Young Tree Champions
Project Application Guidance

Thank you for registering with the Young Tree Champions (YTC) programme and welcome to our community.

This document has been designed by teachers for teachers and provides step-by-step guidance to help you plan and apply to deliver an amazing Young Tree Champion project! Making sure you consider what matters most to your students and make the most of the exciting resources and opportunities on offer.

About the application guide

This guide takes you through how to prepare for and complete your application:

1. Getting started
2. Completing the application form

Your journey

Schools that successfully achieve their project aim, record their achievements using their project self-assessment and post on their Club Space are eligible to be awarded National Beacon School status (subject to assessment). **A National Beacon School** is an exemplar school that has embedded their project into their school's curriculum, on campus, and in their community both locally and nationally through the Young Tree Champion network (club space).

The current deadline for applications is **12 noon Thursday 3 February 2022**. Successful schools will be notified the following week. **Last year 100% of schools that applied were successful,** receiving tree packs and tech kits, training opportunities and support throughout the year. Listen to some of our Year One lead teachers' feedback on their experiences during a recent evaluation meeting.

Existing schools: Existing schools cannot apply to deliver another YTC project. If your school is still delivering a YTC project from 2020/21 then your goal is to reach Beacon School status before you can reapply for further trees and kit.

COVID-19: We are mindful of the pressures teachers and children are under, so we will work to support you as much as possible in completing your YTC project planning and application form.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at schools@treecouncil.org.uk.

1. Getting started

A summary of what you need to know before you get started

Before you dive in, here is a checklist and tips to help you make your project application is the best it can be.

Check list and top tips!

1. **Explore the YTC [project page](#) to understand the programme.** Check out our [YTC guide](#) and [case study](#).
2. **Watch our [project introduction webinar](#) and gain an insight into how to deliver a rewarding and sustainable project.**
3. **Identify what matters most** to your students (Young Tree Champions) and school. Last year teachers used our [questionnaire form](#) to help them define what matters most to them. Design your own to help define your project needs.
4. **Have a clear plan**. We recommend you complete a simple **action plan.** See an [example action plan here](#).
5. **Have fun and keep it manageable by hanging your project on wider initiatives.** Our partners Eco-schools and Forest Schools can help. There are so many initiatives that your YTC project can support.
6. **Decide where you want to plant your trees and make sure you have permission to do so from the landowner (this is very important!).**
7. **Decide how you will use the project resources, training and opportunities available**.
   o [Club Space](#) including club news, school links, training videos, activity plans and more.
   o A tree pack made up of five carefully selected trees - a choice of a container fruit tree pack, broadleaf tree pack, orchard tree pack or hedgerow pack (90 whips). [Find out more about the specific packs here.](#)
   o A tech kit filled with tech resources, such as a microscope camera, to help your students explore trees and nature and tackle the climate and nature crises.
   o A teacher training workshop and full day Speaking Up workshop for your students with partners Speakers Trust.

When you are ready to apply:

- Go to www.youngtreechampions.org/apply-to-young-tree-champions/
- **Make sure you save your application as you go** - you can return to it at any time.

2. Completing the application form

Your organisation details

At the beginning of the application form, you will be asked if you have already created a [Club Account](#). If you have not created a free club account, then you will be asked to choose a username and password to create one. This will give you access to the [Club Space,](#) an exclusive online hub where you can share your activities and interact with our national network of YTC schools. You will then need to enter your school's name, type and address, your contact details and additional information about your school, e.g., number of pupils and the percentage of Free School Meals recipients.

Your Young Tree Champion Project

Consider how your whole school can get involved in the project, and specifically consider the four main activities:
- o Growing deeper connections with each other and nature.
- o Learning across the curriculum.
- o Caring for your trees and nature.
- o Sharing your project impact in fun and creative ways to inspire your community and country.

All schools that apply and successfully deliver their YTC project have the potential to be awarded National Beacon School status. This means your school has excelled in being a Force for Nature across the curriculum, on campus and through engaging the community locally and at a national level.

