

New education award empowers young people to tackle plastic pollution

Key Stage 3 and 4 students from Partners in Excellence (PiXL) member schools can sign up for the 'Green Edge Award' programme from September and undertake one of three award levels – Apprentice, Pioneer and Graduate.

The award is centred around character development with each award level focussing on 5 attributes – leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate these skills through a series of activities, including plastic waste surveys, organising litter picks, and setting up repair cafes.

The award content has been produced by the Environment Agency's plastics and sustainability team on behalf of the Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution (PPP) project, which is working with the education, business, community, sports and agriculture sectors.

The aim of the PPP project is to take action to reduce the impact of plastics and encourage positive behaviour changes to help places, people and wildlife.

Kelly Haynes, Environment Agency STEM engagement officer, said:

We are thrilled to be working with PiXL to offer this award, which empowers young people to help tackle plastic pollution and the wider climate emergency.

The Green Edge award is a very hands-on programme, allowing students to develop their knowledge and skills through practical activities, collectively making their schools, homes and communities more sustainable. Young people are the future custodians of our planet so to see such passion and enthusiasm for these activities will be truly inspirational.

The award sits alongside the current PiXL Edge programme, which supports students to independently develop life skills via experiences and provides them with an evidenced record of their achievements.

Rachel Johnson, CEO of PiXL, said:

Young people often report feeling powerless in the face of the climate crisis we face, which will no doubt play a big part in their futures. The introduction of the Green Edge, in partnership with the Environment Agency, means that not only will they learn about the issues at hand, but can start working on practical ways to make a difference and empower themselves and others to bring about change.

To find out more about the Edge award contact edge@pixl.org.uk or plasticsandsustainability@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Notes for editors

PiXL (Partners in Excellence) is a large membership network comprising of thousands of schools, colleges and alternative education providers across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They collaborate, share best practice and equip leaders so they can support their teams and, ultimately, provide everyone in schools with a better future and a brighter hope.

Environment Agency role: preventing waste plastic entering the environment by cracking down on waste crime and poor waste management is a key activity for the Environment Agency as a regulator. As an influencer, it also has an ambition to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste, helping to achieve the goals and commitments outlined in its 5 year plan to create better places for people, wildlife and the environment, and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Preventing Plastic Pollution: working in partnership with 18 organisations from across France and England, [Preventing Plastic Pollution](#) (PPP) seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the river and marine environments. By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives.

PPP is a €14million funded EU INTERREG VA France (Channel) England Programme project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund which works mainly across 7 pilot sites: Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez, Bay of Veys, Poole Harbour, and the Medway, Tamar, and Great Ouse estuaries.

Partners are the Environment Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Queen Mary University of London, LABOCEA Conseil, Expertise et Analyses, Syndicat mixte établissement public de gestion et d'aménagement de la baie de Douarnenez, Office Français De La Biodiversité, Parc naturel marin d'Iroise, Brest Métropole, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Conseil départemental de la Manche, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, The Rivers Trust, Syndicat de bassin de l'Elorn, ACTIMAR, Brest'aim, Westcountry Rivers Trust, South East Rivers Trust, Plymouth City Council.