



Press release 2019

THOUSANDS OF PUPILS JOIN CAMPAIGN TO CUT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC IN UK SCHOOLS

- On average in the UK we each throw away over 34kg of plastic packaging every year – nearly the weight of 5,000 pencils
- More than 8 in 10 of us are actively trying to reduce the amount of plastic we throw away

Thousands of primary and secondary school pupils have joined a major new campaign to drastically cut the consumption of single-use plastic in UK schools.

More than 7,000 pupils, across 12 schools, have signed up to [Plastic Pioneers](#) - a campaign led by environmental charity Hubbub, and sponsored by retailers [TK Maxx and Homesense](#).

The schools benefit from being part of a community stretching from Scotland to the south coast, sharing ideas on how to reduce their consumption of single-use plastic.

As part of the campaign, pupils form a Plastic Pioneers committee and audit their school's consumption of single-use plastic. They then advise on - and experiment with - ways to reduce single-use plastic, coming up with their own initiatives including replacing plastic bottles with reusable ones, banning yoghurt pots and rethinking lunchtime packaging.

Committee members wear Plastic Pioneers badges to encourage their classmates to think carefully about their consumption of single-use plastic. They have also scheduled workshops with expert guest speakers, including Dan Webb, who last week launched the [Everyday Plastic Survey](#) which is a nationwide campaign to enable participants to discover more about their plastic footprint; TEDx teen speaker, Amy Meek, from Kids Against Plastic and Mel Fisher, who runs Christmas markets with zero waste brands.

Researchers have found that on average in the UK we each throw away over 34kg of plastic packaging every year – nearly the weight of 5,000 pencils. Much of this cannot be recycled and ends up in landfill, floating around in our rivers and oceans.

In December, the Government urged schools to stop using single-use plastic items such as bags, straws, bottles and plastic food packaging by 2022, and to consider environmentally friendly alternatives instead.

Natalie Bayliss, Creative Partner at Hubbub, who is leading the Plastic Pioneers campaign said each school involved in the campaign has been coming up with different, innovative ways to cut down on single-use plastic.

"Pupils up and down the country have devised some brilliant ideas - from cutting out plastic in



their canteens to experimenting with alternatives to plastic prizes at school events,” she said.

“Single-use plastic is everywhere and our schools are no exception. It’s so ubiquitous, we often don’t even register it’s there.

“And yet it’s having an extremely damaging impact on our wildlife and environment. This campaign helps empower young people to challenge whether single-use plastic really needs to be used and to come up with alternatives.”

A [YouGov survey](#) in April showed just under half of us - 46% - feel guilty about the amount of plastic we use, while more than eight in 10 of us are actively trying to reduce the amount we throw away.

At Westhoughton High School in Bolton, 35 pupils are on the Plastic Pioneers Committee.

They persuaded the school to stop selling bottled water and through the campaign, have provided classmates with reusable bottles, which Plastic Pioneers pupils helped design. They have also removed plastic packaging from their canteen.

At Saint Gabriel’s College in Lambeth, the Plastic Pioneers campaign has helped put sustainability at the top of the school’s agenda.

Hazel Millar, Head of Key Stage 3 Science and Plastic Pioneers Coordinator, Saint Gabriel’s College, said: *“The crucial thing about this campaign is that it is student-led. It has shown my students that they have a voice. Their ideas on how to reduce single-use plastic have been taken up by the whole of the school with huge enthusiasm.”*

Just as the schools are looking at ways to cut consumption of single-use plastic, Plastic Pioneers sponsors TK Maxx and Homesense have so far removed the nine biggest contributors to ocean waste plastic from their stores and offices. These include plastic drink bottles, single use carrier bags, straws, plastic cups and non-biodegradable wipes.

Next year, all the schools involved in the Plastic Pioneers campaign will report back on the single initiative that has made the biggest difference to cutting the consumption of single-use plastic in their school.

