

# Information on The Student Climate Strike

## What's it all about?

Students are walking out of school and going on #ClimateStrike to call on governments to keep warming below the unacceptably dangerous level of 1.5 degrees Celsius and protect their future

Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old Swedish student started protesting in the summer of 2018 in frustration of nothing been done on climate change by governments around the world now it has become a global movement. Students around the world have been protesting every Friday since last year. The 15<sup>th</sup> of March has been set as the date where as many students as possible are going on 'strike'. [See this video](#) from Greta Thunberg, the 15-year old Swedish student who sparked the movement -- and then join the strike!



## WHY?

Heat waves, floods, and hurricanes are killing hundreds and devastating communities across the world. Climate change is already a deadly reality. Governments are meeting for the UN climate talks right now in Poland, and despite the latest stark warning from climate scientists that we have only 12 years to reverse course, politicians are ignoring their call. What use is it learning facts if adults ignore them? That's why Greta and her fellow students are walking out of school to teach politicians a lesson in leadership.

**WHEN: Every Friday! There will be a big main event on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March.**

**WHERE: Dáil Eireann, Your school, a government office, anywhere you feel called-this doesn't preclude companies that may not be doing the right thing.**



Here are a few facts that everyone should know:

- There is no debate among climate scientists that human-generated carbon pollution is the primary reason for global warming.
  - The 6 hottest years on record have all been since 2010.
  - Climate-related disasters like floods, hurricanes, heat waves, and droughts cause hundreds of billions of dollars of damage every year, destroying lives and communities across the world.
- **We have the solutions** -- renewable energy is cheaper than fossil fuels across much of the world.
  - [Students from Sweden to Australia to Japan have been striking](#) to hold leaders accountable to deliver on the kinds of action needed that will protect the future for everyone.

Under the Paris Agreement 195 countries have agreed to work to limit global warming to 1.5C. The latest scientific assessment by the UN said this will "require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society". Ireland has to cut it's polluting emissions in half by 2030 and to near zero by 2050, which means Irish emissions have to fall 6-7% year-on-year, every year, from now to 2050. Of course, Irish emissions are rising not falling.

## What's happening in schools in Ireland?

**Ireland has the 8th highest greenhouse gas emissions per person in the world and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst in Europe at tackling climate change.**

**A 'Schools' Climate Action Network Ireland' has been set up by teachers. It's a** network connecting students, teachers and their schools in Ireland calling for urgent action to prevent climate breakdown and ensure a just and sustainable future. The network aims to empower and facilitate students to work together to achieve key demands for climate action, decided democratically by students in the member schools. Students discuss and propose key demands to make of their government within their own schools. These proposals are discussed further and agreed between students from across the network at an interschools meeting. Sign up with the network at this link: <https://form.jotformeu.com/83521871535358>

**Fridays For Future Ireland** are a branch of the global #FridaysForFuture movement. This is a network of Irish student climate activists leading Fridays For Future school strikes across Ireland in solidarity with Greta Thunberg and other school strikers across the globe. Their aim is to force the Irish government into taking action on climate change in Ireland, they want the Irish government to align itself with its commitments to the Paris Agreement and to do their part in lowering our emissions to the point where we can limit global climate change to a 1.5 degree average warming target. [www.fridaysforfuture.ie](http://www.fridaysforfuture.ie)

## INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF

1. **Talk to your students** about the strike and explain this campaign to them if they do not know yet. Show them Greta's video and host discussions. Do a lesson on climate change so the students understand the issue.
2. **Ask them if they'd like to strike** and give them your support.
3. **Talk to fellow teachers** to inspire them to do the same with their students.
4. **Speak with the school administration** along with fellow teachers to show your support for the school students taking a stand to protect our future.
5. **Assure parents** who may be uncertain or opposed and support your students.
6. **Join the strike** with your students if possible!
7. **Make placards or construct messages based on the advice in this document (see below)**

