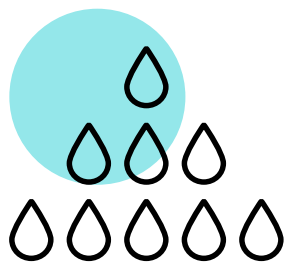




Pearson



Ask the Expert

How can you help your school community to be healthier for people and planet?



Nicky O'Malley

Director of Corporate Partnerships at Global Action Plan shares her top tips.

“
Cycle to School Week takes place across the UK from Monday 25 September until Friday 29 September – why not encourage students and staff to get involved?
”

1. Encourage walking or wheeling

With vehicles being such a big source of air pollution, the less we drive the more we will cut down the pollution we create and are exposed to. So, wherever its possible, instead of driving, we can encourage our school community to walk or wheel to school as a great way to cut down on our collective emissions, while enjoying the many health and wellbeing benefits of getting active. [Cycle to School Week](#) takes place across the UK from Monday 25 September until Friday 29 September – why not encourage students and staff to get involved?

2. Take less polluted routes to school

Exposure to air pollution can cause a range of health issues in children, like affecting lung development, worsening asthma and reducing memory function. Air pollution on side streets can be 30% less than on busy roads, so avoiding congested streets on the school run can help limit the harmful toxins that students are exposed to. Encouraging students to consider where the less busy roads may be and to draw maps of low pollution routes around the school is a great way to get them thinking about sources of air pollution and to empower them to take positive action.

3. Consider car sharing

Lots of us have no choice but to drive to school if we live far away and there just aren't public transport links in place, so why not help people to reduce their emissions by coordinating car sharing? To meet climate targets and breathe cleaner air, we need at least 20% fewer vehicles on our roads. In practice, this means cutting out around one trip per week. Car sharing is a simple way to reduce congestion outside schools, while helping your school community to come together to cut commute costs too.

4. Limit pollution at the school gates

We can use signage around the school to remind people not to leave their engines idling at the school gates, emitting high levels of harmful air pollution around the school. Educating parents about the dangers of air pollution and encouraging them to switch off their engines when their vehicles are stationary and it's safe to do so can make a big difference.

5. Come together as a school community for clean air

Recent analysis conducted by Global Action Plan and Queen Mary University of London found that a 50% reduction in air pollution around schools across the UK and Ireland could halve the number of children who have poor lung function that affects their everyday lives. As well as the respiratory and health implications, tackling air pollution can also have a positive impact on students' ability to learn – improving memory function and cognitive performance.

To help you to take action in your own school community, we have created the Global Action Plan [Clean Air for Schools Framework](#), providing every school with free access to the information and tools you need to tackle air pollution. Visit our website to find out more and download your school's free, tailored action plan today to start your clean air journey..

