

# go green Switch Off Energy Action Sheet



## Carbon footprint: Energy

Our everyday lives depend on access to cheap fossil fuels that can be quickly converted to power for heating, cooling, lighting and operating appliances. How much we use and where our energy comes from all contributes to our carbon 'footprint'. Most electricity used in schools and colleges comes from dirty fuels like gas and coal and is so easily available we take it for granted. A massive 20% of it is wasted, for example, by leaving unused lights and appliances on to save the 'hassle' of switching off.

As a result, energy is responsible for 37% of our carbon footprint which is bad news for the planet. We can change this by using only what we need and getting more energy from renewable sources like solar and wind.



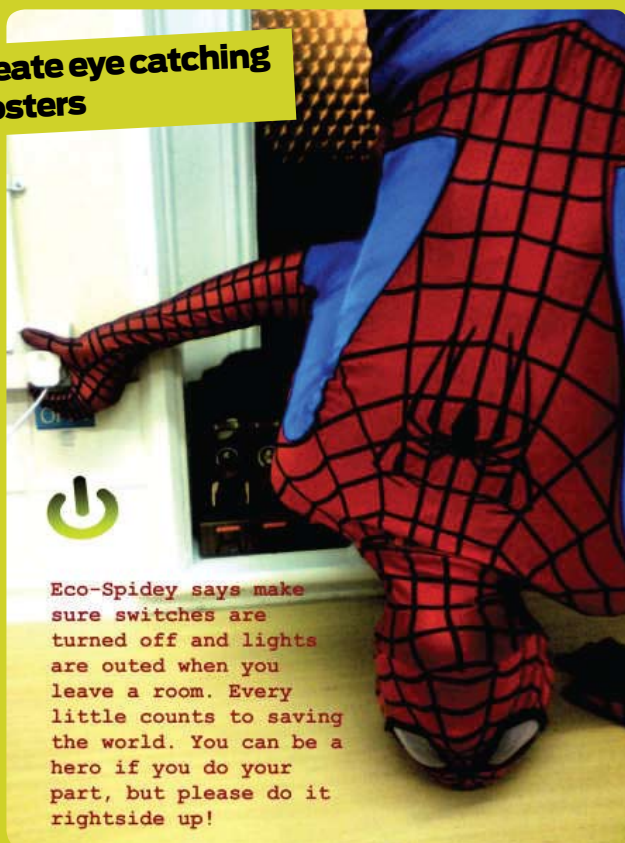
eco-power rangers

Read on for practical ways to save pounds, save the planet and get everyone learning about sustainability at the same time.

## Did you know?

- By reducing energy waste schools and colleges could save up to **£17.85 per student** every year. This would result in **23% less** CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Switching off unused appliances could save enough CO<sub>2</sub> each year to fill **105 hot air balloons**
- Each year England wastes enough electricity on lighting empty rooms to produce about **8 million tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub>, just imagine if we included Scotland and Wales!

## create eye catching posters



Eco-Spidey says make sure switches are turned off and lights are outed when you leave a room. Every little counts to saving the world. You can be a hero if you do your part, but please do it rightside up!

## What can we do about it? **Cut the waste:** **Plan a Switch Off Week**

### 1. **Set up an Energy Action Group**

First, you need a good team to take on the challenge and push the school or college to clean up its energy use. You will need a good mix of students, teachers and non-teaching staff such as the caretaker/ estates manager. You should aim to meet at least once a term to plan activities and measure the impact. Need help setting up an action group?

**Check out our website:**  
<http://peopleandplanet.org/sixthforms/startagroup>

### **They did it!**

#### **Worcester College of Technology**

The environment group reduced electricity use by 2% in just two weeks by introducing a 'Shutdown Routine'.

Staff had to follow a daily routine of switching off all non-essential electrical items before leaving a room. The group has also replaced all of the college's lighting with low energy bulbs, reducing energy used for lighting by 40%. This was paid for through a grant from Salix Finance, and will pay for itself in less than three years.

Source: Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges.



### 2. **Switch off Energy Survey**

First, work out what your carbon footprint is with this easy step-by-step survey and carbon calculator <http://bit.ly/2KexK2>.

You can get the info you need from Display Energy Certificates which you will find on school or college buildings. The Estates Manager can show you where these are.

Next, find out where the carbon is being wasted. Do an energy walk around the school or college taking note of energy waste 'crime scenes'. For info on what to look out for visit [peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy).