## What if taking part in the Strike is not possible in my school?

- Have a walk out but confine it to the school grounds like a fire alarm-encourage students to bring their placards-invite the local media to report on it.
- Have a Friday For Future event in your school to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> of March
- Organise students to write letters to their local councils and TDs about Ireland's commitments (see the recommendations made by the Citizens' Assembly and Friends of the Earth outlined here)
- At the very least teach one class about climate change-drop everything and be part of the change to tackle climate change.
- Find lesson activities here <http://www.worldwiseschools.ie/resource-item/information-on-climate-strike/>

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

1. **Talk to your parents** explaining what you are doing and why, and ask them to support you.
2. **Record a video** telling your story, and post it on social media tagging your friends, YouTube influencers, leaders, and others -- calling on them to join the **#ClimateStrike**. **Use these hashtags too: #ActNow #FridaysForFuture**
3. **Make a sign** calling for whatever you want your leaders to do on climate. It could be “100% clean energy!” or “listen to science!” It’s your call -- be creative!
4. **Talk to your schoolmates and teachers** - tell them why you care about climate change and ask them to join you on Friday’s #ClimateStrike.
5. **Share this toolkit** with anyone who’s interested in supporting or finding out more.
6. **Join the #ClimateStrike** on a Friday. Make sure to agree a specific time in advance so everyone knows when to join! When the time comes, walk out of school in whatever way you think best.
7. **Once you’ve walked out - choose what is right.** You might want to hold a quick rally on the school steps. Or you might want to sit on the steps outside your local politicians’ office and demand they take urgent climate action.
8. **How this has an impact - share photos and videos** of the #ClimateStrike on social media, and tag your leaders.
9. **Please keep the #ClimateStrike peaceful and non-violent at all times.**

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

1. **Talk to your children** who are in school and explain this campaign to them if they do not know yet. Show them Greta’s video.
2. **Ask them if they’d like to strike** and give them your approval and encouragement.
3. **Talk to teachers** at the school saying that you support your children’s decision to strike to make a stand for climate action to protect our future.
4. **Talk to other parents** inspiring them to speak with their children as well. Share with neighbours and community gatherings.
5. **Help your kids prepare** for the #ClimateStrike by brainstorming and making signs, helping coordinate, prepare them to present to classmates and teachers, etc.
6. **Create your own strike and take an extra step at home to tackle climate change!**
7. **Join the strike** with your kids if possible and make it a family action!

# PLACARDS & SIGNS FOR THE CLIMATE STRIKE

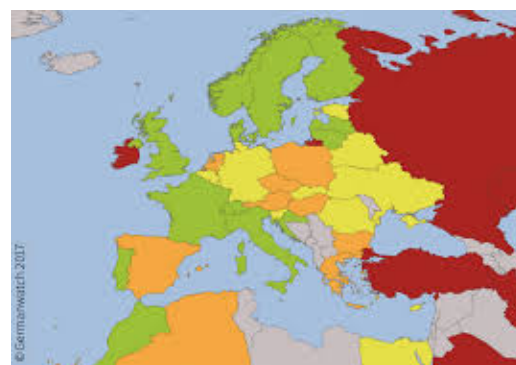
- To make a placard you just need a tough piece of cardboard or paper, a stick and something to stick them together!
- Use recycled materials to make your placards
- Make sure you are sending a constructive message to the government on what they should do to tackle climate change-see below for details

## What should Ireland do?

### Read the following to come up with more ideas for your placards:

#### What should the Irish government do to live up to the Paris Agreement?

The Citizens' Assembly report on climate change came up with practical proposals to the government on how they can play their part in tackling climate change.



