



18th November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you to share some positive news, this year St. Edwards has made the decision to work towards Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation (see <https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/> for more information).

Operated by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, The Eco-Schools programme focuses on empowering young people to lead environmental education and action. It does this by providing a simple, seven-step framework that gives students a voice, which allows them to plan and implement environmental projects in their school, local community and beyond.

There are multiple reasons we have decided to embark on the journey to Eco-Schools Green Flag. Firstly, our planet (and all life on it) is already beginning to feel the catastrophic effects of climate change, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss and a myriad of other environmental challenges. As a community at St. Edwards we don't want our student-body to avoid, ignore, shy-away or cower from these challenges. Instead, we want to embrace our responsibility as stewards of all creation and openly discuss the problems we all face, tackling them head-on together. Through this approach, we hope to make a positive difference now, whilst empowering our students with the knowledge and skills they need to continue making a positive difference as they continue to grow as leaders, decision-makers and educators themselves.

Alongside benefitting our planet, participation in the Eco-Schools programme will also benefit our school and our students. Independent research has found that student participation in the Eco-Schools programme leads to: increased confidence, development of leadership skills, improved behaviour and greater motivation – all of which are important life-skills our learners will need when they move on to further education or employment. It is also proven that Eco-Schools consume less water, use less energy and produce less waste, creating financial savings which can then be spent on additional educational resources.

You may be reading this and wondering, 'How does this impact me?' Well, our students are yet to decide on the environmental actions our school will embark on, so a detailed answer is difficult at the moment. However, over the coming months you may notice you have a son or daughter who is gradually becoming more interested in environmental issues. This interest may manifest itself in anything from an increased willingness to watch the news to regular requests for plant-based dinners. And whilst, as mentioned, it is impossible for us to say exactly how the programme will impact you, we are definitely able to say that our school is doing its very best to protect our planet, so your child can have the best possible future.

I hope you're as excited about our Eco-Schools journey as everyone at St. Edwards is - if you would like to find out more, or get involved, please feel free to contact me directly.

Harry Vincent, Eco-Coordinator

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www.eco-schools.org.uk