

Guidance to help you use the National Education Nature Park Climate Education Framework

The framework offers guidance for how to implement comprehensive climate education* at your school, nursery or college. Use this guidance document alongside the framework to help evaluate the current position of climate education in your setting and identify future targets at a school, classroom or scheme of work level.

Each section of this document corresponds to one of the key areas to consider in the framework. You will need a copy of the [National Education Nature Park Climate Education Framework](#). This can be downloaded [here](#).

**Note that climate education may be referred to in some settings as environmental, nature and/or sustainability education. There is an array of subtly different approaches. Crucially, climate education includes nature as the issues are intertwined. Through considering all key areas within this framework you can implement comprehensive climate education in your setting.*

To do, to know and to be

Within climate education, this framework encourages you to always keep **the individual learner at the centre**, ensuring climate education is meaningful and responsive to their needs, their future and their agency. The questions within the 'to do', 'to know' and 'to be' boxes underpin the Nature Park's climate education approach. Reflecting on these questions throughout your journey will help you keep individual learners' needs at the forefront.

Foundations of good practice

Effective climate education should build on the existing extensive evidence base and research literature regarding effective teaching and learning more broadly. It should also keep evolving with the latest evidence and research. This principle underpins the whole framework.

You will need to:

- remember the importance of cognitive science when learning about climate-related concepts
- embed collaborative learning approaches
- build on prior knowledge and experiences to avoid misconceptions
- continue to use subject-specific pedagogy, allowing learners to understand the unique nature of each discipline (and an awareness of how each subject contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complex topic of climate change)
- ensure clear learning goals and well-sequenced content
- provide opportunities for developing in-depth knowledge and flexible application to real world problems



Evidence-informed climate pedagogy

There are core strategies to effective climate education. Below are evidence-informed principles for planning learning.

Prior knowledge

Ensure projects and contexts used – to improve understanding of nature and climate change - are curriculum-aligned. This ensures learning is age-appropriate and builds on learners existing understanding.

Explore

Over time, move learning from local to global contexts, helping learners to understand that everyone and everything is impacted by climate change in different ways.

Enquire

Ensure learning provides opportunities for learners to develop critical thinking skills and autonomy in constructing knowledge and understanding.

Making change

Consider how learning can be consolidated through practical application, promoting positive and responsible action.

Communication

Consider how learners can be supported to develop their communication skills, allowing them to talk to different audiences about issues they care about, thereby promoting social emotional learning.

Quality assurance

Ensure that resources are informed by up-to-date science and current affairs. Having a responsive curriculum is important and Nature Park resources can help here.

Social and emotional learning

Learning about climate change provides an opportunity to learn together, share experiences and make connections with the world around us. This should foreground learning about nature, in nature and for nature (socio-emotional learning).

Nature Park units of learning follow these core principles. Units of learning are a series of five or more sessions. Each unit has a curriculum focus. This enables it to be delivered in a subject area as a scheme of work within a setting's existing timetable. They enhance national curriculum statutory requirements with biodiversity and climate-related opportunities.



Social and emotional learning

It is important to embed social and emotional learning in climate education, to support mental health and wellbeing. A crucial question to ask yourself is: are there spaces for learners to share their feelings about climate change?

To create this space, consider planning opportunities for learners to listen to each other's perspectives and feelings. You might use a climate change related issue from the news, focus on the impacts of habitat loss on local animals, or use the guided Nature Park poetry resources made in collaboration with The Poetry Society.

You could:

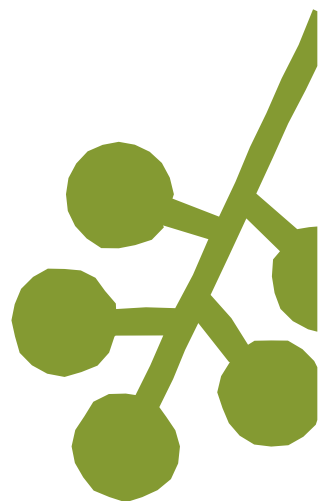
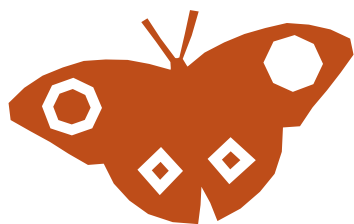
- discuss the range of emotions that they may have (asserting that these are all normal)
- share stories of environmental stewardship – actively care for and advocate on behalf of local nature, habitats and living landscapes – to evoke hope
- invite a vision for a possible future
- examine and enact pathways to possible futures

Creative and critical thinking

Create opportunities for learners to explore and understand how communities are impacted by and responding to climate change.