#### The Citizens Assembly on Climate Change made the following recommendations to the government:

- To ensure climate change is at the centre of policy-making in Ireland, as a matter of urgency a new or existing **independent body** should be resourced appropriately, operate in an open and transparent manner, and be given a broad range of new functions and powers in legislation to urgently address climate change.
- The State should take a leadership role in addressing climate change through mitigation measures, including, for example, **retrofitting public buildings, having low carbon public vehicles, renewable generation on public buildings** and through adaptation measures including, for example, increasing the resilience of public land and infrastructure.
- The State should undertake a comprehensive **assessment of the vulnerability of all critical infrastructure** (including energy, transport, built environment, water and communications) with a view to building resilience to on-going climate change and extreme weather events. The outcome of this assessment should be implemented. Recognising the significant costs that the State would bear in the event of failure of critical infrastructure, spending on infrastructure should be prioritised to take account of this.
- The State should enable, through legislation, the **selling back into the grid of electricity** from micro-generation by private citizens (for example energy from solar panels or wind turbines on people's homes or land) at a price, which is at least equivalent to the wholesale price.
- The State should act to ensure the greatest possible levels of **community ownership in all future renewable energy projects** by encouraging communities to develop their own projects and by requiring that developer-led projects make share offers to communities to encourage greater local involvement and ownership.
- The State should **end all subsidies for peat extraction** and instead spend that money on peat bog restoration and making proper provision for the protection of the rights of the workers impacted with the majority 61% recommending that the State should end all subsidies on a phased basis over 5 years.
- The number of **bus lanes, cycling lanes and park and ride facilities should be greatly increased** in the next five years, and much greater priority should be given to these modes over private car use.
- The State should immediately take many steps to support the **transition to electric vehicles**.
- The State should prioritise the **expansion of public transport spending** over new road infrastructure spending at a ratio of no less than 2-to-1 to facilitate the broader availability and uptake of public transport options with attention to rural areas.



- There should be a **tax on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture**. There should be rewards for the farmer for land management that sequesters carbon. Any resulting revenue should be reinvested to support climate friendly agricultural practices.
- The State should introduce a standard form of mandatory **measurement and reporting of food waste** at every level of the food distribution and supply chain, with the objective of reducing food waste in the future.
- The State should review, and revise supports for land use diversification with attention to **supports for planting forests and encouraging organic farming**.

As a special all-party Oireachtas committee grapples with how to progress them and Minister Richard Bruton is promising a new "all-of-government climate action plan", Friends of the Earth are proposing a 12-step programme to quit fossil fuels. This "Green New Deal" would deliver **warmer homes that are cheaper to run, community-owned renewable electricity, better public transport with lower fares**, and greater transparency and accountability in Government decision-making.

## **Key elements of a Green New Deal: 12 steps to overcome Ireland's fossil fuel addiction**

### **1. A scheme for insulation**

We need to upgrade at least 100,000 homes a year between now and 2030. Householders are going to have to invest themselves, but the state has to make it attractive and simple. Something like the old SSIA scheme, for every €4 you invest in retrofitting your home the state gives you €1.

### **2. A 'Tipperary Energy Agency for every county'**

Householders also need project management support to figure out what they need to get done and what contractor to trust to do it and at what price. The Tipperary Energy Agency has built up an unrivalled capability and reputation for doing that well in a way that appeals to people (it's about warmer homes, with healthier air and lower bills as much as lower emissions). We need to scale up the same capacity in every county in Ireland, with a support agency that has the reach, the resources and the trust to deliver, modelled on the success of Tipp Energy.

### **3. Every new house must be zero carbon**

Houses last for 100 years. And we need cut our emissions in half by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. Given how leaky and polluting our current housing stock is every new house we build from now on has to be zero carbon. This also means new homes are warmer, healthier, cheaper to run, and future-proofed.

### **4. Prioritise upgrading social housing**

The Government must resource and mandate local authorities to upgrade the existing social housing stock as an absolute priority. And all new social housing must be zero carbon. The benefits of the transition must be inclusive and leave no one behind.

### **5. Every school a solar school, and unlock the rooftop revolution**

Every school should have solar panels on their roofs generating electricity and generating income. So should parish halls, sports clubs and farm buildings. It's happening across Europe but it doesn't happen here because you have to give away any power you don't use to the ESB for free, so it doesn't make economic sense to invest. Ireland does community-scale well, from Tidy Towns to GAA. We know there's huge enthusiasm for community energy. We need to unlock that potential with a rooftop revolution that puts citizens at the heart of the energy transition, making it something that's done by and with them, not to them by large companies making a killing.

