions which are nonsense could be deconstructed."**

Appendix 1: Open comments



One student's response....

"My political awareness has left a distrust of the government and other big companies, and I doubt they will act to protect my generation or heal our planet. I doubt most adults from a few generations above me will care or believe the repercussions.... I don't feel that anyone will look out for us because my growing political awareness, which comes from the adults in my family as much as news articles or people on TV is mostly them complaining about the government and their failure to act. There is a lot of that on social media as well, and similar discussions among young people. However, **there are people in each of these groups who spread hope and I do my best to engage with them,** mostly on social media. **The negative press leaves a danger of change not seeming possible or worth it, the mentality of 'why should I sacrifice comfort when it won't make a difference?'**

I chose to have hope and do the best I can because I believe in my generation, as most of the free thinking and openness and acceptance and awareness and demand for change come from my generation. I think we're worried the older generations will fail to act and ruin our chances and futures. They caused this mess and aren't doing nearly enough to fix it. **Progress is too slow.** I understand the difficulties in such drastic change, but if we don't move fast enough then it'll be too late. We need to return the world to the health it had before we poisoned it. **Just 'better' isn't enough, because it isn't just our home. We need it to be healthy enough for us and for the creatures we share the Earth with. They need to be a priority as well.** I'm aware the world changes and progress is made with each generation, but we need to drive that, not suffer the consequences of our elders and make compromises for problems that aren't our fault. We can't keep gradually making it better, people and animals and habitats are dying NOW. I worry we won't be saved in time.

We shouldn't misrepresent the situation or grow complacent that we're doing enough, but we should focus on the positives and use that to drive us. If we don't believe we have a future, we will sacrifice it for our comfort in the present. We need to believe, and that belief needs to be grounded in reality. We need to work so hard that our belief is the most likely scenario, that hopelessness is near impossible and simply pessimistic rather than factual.

My thoughts and beliefs have been shaped by those who care for the natural world and tried from my childhood to educate and inspire love and fascination. By those who raise awareness yet spread hope that is not unfounded. Mostly this is due to social media or to shows I watched when I was young. **My family showed me everyday strategies that others grew. My schools showed me that they were trying, and sometimes succeeded. My friends showed me that I'm not alone in my views or situation. News stories of people around the world undertaking projects with visible results made me believe that we could do this.** I haven't given up on **world governments or big corporations,** but I think a visible effect and consistently increasing effort, even after goals have been reached, would be a good step, as I know young people distrust them, and for good reasons with all these civil rights issues. That trust needs to be rebuilt and investment and sacrifice for our future may be the best, or only, way to do that."

