

SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ALL SCHOOLS IN THE TEES VALLEY
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Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Growing Wild Schools

Eco-schools / Sustainable Schools

We are offering schools support with range of environmental activities including wildlife gardening, using your school grounds and eco-schools and MUCH more.

All Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Growing Wild Schools get:

- Membership certificate
- 10% off all schools workshops.
- Wildlife Link for teachers – magazine for environmental educators which includes projects, publications, events and environmental activities section.
- Access to the [Wildlife Watch website](#) leaders section
- 4 mailings a year to include 5 copies of “Watchword” our children’s magazine packed with wildlife features, environmental stories, quizzes, competitions, cartoons and news, including A2 full sized colour poster.
- Access to phone advice on Biodiversity and Environmental Education issues.
- Opportunities to take part in free workshops linked to Trust projects.

Levels of membership:

Level of Support	What you get (eq)	Cost	Additional option
Bronze	2 days	£550	Constant garden* £180
Silver	4 days	£1050	Constant garden* £180
Gold	6 days	£1550	Constant garden* £180
Green	8 days including constant garden*	£2100	

*We have negotiated with Rocket Garden – Constant Gardens for a discount for schools who sign up through our scheme.

The support will:

- enable schools in the Tees Valley to work towards their **Eco Schools Award**, **RHS Campaign for School Gardening Benchmark Scheme**, Learning Outside the Classroom Mark and the Sustainable Schools framework.
- provide specialist advice, CPD and support in various aspect of sustainability including school grounds development, sustainable resource management to cut costs, curriculum development for **Learning Outside the Classroom** (e.g. Forest Schools, John Muir) and local wellbeing.

Improving attainment – how can outdoor learning help

The approach will work closely with the **OFSTED** judgement criteria to improve pupil achievement, improve quality of teaching, enhance the safety and behaviour of pupils and support high quality, effective leadership.

The outdoors, particularly natural spaces, can stimulate and support learning in a way that the indoors simply cannot. Outdoor space allows children the freedom to move and express themselves, and learn by doing. Nature, across all of its aspects, weather and seasons, is dynamic, surprising, and multisensory. Include adventure and fun, and all these elements can motivate the learner and support experiences that provide depth, breadth, challenge and progression. Many children and young people, who have disengaged from learning indoors, thrive in the outdoor context. Typically, high quality outdoor experiences are child-led and take an interdisciplinary approach. Often, teachers will experience a shift in attitude, seeing sometimes challenging learners in a new and positive light. Increasingly, parents want to know if their children have access to quality outdoor play and learning at nursery and school.

The importance of greenspace for health and wellbeing is recognised by the biophilia hypothesis (our innate positive response to the natural world). But how do we know outdoor learning really delivers education benefits? Anecdotal evidence, from teachers who have embraced outdoor learning approaches, is backed up by an increasing volume of empirical research. For example, recent collated evidence finds links between natural environments and learning.

- *‘School students engaged in learning in natural environments have been found to have higher achievement (in comparison to their peers or projected attainment) in reading, mathematics, science and social studies, exhibiting enhanced progress in Physical Education and drama, and a greater motivation for studying science’* ([Natural England Access to Evidence Information Note EIN017, 2016](#)).
- [RSPB](#) research found that “children who were more connected to nature had significantly higher English attainment”
- Scottish Natural Heritage’s own research report [Young people’s interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning Scottish Natural Heritage \(2007, Commissioned Report No.225\)](#) found that “The effect of learning and play within green or natural places of all kinds...was particularly strong in generating greater engagement and challenge and enjoyment”

Eco-Schools is an international award programme that guides schools on their sustainable journey, providing a framework to help embed these principles into the heart of school life. The programme creates positive environmental improvement but this is only half the story research shows evidence of a positive impact on wellbeing, behaviour, motivation and cognitive skills that benefit the whole community. The Sustainable Schools framework aims to encourage schools to take on board the principles of sustainable development in their everyday work, achieving educational excellence alongside the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community participation and global citizenship.

