

## Introduction

[Teach the Future](#) is a youth-led campaign to urgently repurpose the education system around the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

Scotland's policies for Learning for Sustainability (LfS) are commendable, and the ambitions outlined in the 'Target 2030: A movement for people, planet and prosperity' Learning for Sustainability Action Plan are comprehensive. However, Scotland's young people are still calling for their education to better equip them to tackle the climate and nature crises.<sup>1</sup>

Barriers still limit the extent to which learners receive their LfS entitlement:

- LfS is siloed into certain subjects and not always integrated as a cross-cutting theme.
- Insufficient professional development opportunities on LfS.
- Unclear and uneven designation of LfS leadership responsibility.
- Limited emphasis on LfS into school inspection frameworks.
- Insufficient funding for school decarbonisation.

As young people, our right to express our views on decisions that affect us is protected by Scotland's landmark [UNCRC Incorporation Act](#).

Our policy asks for Primary 1 to Secondary 6 are laid out below:

### ASK 1: Implement interdisciplinary climate and nature education

- The current Curriculum Improvement Cycle is an opportunity to fully integrate LfS across the curriculum at every age and stage and curriculum area.
  - Currently LfS is mainly evident in the Sciences and Geography.
  - Most curriculum areas have potential to deliver more on LfS.
- Financially invest in interdisciplinary learning.
  - Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) empowers learners to develop **values**, **capacities** and **agency** by applying their LfS knowledge in practice, for example through designing projects to improve sustainability of their schools or communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Children's Parliament, *Children's Parliament Investigates: Learning for Sustainability* (2022)

- Despite IDL being one of the four 'contexts for learning' in the curriculum, it has yet to be meaningfully implemented in many of Scotland's schools.<sup>2</sup>
- The current curriculum improvement cycle is an opportunity to enhance IDL by supporting educators to co-organise and facilitate IDL, embed IDL into timetabling and sharing examples of successful IDL projects.
- Ensure learner voice is at the centre of Education Scotland and Qualifications Scotland.
- Once established, Qualifications Scotland should:
  - Consult young people in preparing the learner charter.
  - Include young people in their **Strategic Advisory Council**.

## ASK 2: Mandate Learning for Sustainability professional learning for all school staff

- The proposed new Framework for Teacher Education and Development in Scotland should mandate professional learning on LfS for **all** teachers, not just new ones.
- Although LfS is included in the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standards and is being incorporated into initial teacher education, many qualified teachers still feel inequipped to deliver LfS, and are calling for **additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD), training, and resources**.<sup>3</sup>
- All teachers should be trained on how to plan and deliver IDL on LfS.
- Additional **financial support** to the Centre for Teaching Excellence's new Rural Education and Learning for Sustainability Hub would help to expand professional learning opportunities on LfS.
- All staff, including school leaders, have a role to play in facilitating LfS. A whole school approach to LfS is a requirement in the Standard for Headship, but further professional learning is required.

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<sup>2</sup> Education Scotland, *Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world* (2023)

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government, *Learning for Sustainability: young people and practitioner perspectives* (2023)

## **ASK 3: Designate a Learning for Sustainability lead in all schools**

- Research commissioned by the Scottish Government demonstrates that schools struggle to adopt a whole-school LfS approach.
- LfS delivery is patchy and quite often subject to the passion of individual teachers<sup>4</sup>, who are constrained by limited time and resources.
- A **member of the Senior Leadership Team** of each school should have **Learning for Sustainability as part of their portfolio** to ensure that there is a whole-school approach to the school's Sustainable Learning Setting ambitions across the campus, curriculum, community, and culture.
- The Learning for Sustainability Lead should engage with learners in the development of their education setting's **whole-school approach** to LfS, as research indicates young people are often excluded from this process.

## **ASK 4: Make Learning for Sustainability central to inspections**

- LfS delivery varies hugely depending on school resources and practitioner goodwill.
- In the How Good is Our School Framework (HGIOS4), LfS was included but sidelined.
- The redesign of the schools inspectorate as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Bill is an opportunity to incentivise all schools to increase emphasis on LfS.
- **We call for strengthening of all aspects of LfS** (curriculum, culture, community, and campus)<sup>5</sup> **as key criteria in the new inspection framework**.
- We also urge the HM Inspectors to conduct a **national thematic inspection on LfS**.<sup>6</sup>
- Young people should be engaged as co-designers of the new inspection plan, as recommended by the Putting Learners at the Centre report.
- Young people should also be included in the Chief Inspector's Advisory Council.

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<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government, "Target 2030" A movement for people, planet and prosperity: Scotland's Learning for Sustainability Action Plan (2023)

<sup>5</sup> The aspects of a 'Sustainable Learning Setting' as outlined in the Target 2030 Learning for Sustainability Action Plan

<sup>6</sup> In line with action no.7 of the Target 2030 Learning for Sustainability Action Plan

## **ASK 5: Ensure all educational buildings are net-zero by 2035**

- All **new** schools should be **completely net zero**, not only in terms of heating and energy efficiency but also other emission sources such as procurement and transport.
- All educational estates should be completely net zero by **2035**.
- A **detailed delivery plan for school decarbonisation** is urgently needed.
- All schools should track annual emissions reductions.
- **More funding** is urgently required to address the backlog in repairs and retrofit.
- Build partnerships: from local authorities to solar cooperatives to industry sponsors, collaboration is a win-win for decarbonisation and green jobs.
- Only 15% of students rate their schools as 'nature positive'<sup>7</sup>. Schools should invest in creating 'accessible nature spaces', which have a huge potential to sequester carbon and support biodiversity<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> NatureScot, *Nature Discovery Map Scotland* (2024)

<sup>8</sup> As called for by the Commission for the Land-Based Learning Review