

PRESS RELEASE

FIRST EVER EDUCATION LEGISLATION WRITTEN BY PUPILS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12 noon, Mon 24 February 2020

On Wednesday 26 February 2020, fifty students will be entering parliament on a mission to engage MPs and Peers in the need to repurpose the education system around the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

The group, who are mostly under 18, ranging from 13-26, created the Teach the Future campaign three months ago because they were unhappy about the lack of climate change focused education they'd received in school, college and university.

Their parliamentary reception is being hosted by Nadia Whittome, the youngest MP in parliament, at 24 years old, with speakers including school pupil Scarlett Westbrook (15), NUS President Zamzam Ibrahim (25), Kevin Courtney, General Secretary of the National Education Union, historian and Vice Chancellor Sir Anthony Seldon and Nigel Topping, High Level Climate Action Champion for the COP26 climate talks.

The students have invited all English MPs to attend the reception and hear about their experience of climate education. At the event the students will unveil their draft English Climate Emergency Education Bill, the first ever education legislation to be written by pupils and students.

Should the bill become legislation, it would obligate English education providers across primary, secondary and tertiary to teach the climate emergency and ecological crisis. It also would provide new funding for the upskilling of existing teachers and lecturers, development of teaching resources and funding for youth-led climate and environmental social action in every school, college and university.

The Bill would additionally require all new state-funded educational buildings to be net-zero carbon from 2022, and that all existing state-funded educational buildings are retrofitted to net-zero by 2030 as a national infrastructure priority.

The students are also calling on the Secretary of State for Education to commission an independent review of how the education system is preparing young people for the climate emergency and ecological crisis and requesting that he amends the teacher training standards so that all new teachers are trained on the climate emergency.

Joe Brindle, 17, said: *"We are all aged 13-26 and in full time education, but have barely been taught anything about the climate emergency and ecological crisis. So much of what we are taught about seems irrelevant given the way the world is going. We just want to be taught the truth and supported to make a difference".*

Mary Skuodas, 15, said: *"In the 1950's the US Government passed their Defence Education Act, which was a massive investment in teaching STEM across all forms of education. They did that so they could win the space race, and they did. We now need a similar massive investment in our education system, so we can combat the climate emergency".*

Zamzam Ibrahim, 25, said: "COP26 is coming and we hope to persuade our Government that education should be a main theme at the talks. We have seen Italy, Russia and New Zealand make announcements about climate education. We hope our Government will want to work with us to develop a Climate Emergency Education Plan in the run up to COP, our bill is the first step to making this happen."

Notes to editors

- Teach the future is a campaign jointly run by two student-led organisations, the UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN) and Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK). It was launched at the NUS Student Sustainability Summit in November 2019.
www.teachthefuture.uk
- UKSCN is made up of mostly under 18s mobilised in response to direct protests made by young people against climate inaction across Europe. The charity has four key demands: to Save the Future, Tell the Future, Teach the Future and Empower the Future. In 2019 UKSCN organised over 850 demonstrations including the September 2019 Global Climate Strike that saw over 300,000 people take to the streets across the UK. www.ukscn.org
- SOS-UK is a registered charity created by the National Union of Students (NUS) in 2019 in response to the climate emergency and ecological crisis. It works with students who are mostly over 18. The SOS-UK President is Zamzam Ibrahim, who is also the President of NUS. www.sos-uk.org
- As education is a devolved matter, Teach the Future is initially focused on England. The students intend to develop nation-specific versions of the campaign soon.
- The six Teach the Future policy asks are:
 - 1) A government commissioned review into how the whole of the English formal education system is preparing students for the climate emergency and ecological crisis
 - 2) Inclusion of the climate emergency and ecological crisis in teacher training and a new professional teaching qualification
 - 3) An English Climate Emergency Education Act
 - 4) A national climate emergency youth voice grant fund
 - 5) A national Youth Climate Endowment Fund
 - 6) All new state-funded educational buildings should be net-zero from 2022; all existing state-funded educational buildings net-zero by 2030
- The students have drafted ask 3, the Bill (which would become an Act if passed by parliament), and included asks 4, 5 and 6 in that. Asks 1 and 2 are in the gift of the Secretary of State for Education.
- Copies of the Climate Emergency Education Bill will be released at 12 noon on Wed 26 Feb 2020.
- More details on each ask can be read at www.teachthefuture.uk/asks
- The students [crowdfunded](#) the costs for the parliamentary reception.
- The two stock images supplied with this story all have permission to be used with this story.
- Students are available for interviews in relation to this story. Please contact hello@sos-uk.org, or phone Jamie Agombar, SOS-UK, 07738 883451.

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