**Local authorities help schools and young people increase community energy efficiency in the run-up to COP26**

The Energy Saving Trust Foundation, and [the Pod](https://jointhepod.org/) are calling for all local authorities across the UK, to help their school communities get energy efficient with the annual [Switch Off Fortnight](https://www.jointhepod.org/campaigns/sof21) campaign, 8-21 November 2021.



The Energy Saving Trust Foundation, the charitable arm of the Energy Saving Trust has formed a partnership with [the Pod](https://jointhepod.org/), to use education and positive community engagement to promote energy efficiency and address the climate emergency.

Under the new partnership, the Energy Saving Trust Foundation will support the Pod’s flagship annual energy campaign began in 2008.

Both expert organisations will provide free practical support, resources and information for schools on how young people can reduce their everyday energy use and have a positive impact on addressing the climate emergency by taking action in school and at home.

Over 600 schools have already signed up to take part so far in 2021.

The Energy Saving Trust Foundation and the Pod are asking local authorities to help ensure their local schools don’t miss out, and to join in with the campaign in their own offices.

**Building on Switch Off Fortnights ongoing impact via schools**

Since 2008, the free Switch Off Fortnight campaign and its suite of supporting engagement and education resources, has helped schools save 10% on average on their energy bills. 85% of primary school children who have participated previously in the campaign said they did things at home to save energy after taking part in activities, while 88% of secondary students said the Pod helped them understand how to use energy responsibly.

Running from 8-21 November, this year Switch Off Fortnight 2021 overlaps with COP26, allowing schools to be part of the conversations around the climate crisis and support young people to make changes in their own lives that can help to protect the planet.

**Why schools should seize the chance to participate**

By taking part, schools can help the UK reach its goal of creating a net zero society. Switch Off Fortnight makes it easy for schools to adopt a school-wide approach to saving energy and take action to turn the tide on climate change. With campaign education resources that also support STEM and the wider curriculum.

**Through participation, schools can:**

* Measure the impact of ‘switching off’ on school energy use.
* Contribute to helping the UK reach its net zero targets.
* Choose to use school technology, appliances and resources efficiently.
* Reduce school energy consumption and bills.
* Enable young people to consider how their actions have a bigger impact on the planet.
* Inspire pupils and staff to make positive changes to their behaviour both at school and home.

Let’s see how much we can save – encourage schools in your community to take part!

**How can Local Authorities encourage school participation?**

Please tell your schools about the free Pod campaign and resources.

Visit the Pod [Local Authority page](https://www.jointhepod.org/about/local-authorities) to download a template school engagement letter which you can adapt, and a campaign web banner you can use on your website or other communications.

**How do schools take part?**

Schools need to [join the Pod](https://www.jointhepod.org/registration) first. It’s free and takes just a few minutes to sign up – they will also be able to access more free Pod campaigns and resources that support sustainability, exploring the 3Rs, biodiversity and climate science.

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| **Sign up step advice for schools** |
| * + Choose what type of free [Pod registration](https://www.jointhepod.org/registration) you need (teacher or other, for example, parent or school governor). If you’re a teacher, governor, or school associate, you’ll be asked to put in your school postcode then to select your school from the dropdown list, add your contact details and submit. If you’re a parent or home educator, you can input your details manually. |
| * + To activate your registration, you’ll be sent an email to verify your details. Once you’ve clicked on this, you can log in to the Pod and navigate to the [Switch Off Fortnight pages](https://www.jointhepod.org/campaigns/sof21), where you’ll be able to sign up for the campaign and access the Pod’s free energy saving resources (these can also be found in the Teachers section). |
| * + The Pod has a limited number of campaign packs containing a selection of hard copy versions of the digital resources that are available to all schools for download - factsheets, posters and stickers – for schools that sign up to Switch Off Fortnight. These can be used to decorate the school and support you in running your campaign, so don’t delay in signing up! We only have a limited number of packs, and these are distributed on a first come, first served basis. |

**Notes to Editors**

**Katy Newnham, founder of Wastebuster, said:**

*“More than 600 schools have already signed up to take part in Switch Off Fortnight 2021 – and we’re encouraging many more schools across the UK to join in, to access free resources and support. We’re delighted to be working with Energy Saving Trust Foundation to deliver this year’s campaign – their impartial advice and expertise in energy efficiency and sustainable energy use makes them an ideal partner. Together, we are looking forward to supporting thousands of schools in their transition to net zero and helping to shift the dial on climate change.”*

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**Mike Thornton, Chief Executive of Energy Saving Trust, said:**

*“Taking part in Switch Off Fortnight offers a hands-on opportunity for young people to learn more about climate change, what net zero means and how that translates into simple but significant changes they can make to their own lives. Practical initiatives like this are vital in helping to empower, inform and inspire people to make the changes we all need to live more sustainably.”*

**Wastebuster:** a not-for-profit Community Interest Company and The Pod is its award-winning school's programme. Wastebuster was formed in 2006 to promote care for the environment to children and young people. Working closely with industry, retail, governments and organisations including UN +200 local authorities, Wastebuster delivers innovative education and campaigns for schools that promote responsible consumption in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

**The Pod:** an award-winning education platform that helps educators teach students about energy, waste, biodiversity and climate science through curriculum-linked resources and nationwide campaigns, Switch Off Fortnight, Waste Week, What’s Under your Feet and Recycle to Read. More than 19,000 educators and 22,000 schools are members of The Pod and its campaigns reach more than four million young people and their families each year.

**Energy Saving Trust Foundation:** the charitable arm of Energy Saving Trust. The Foundation aims to reach new and diverse audiences to provide information, advice, and support to address the climate emergency. It looks to pioneer innovative solutions that empower different audiences to act to reduce carbon emissions and works with the education sector to support a transition to a net zero carbon society.