The **Learning Outside the Classroom Mark** is the first national accreditation for schools which recognises, and supports the development of learning outside the classroom across all subject areas.

Forest Schools originated in Scandinavia and aims to enable children to develop skills in a woodland setting, on a regular, sustained basis, with a child-led enquiry based approach to learning.

Gardening could be taught in schools from September 2014, a move very much welcomed by the Wildlife Trusts and other organisations - The consultation on reform of the National Curriculum states that pupils from Key Stages 1–3 should be taught 'to cultivate plants for practical purposes such as for food or for decorative displays' as a key activity in design and technology lessons. The Trusts "**Growing Food for the Future**" project has been delivering on this for the past 3 years.

The package aims to be as flexible as possible to fit in with on-going school priorities.

Rocket Garden – Constant Gardens

Constant Gardens are the best and easiest way to ensure you have an amazing and continuous supply of fresh produce bursting from your garden throughout the entire year. Your Constant Garden will comprise of a series of 5 gardens delivered throughout the year. As with all Rocket Gardens we've done all the tricky stuff for you, so all you have to do is unpack your plants on arrival, pop them into the ground and watch them grow. A detailed growing guide will be provided with each garden delivery. You will need 10-15 m² of space to grow this garden.

What happens next?

An initial meeting of up to an hour will be provided free of charge to discuss how the time is best used and will include one stop shop signposting to further support/training focusing on the eco-schools/sustainable schools doorways and ideas of where to access funding for specific projects.

Schools can pick and choose from the following – the list is not exhaustive

Specialist support for senior staff

- Strategy meeting discussing how the school can benefit from being involved in the sustainable schools agenda.
- Presentation to governors.
- Run a staff meeting.
- Deliver CPD sessions.
- School development planning.

Specialist support for Eco–school coordinators/subject leaders

- 1 to 1 support to develop applications for the various awards.
- 1 to 1 support for subject areas focusing on sustainable development themes.
- Attendance at Eco-School action team meetings.
- Help with Environmental Review and Action Planning, Waste Audits, Energy Audits, Litter Surveys.
- Support with Travel Planning, Wildlife Surveys, School Grounds Development, developing a global dimension, learning outside the classroom.

Specialist support for classroom teachers

- Assemblies.
- Half day pupil workshops.
- Curriculum-linked “Learning Outside the Classroom”, Gardening and Forest School delivered to pupils.

CPD

Staff meeting, Twilight and half day CPD sessions focusing on:

- Eco-school/Sustainable schools themes:
 - Energy
 - Water
 - Biodiversity
 - School grounds
 - Healthy living
 - Transport
 - Litter
 - Waste
 - Global citizenship

- Wellbeing, inclusion and participation
- How to be an eco-school .
- How to get a Green Flag – ideas for your school.
- Tailor-made sessions e.g. Growing food in schools, How to use your schools grounds to deliver the curriculum (various subjects / age groups) .
- Forest School Taster Sessions.

Service standards

The service will use nationally-recognised training resources, tools and methodologies to ensure high quality provision, including:

- “The Pod” Eco-Schools resources
- Sustainable Schools Framework resources
- Auditing tools, e.g. Eco-Schools Environmental Review
- Guidance on global dimension and sustainable schools
- National College sustainable schools toolkit
- WWF Pathways to Sustainability
- Philosophy for children and enquiry-based learning
- Staff delivering outdoor learning are Forest School Leadership and Practise Level 3 qualified
- RHS Campaign for school gardening
- Membership of Institute of Outdoor Learning.

Role of school

The school will be required to make available a member of staff to work with the provider and take forward ideas developed from the initial meeting this is normally the eco-schools coordinator or similar.

To discuss this further contact Steve Ashton 01287 636382

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www.teeswildlife.org/discover-learn/for-schools/