

# COMMON SEAS EDUCATION



**Deep, practical learning experiences about plastic, that create understanding and agency about sustainability and climate change.**

Children and young people are the leaders, innovators, artists, engineers and citizens of tomorrow. It is critical every school student in the UK can access the skills, knowledge and experience they need to help build a cleaner, greener and fairer future.

Common Seas Education provides curriculum-aligned learning experiences about the impact of plastic on our world. These resources have been downloaded 85,000 times since their launch in 2019. We also run a companion programme to help students apply their learning while creating tangible, positive changes in their schools, homes and wider communities. Over 700 schools have signed up so far.

## **Why plastic?**

By 2040, plastic will account for almost a third of 'allowable' CO2 emissions in a 1.5C warming scenario. Plastic waste kills a million seabirds every year. Meanwhile, microplastics are polluting our food, water and air, and consequently our blood and organs, posing a direct (and largely under-researched) threat to our short and long-term health...

Plastic is a complex and cross-cutting issue: it is about a lot more than the waste we can see around us. However, the fact we can see it – and can positively or negatively contribute to it – makes it an incredibly tangible and relevant issue, particularly for young people.



## A unified approach

In 2022, building on its announcement at COP26 in 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) published a new strategy that puts sustainability and climate change at the heart of education in the UK. The Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy outlines how education can impact, influence and inspire communities through increasing the knowledge and understanding of children and young people, and by improving environmental sustainability in and around education settings.

## Common Seas Education is closely aligned with the DfE's strategic approach.

### 1. Fully-resourced lessons and professional development for educators

Common Seas Education provides time-poor educators with the resources and confidence to teach the broad issue of sustainability through the salient lens of the plastic crisis, within the curriculum and through project-based learning.

The resources were developed in collaboration with a broad coalition of educators, scientists and industry experts. Any school can download off-the-shelf packages for geography, science, design & technology, citizenship and enrichment in primary and secondary schools.

Alongside this, our resources provide professional development, empowering teachers so they can in turn empower their students. This would support the National Climate Education Action Plan to ensure teachers are equipped with high quality professional development and ongoing support to embed the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

### 2. Practical learning opportunities that enhance school and community environment

In partnership with Kids Against Plastic, Common Seas runs the Plastic Clever Schools award. This award puts children and young people at the heart of the action, supporting them to lead on reducing plastic waste in their school, whilst building essential skills for active citizenship beyond the classroom. Our interactive toolkits ensure this process is guided by accurate knowledge and practical experience.

This awards programme aligns well with the DfE's National Education Nature Park, which aims to deepen every student's connection to nature, while helping them understand the challenges facing our environment and empowering them to feel they can do something about it. It also supports the implementation of the new, prestigious Climate Leaders Award, providing evidence that schools are taking action to be more environmentally sustainable (e.g., reducing plastic waste).