Take loads of pictures and send them to your office contact at [gogreen@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:gogreen@peopleandplanet.org).

### **Top tips for reducing energy**

- Reduce the heating temperature by 1 degree to reduce bills by 5-10%
- Have the heating on for an hour less each day and you can save the same again
- Fit energy-efficient lightbulbs, they use 80% less than standard ones
- Switch off lights, they account for half the electricity use in a typical school or college
- Computers use a huge amount of energy - switch them off, don't leave them on standby

### 3. **Organise a Switch Off Week**

#### **Plan**

To make your Switch Off Week a success you need to plan with teachers, the Head or Principal and caretaker.

#### **Maximise Your Impact!**

Hold your Switch Off Week in February during national Go Green Week when People & Planet groups in schools, colleges and unis across the UK will all be taking action together. [peopleandplanet.org/gogreenweek](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreenweek).



#### **Promote**

- get posters up
- use a catch phrase like "are you switched on to switch off week?"
- hold a stall to explain what you're doing and why not do an assembly or event to get people thinking about energy waste?
- use your climate crime photos and/ or Part 1 of your Go Green film

#### **Go for it!**

- On the day, get people switching off with:
- reminder signs above every light switch and computer
  - a Go Green noticeboard with loads of ideas and tips on energy saving
  - a gimmick like 'eco-power rangers' – get members of your group to dress up and roam the school or college checking that energy is being use efficiently
  - an Eco-Code of conduct which students sign up to
  - a staff shut-down routine

If you're at a FE college why not make the switch off a competition between campuses or halls of residence, Find out more about Student Switch Off: <http://bit.ly/1wUfHo> Make sure you take loads of photos for the Go Green photo competition and send them to your office contact or [gogreen@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:gogreen@peopleandplanet.org)

Raise some cash...

#### **Organise a Wear Green Day**

A brilliant way to raise awareness of your switch off. Students donate £2 to wear green for the day and raise money for People & Planet's Go Green campaign. Remember to book this with your school or college well in advance. Find out more at: [peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy)

**CO<sub>2</sub> £2**

### 4. **Celebrate your progress**

If your group looks as if it's getting somewhere, other people are more likely to get involved. Calculate the carbon and money saved during the big switch off. Ask the caretaker or estate manager how electricity is measured, take a reading at the beginning and end of a normal week and compare that with the Switch Off week. You can then convert that into CO<sub>2</sub> with this handy online calculator and publicise the results [peopleandplanet.org/go/zekH](http://peopleandplanet.org/go/zekH)

### 5. **Switch off for good**

Go Green Week happens every year - so could Switch Off week. This will make sure you have a lasting impact on your school or college's carbon footprint. You can convince your Head or Principal that it's a good idea with these arguments:

- cuts carbon emissions
- energy waste in schools and colleges is very high
- energy efficiency measures save money
- schools and colleges can get interest-free loans for energy efficiency measures.

Find out more at [peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy)

# Next steps:

## The future of energy

### 6. Generate your own

The problem at the heart of the energy crisis is that it's all generated at big central power stations miles away from anywhere. Lots of it gets wasted in transportation and big companies keep all the profits.

For a green energy future we need locally generated power from renewable sources – this technology is available now and there are lots of grants and funds available to help your school or college make the switch.

This is a bigger long term goal so your Energy Action Group will need to do some research and work with the Head/Principal but People & Planet can give you all the support you need. There are loads of arguments to make the case for renewables:

- they pay for themselves through savings on bills
- they give the school/college control of the energy supply
- they are an educational tool
- there are lots of grants available to help with funding
- 'feed-in tariffs' mean the government will pay for all energy generated by renewables whether you use it yourself or sell it back to the grid

## Who can help you get renewables?

**The Carbon Trust** can do a free survey of your school or college to work out where renewable and energy efficiency measures can be used  
<http://bit.ly/p4Gqh>

Check out People & Planet's simple guide to funding for energy projects  
[peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy)

## Further resources

For downloadable posters, Eco-codes of conduct and practical details on organising your Switch Off week visit:  
[peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy](http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreen/energy)

**The Energy Saving Trust** – lots of great info and freebies for your school:  
<http://bit.ly/YW9EI>

**Sustainable Schools** - has top tips to reduce energy and water usage in schools: <http://bit.ly/4KV1S>



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51 Union Street, Oxford, OX4 1JP | 01865 245678 | [gogreen@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:gogreen@peopleandplanet.org)

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