### **6. A Just Transition Taskforce**

Whenever a US multinational announces it is closing a factory, overnight the Government sets up a taskforce with the state agencies to support the workers find new jobs. We have known for 20 years that we have to stop burning coal and peat for electricity and Government is still dragging its heels. We need a Just Transition Taskforce now, with representatives from the unions, the ESB and Bord Na Mona, all the state agencies, NGOs like Irish Rural Link and local community development

representatives. It needs to have the resources and the authority to support the affected workers, and their families and communities, to plan for a sustainable future and realize it.

### **7. Leave Moneypoint offline**

Our only coal-fired power plant, Moneypoint, is actually closed and has been for months, due to a fault. And the lights are still on, proving we don't need to burn coal even during peak winter demand. Serious consideration should be given to leaving Moneypoint offline. Coal provided just 12% of our electricity in 2017 but over 29% of our climate pollution from electricity.

### **8. Stop burning peat for electricity**

Peat is even worse, providing just 7% of our electricity but producing 20% of our pollution. We've been subsidizing that to the tune of more than €100 million a year. That direct subsidy ends in 2019, but Bord na Mona wants to keep burning peat for another 10 years. And it wants to grab a chunk of the subsidies for wind and solar to make it economically viable, by co-firing its power plants with wood. We should just stop burning peat in 2020 and use the subsidies we save to support the affected workers and communities.

### **9. Invest in public transport, cycling and walking; and reduce fares**

Transport is the area our pollution has risen fastest. We should implement the very simple Citizens' Assembly recommendation that 1/3 of the transport budget should go on roads and 2/3 should go to public transport, cycling and walking (reversing the current ratio). And we should implement the UN recommendation that 20% of the transport budget should go to enabling safe cycling and walking (less than 2% does now) as that also tackles obesity and promotes healthy lifestyles.

We also need to reduce bus, tram and train fares to make them more accessible and attractive. Ireland has one of the lowest public transport subsidies in Europe. Luxembourg recently became the first country to announce all public transport will be free from 2020. As long ago as 2007 the Labour party proposed a €1 flat fee for all bus fares in Dublin.

### **10. 5-year Carbon Budgets**

The new climate and energy plan should come with two 5-year carbon budgets, voted on by the Dáil. That's simply the total amount of pollution Ireland will emit from 2021-2025 and 2026-2030. Departments then negotiate within that for their share of the pie, just like the fiscal budget and implement policies to stay within their budget. At the moment there's nothing to translate national targets into Departmental discipline.

### **11. Carbon Impact Assessments**

No Government policy that might affect our emissions should be adopted by Cabinet in the dark. They should run the numbers and estimate how much emissions will go up or down. That assessment should be in front of Cabinet when they make the decision and it should be published when they announce any new policy, plan or programme.

Between them these two policy instruments ensure that all Departments, sectors and policies have to have emissions reductions as an absolute priority from now on.

### **12. A cheque in the post**

We are going to need to increase the price on carbon, in line with the polluter pays principle. It will give a steady signal that every time we have a choice, choosing the less polluting option will save us money, as will investing in energy saving. But we have to do the carbon tax in a way that protects the most vulnerable and is socially fair.



### **Here are some placards/signs that have been used already:**

- **1. Reduce emissions by 2030!**
- **2. I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues**
- **3. Can we fix it? Yes we can**
- **4. No planet B**
- **5. Sea levels are rising, so are we**
- **6. We are the first generation to feel the effects of climate change and we are the last that can do anything about it!**
- **7. We can't drink oil, we can't breathe money**
- **8. Sorry I can't tidy my bedroom, I have to save the planet**
- **9. Global warming. Oh no**
- **10. Learn to change or learn to swim**
- **11. You say you love your children but you are destroying their future**
- **12. Respect existence or expect resistance**
- **13. Are you fracking kidding me?!**
- **14. We have the energy (renewable) to change!**
- **15. The emperor has no clothes**