For more information on Plastic Pioneers, contact Natalie Bayliss at hello@hubbub.org.uk

ENDS



NOTES TO EDITORS

- For images or for interviews, contact Jessica.Shepherd@barleycommunications.co.uk or 07957147308
- Please find attached and below a list of 10 ways schools can cut down on single-use plastic.
- High street retailers [TK Maxx](#) and [Homesense](#) have supported the campaign by providing funding to each school.
- To kick start student discussions on different types of plastic the Plastic Pioneers water bottles have been made from Braskem's bioplastic.
- **Schools involved in Plastic Pioneers:**
 1. All Saints Catholic College, Tameside
 2. Bo'ness Academy, Bo'ness
 3. Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, Leeds
 4. Croxley Danes School, Watford
 5. Eastern Green Junior School, Coventry
 6. Kinneil Primary School, Bo'ness
 7. Monkspath Junior and Infant School, Solihull
 8. Saint Gabriel's College, Lambeth
 9. St Andrew's CE High School for Boys, Worthing
 10. Thomas More Catholic School, Purley
 11. Westhoughton High School, Bolton
 12. Willows High School, Cardiff
- **Top 10 ways schools can cut down on single-use plastic:**
 1. Actively encourage pupils to remember their reusable water bottles
 2. Install and promote water bottle refill points
 3. Ban straws and disposable dessert pots
 4. Switch to metal cutlery
 5. Wrap sandwiches in tin foil
 6. Bring mugs back to the staffroom and parent events
 7. Reward book care rather than wrapping books in plastic
 8. Create a reusable "party kit" for school events and parties
 9. Invite inspiring plastic reduction experts to talk to the school about their tips and ideas
 10. Create and empower your own Plastic Pioneer committee to challenge single-use plastics

TK Maxx

- TK Maxx is Europe's leading off-price apparel and homeware retailer selling a huge assortment of big names and designer labels, top brands, up-and-coming labels and exciting gems at up to 60% less than the RRP and at a significant discount to the price in a department store or on the high street, every single day.
- TK Maxx offers a unique treasure hunt shopping experience where customers can find something special at a great price, every time they visit.
- The average TK Maxx store receives several deliveries a week. The rapidly changing mix of high quality merchandise creates the treasure hunt experience that customers love.



- Opportunistic buying, established relationships with vendors and a no frills operation means TK Maxx can pass huge savings onto customers.
- TK Maxx is committed to being a responsible retailer whether in the community, as an employer, in the supply chain or in the environment.
- As at August 2019¹ TK Maxx has 580 stores in six countries across Europe: the UK, Ireland, Poland, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands and is online at www.tkmaxx.com

Homesense

- Homesense is part of the TK Maxx family and operates an exciting off-price concept which offers branded homeware and unique finds, always up to 60% less than the recommended retail price.
- Homesense offers endless inspiration in a unique treasure hunt shopping experience where customers can experience the thrill of finding an amazing brand or exciting gem every time they visit.
- Opportunistic buying, established relationships with vendors and a no frills operation mean Homesense can pass huge savings onto the customer.
- The average Homesense store receives several deliveries per week. The rapidly changing mix of high quality merchandise creates the treasure hunt experience that customers love.
- Homesense is committed to being a responsible retailer whether in the community, as an employer, in the supply chain or in the environment.
- Homesense launched in the UK in 2008 and in Ireland in 2017.
- As at August 2019¹ Homesense has 72 stores across the UK and Ireland.

¹TJX Companies, Inc. Q2 FY20 results

TK Maxx and Homesense' sponsorship of the Hubbub Plastics Pioneers is one of four projects funded by the single use plastic carrier bag charge. TK Maxx and Homesense have also funded:

- Ocean Clean Up: a project to clear plastic from half the Pacific garbage patch by 2025.
- Plastic Collective: an innovative project which helps remove plastic from the ocean and communities affected by plastic waste and helps turn plastic waste into income for Pacific island communities.
- Supporting environmental and clean-up schemes through the UK by providing funds for 450 charities around our store communities. As at July, 30% of the projects have been completed resulting in 4,766 bags/28 tons of litter removed and 900+ bags of litter recycled through our partnership with Neighbourly.



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ABOUT HUBBUB

Hubbub is a charity which explores innovative ways to interest mainstream consumers in important sustainability issues, through different 'hubs' of activity: Food; Fashion; Homes; Neighbourhoods. Hubbub's previous campaigns have included #LeedsByExample a large scale recycling on the go campaign in Leeds, #SquareMileChallenge, the UK's first large scale solution to coffee cup recycling, #NeatStreets to cut litter in UK cities and For Fish's Sake (#FFSLDN) to tackle litter in the Thames.

www.hubbub.org.uk

Twitter: @hubbubuk

