## What can we do?

It is easy to get overwhelmed by climate change. It is such a big issue, and there doesn’t seem to be much good news. It is easy to feel powerless. It is true that big decisions need to be made by world leaders about combatting carbon emissions, but there are also small things that we can do in our own every day lives that can make a difference. One of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions is electricity generation. Therefore, every time we do something that saves electricity, we are doing our bit for the planet.

Have a discussion with your class or children about the different things we can do in our everyday lives, at home and at school to help the planet. Children often have the most amazing ideas, so you are sure to have some great discussions, but here are some ideas of things we can do to help get you started.

#### Think about what you eat.

Producing food takes energy, but it takes more energy to produce some food rather than others.

Try and eat food that is grown or produced locally to you. The further food is transported, the higher the carbon footprint due to the fuel required to transport it. Maybe you could try growing some of your own food, even just some salad leaves or herbs in a windowsill.

Eating more vegetables and fruit, particularly local and seasonal. It takes more energy to produce meat, especially red meat, than vegetables, so the carbon footprint of a cheeseburger burger is nine times bigger than the carbon footprint of falafels in pitta bread.

Why not have a few days a week where you don’t eat meat, and keep red meat for treats and special occasions?

Do your very best not to waste food. A lot of energy goes into producing food, and food waste releases greenhouse gases, so the less we waste the better for the planet in both ways.

#### Try to use the car less

Petrol emissions are another big contributing factor to climate change. Are there any journeys you make by car which could be done by walking or by bike? If the journey is a long way, is it possible to use public transport, or to share your car journey with someone else going the same way?

If you can afford it, you can think about getting an electric car.

#### Reduce energy that you use and home.

Make sure you switch off lights when you leave rooms. Use low energy light bulbs.

Can you turn the heating down a bit and put on a jumper instead?

Can you get your electricity supplied by a renewable power company? Investigate if you can get solar panels or other renewable energy sources at home? There are sometimes grants available to help pay for these to be installed.

Keep doors closed to keep heat in and reduce the need to have the heating on as much.

Switch off televisions, computers, consoles, and chargers when they are not being used.

#### Reduce waste, reuse, and recycle what you can

Try not to buy things that are single use. Use a refillable water bottle or reusable coffee cup rather than single use ones.

Try shopping for second-hand clothes in charity shops rather than always buying new items. Give things you don’t use any more a new lease of life by donating them to charities.

If you are out and about, take your rubbish home to put in recycling bins, rather than putting things in general waste bins.

Let companies know if you think they are using too much packaging that has to be thrown away. Your voice does have power, and if enough people write to them, they will change how they do things.

#### Make sure your voice is heard.

If you are old enough to vote, vote for people that you believe care about the climate and will make a difference. If you are not old enough to vote, you can still make your voice heard. Write to your local MP, to parliament, to your local council, to local businesses, and to anyone else who has the power to make change. Tell them of your concerns about climate change and urge them to make decisions that will help cut climate emissions and help our planet.

Ask you council about how it plans to make your school carbon neutral. Is there anything you can do to speed up the plans?

#### Care about Nature.

Spend some time in nature in your own local area. The more we know about the animals, plants and other life that share our world with us, the more we care about them and the more we protect them. See if you can discover what lives near you. Do a minibeast hunt in your school playground. How many different types of minibeast can you find?

Think about all the different plants around you. How do they change throughout the seasons? Do they support other life? Think about all the different things that will eat the leaves, nectar, or berries.

Listen to the sounds of the birds singing. How many different types of bird can you hear? Do you know the names of any different types of birds?

Get involved in citizen science projects, such as the RSPB’s big garden birdwatch, or your local biodiversity recording scheme.

The more time we spend in nature, the more we understand it, care about it, and want to protect it. It can also be good for us and can help us to feel calmer and happier. The world is an amazing place that we are lucky to live in. If we look after our planet, it will look after us too.