Use these four guiding principles to help you plan.

1. Respectful collaboration: embedding inter/intragenerational knowledge and perspectives requires respectful collaboration between students, teachers and the wider community, supporting shared responsibility of all involved.
2. Recognition of diverse cultures and backgrounds.
3. Recognition and incorporation of multiple ways of knowing: seeking opportunities to facilitate learning from expertise in the community.
4. Embracing complexity: appreciating different needs (people and nature) and interests.



Systems and processes

Climate- and nature-related knowledge can be grouped into nine areas. These are outlined below. Is there a progression of this climate-related knowledge across your formal curriculum?

<p>Anthropocene</p> <p>Developing an understanding of what climate change is. Understanding the evidence demonstrating the relationship between rapid warming and human activity (primarily from burning fossil fuels that generate greenhouse gases).</p>	<p>Nature</p> <p>Understanding the importance of maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems to mitigate against further climate change. Understanding the role of nature-based solutions.</p>	<p>Food and agriculture</p> <p>Understanding the relationship between food production and climate change. For example, the production of greenhouse gases from food production, deforestation for agricultural land, emissions from packaging and distribution, manure and fertilisers).</p>
<p>Develop a green economy</p> <p>Understanding the role of green skills and green careers. For example, shifting to electrical vehicles, energy efficient buildings and developing a green economy.</p>	<p>Energy</p> <p>Developing an understanding of the importance of renewable energy for a safer, cleaner and more sustainable world.</p>	<p>Planetary systems</p> <p>Developing an understanding of the regular and predictable cycles on our Earth underpins our understanding of how climate change is impacting the cycles and systems on our planet.</p>
<p>Health</p> <p>Understanding the impact of climate change on health through air pollution, disease, extreme weather events, food insecurity, displacement and pressures to mental health. Considering how these can be mitigated.</p>	<p>Promoting equity</p> <p>Understanding the ways in which we can safeguard people and nature from higher temperatures, rising seas, unpredictable weather and more acidic oceans; being aware that some people and places are more vulnerable and need more support to adapt.</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>Using the water cycle to help inform an understanding of the relationship between water and climate change. Climate change is exacerbating both water scarcity and water-related hazards such as droughts, floods, rising sea-levels and unpredictable rainfall patterns.</p>

Green skills

Green skills can be defined as "the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a society which reduces the impact of human activity on the environment" Simmonds and Lally (2024).

Young people participating in Nature Park can develop the following green skills:

- identification and ecology
- recording data
- interpreting data
- creative thinking
- environmental stewardship and horticulture
- communication

Consider how these skills might be developed across your curriculum subjects. Find more information on the Nature Park website on the [green skills](#) page.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Climate education should be equitable, diverse and inclusive. Consider these two important questions to achieve this.

1. How can we engage and include learners from all backgrounds and sectors of society in climate education?
2. How can we prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion practices?

The following considerations can be helpful in planning for these questions:

- Are there opportunities to invite a diverse range of 'green' ambassadors to speak to your learners?
- Are there opportunities to celebrate 'green' careers* within the units of learning you teach?
- Are you showcasing 'green' ambassadors that represent a range of backgrounds and cultures that students can relate to?
- Are the diverse needs and backgrounds of learners considered in the planning and teaching of climate education?

Through the Nature Park, celebrate the green skills learners are developing for now and for their future.

**The Green Careers Week campaign says that: "...a green career be any job, role or occupation that contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet. It can be any industry, not just those seen as 'green.' Green skills are abilities, attributes, values, attitudes, knowledge, and technical skills needed to adapt services, processes and procedures to support climate change."*

References

References for further reading and information

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