



Embedding Sustainability into the Parent Teacher Association: Advice for School PTAs – Event planning

Schools can create a number of significant environmental impacts, including within their events/fetes.

The PTA/PSA can make a huge difference in reducing this impact, whilst at the same time advocating good sustainability practices to pupils.

School events are a great opportunity to raise important funds for your school, as well as bringing together children, parents and teachers in an informal and fun way! However, being mindful of the impacts on our planet can still reach the same outcomes and possibly even save your school money; that's because we at Eco Essex believe that being sustainable is actually money saving!

The Sustainable Schools Alliance (SSA) aims to drive change in the education system so that all schools put sustainability at the heart of their curriculum, their campus and their community.

At Eco Essex, we want to assist with facilitating this change. We want to make the process of running events as easy as possible, so we have put together an Eco guide to school event planning.

Eco guide to school event planning

Instructions

Use this table as a guide (note: this is only a general guide made by us) for your fete/event planning, as well as for tracking the sustainability of a planned event.

Track (tick) each of the suggested sustainable ideas if they have been included in the event, and then calculate the total at the end to see your events overall score.

In order to reduce your events environmental impact, we recommend you aim for the highest score possible, but we understand this is not something that can necessarily be achieved immediately, so demonstrating continual improvements at each subsequent event is still a positive outcome.

School event eco score checklist

Main areas	Sustainable (Eco) Idea	Tick if included in this event	Tick if aiming for this at next event
Food / Drink stalls	Home-baked cakes	☐	☐
	Avoid pre-packaged food	☐	☐
	No shop-bought bottled water or individual SUP ¹ drinks (buy a large squash bottle and make up in reusable cups or BYO ² cup)	☐	☐
	Re-usable cups available (ask for an old mug donation for school events)	☐	☐
	Discounts for people who bring their own reusable drink cups/bottles	☐	☐
	Reusable plates/cutlery – no SUP	☐	☐
	Vegan beer/wine stall	☐	☐
	Vegan food options available	☐	☐
Prizes	No single-use plastic prizes	☐	☐
	Eco-friendly prizes E.g. • pre-loved/unwanted gifts – donated from parents/carers • bird feeding kit • bee bombs/wildflower seeds and compostable pot (could decorate that as an activity) • vegetable seeds • ethically made, sustainable wooden toys • eco magazine • environmental focused books • joint prize winners sponsor an endangered animal	☐	☐
	Recyclable wrapping paper used for any prizes with <i>paper</i> tape (that doesn't come in plastic wrapping)	☐	☐
	'Auction of promises' meaning the community/parents/school donate experiences (completely dependent on is offered by the community) and then private bids are made i.e..front row tickets for all school performances for the year	☐	☐
	Wind up torches / head torches as a reusable light item at fireworks night	☐	☐
	Use recycled/reused (old scraps) wrapping paper or use old drawings/newspapers/delivery paper etc in which to wrap prizes	☐	☐
	Use tokens to build up to an experience prize i.e. a go on the bouncy castle	☐	☐
Types of Stalls / traders	Hire out stalls to eco-friendly traders	☐	☐
	Ask for book donations to sell on pre-loved books	☐	☐
	Local book seller showcasing eco specific books and do an eco-book reading	☐	☐
	Reusable party pack hire company	☐	☐
	Vegan/eco-friendly/glitter-free face painting	☐	☐
	Recycled crafting/junk modelling/cardboard box fun/den building – ask for donations of scrap craft materials and cardboard boxes and blankets	☐	☐

	Toy swap/second-hand good quality toy sale	☐	☐
	Second-hand uniform stall	☐	☐
	Pre-loved kids clothes/fancy dress (think Book Week!) stall	☐	☐
	Eco stationery stall such as FSC notepads, refillable pens etc	☐	☐
	Eco magazine/paper selling, i.e. The Eco News, The Ethical Consumer Magazine, Eco Kids, Pebble	☐	☐
	Eco party decoration stall, i.e. local crafter who upcycles materials into decorations	☐	☐
	Eco friendly children's household items such as bamboo crockery, reusable straws, hot chocolate reusable cups, reusable water bottles, chemical free bath bombs, shampoo bars etc	☐	☐
Decorations used for event	Eco-friendly/reusable decorations such as paper decorations, fabric (washable) bunting, rag wreaths (made out of unwanted uniform)	☐	☐
	No balloons (not even 'biodegradable' ones)	☐	☐
	No glitter (and consider how 'good' eco glitter is too)	☐	☐
	Children to make decorations such as bunting, paper chains etc	☐	☐
	Second-hand/donated decorations	☐	☐
Advertising / promotional material	Keep paper promotional advertising minimal and prioritise flyers in busy, public places rather than individually handing people flyers which commonly get recycled/thrown immediately	☐	☐
	For any physical promotional material such as flyers, banners etc, consider how to make them last longer, such as using laminated ones where the date can be changed for the next event (Velcro or leave blank to write on/rub off date each time) and they can be used repeatedly for any event each year	☐	☐
	Protect/store promotional material well so it is kept in good condition for regular use, i.e. kept flat, dry etc. where the date of the next event can be modified each time.	☐	☐
	Online advertising	☐	☐
	Recycled advertising boards such as an old/upcycled chalk board/laminate board	☐	☐
Waste disposal	Recycling bins available at event with clear signage for waste/recyclable contents	☐	☐
	Food waste collected for commercial composting or used in school compost if available (specific food waste only)	☐	☐
	Excess food donated to shelter (arranged prior to event for immediate collection/drop off)	☐	☐
	Decorations, excess gifts/prizes to be reused for future events	☐	☐

Event name			
Date			
Eco score rating (add your own ideas to the list too)	Score for this event:	Future score aim for next event:	

¹ SUP: Single use plastic

¹BYO: Buy your own