Top tip! Consider your whole school approach, be innovative, be creative and connect and engage with your wider community, experts and other schools to help embed your project into your school's improvement plans.

What is your project title?

A good project title is concise and memorable and gives a clear idea of what your project hopes to achieve (for example 'Tree-mendous Stonepark Primary' or 'Woodridge High's Tree Trail').

What matters most to your Young Tree Champions and your school as a whole?

Before you start your project application, work with your Young Tree Champions to identify what matters most to them and the wider school community when it comes to the climate and nature crises.

For example, your project might aim to:
- Reduce local air pollution and cut your schools carbon footprint.
- Create a better home for nature in your school and community.
- Help more children get active and connect with nature to improve their mental health.
- Raise awareness of the climate/nature crises. Start a campaign to tackle deforestation.
- Explore the science of trees, unlocking your life support system.

You could ask your Young Tree Champions to carry out a pupil and parent questionnaire to really understand what your school and parents care about most. To help you get started, we recommend using our [questionnaire template](#).

Please summarise your project aim

In this question, you will need to explain your project aim – how will it address what matters most to your Young Tree Champions, and what do you hope to achieve together, your impact.

Remember, our YTC ethos is **to be a Force for Nature by connecting, learning, caring for and sharing the power (value and role) of trees to help tackle the climate and nature crises**. This should be at the heart of what you hope to achieve.

Example project aim

Our Young Tree Champions have identified health as the key issue that matters most to them. Our projects aim is to grow a deeper understanding of how to keep trees and ourselves healthy.

Objectives include:
- *Connecting with each other and nature through sharing special memories and feelings for trees and nature.*
- *Learning about what trees and we need to thrive.*

- *Caring for each other and our trees health.*
- *Sharing activities through creating a display in the hall and producing a podcast to teach other students about the benefits of trees and nature for our mental health.*

Please select one or two themes that you feel align best with your project.

Projects can focus on one or more of the following themes:

- Trees, health and wellbeing
- Trees and our climate
- Trees and nature
- Trees, past and future

'Trees, health and wellbeing' is about exploring the health and wellbeing benefits that come from forming deeper connections with trees and nature.

'Trees and our climate' is about delivering activities that explore the role and value of trees and nature in tackling the climate crisis in your school, your community and beyond and our responsibilities to take action.

'Trees and nature' is about delivering activities that explore the role of trees in providing a home for a diverse and resilient ecosystem in your school, your community and beyond, and our responsibilities to care for nature.

'Trees, past and our future' consists of activities that explore our relationship and use of trees in the past and looking forward into the future as society works together with nature and new technologies to tackle the climate and nature crises.

CONNECT: What connection activities are you going to deliver to grow your Young Tree Champions' connection with each other, trees and nature?

In this question, we'd like to know how you'll inspire pupils to learn from trees, to grow their connections with each other and trees and nature. Include activities that help them share how trees and nature make them feel and the benefits this brings to their **health and wellbeing**. For example, activities could include:

- Planting trees in your grounds.
- Collecting seeds from existing trees and planting them.

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- Using art and poetry to reflect on personal moments and special memories in the outdoors.
- Through English lessons, sharing feelings about nature at home and across the world and sharing their concerns for nature and their future.
- For Science lessons, recording their heart rate and other physical and mental changes whilst in nature and using their senses in different ways to experience trees and nature.
- Defining their relationship with trees and nature, observing a growing friendship and trust in nature, exploring loyalty and responsibility for each other's wellbeing
- Noticing trees in different seasons, observing tree health and their own health.

For further ideas and inspiration, see our activity inspiration guides.

LEARN: What activities are you going to deliver to learn about the power (value and role) of trees and nature to progress your project?

The learning activities for your YTC project should become part of your school curriculum. Doing this will help to engage the whole school in your project. Please describe examples of your activities and the curriculum links for specific subjects and associated topics. Activities may include specific lessons and resources. For inspiration, see our Training and Activities page on our website. You can also seek ideas from our partners and other environmental initiatives – **see page 9 and 10** for further details.

Keep the activities simple and achievable and **be creative** about how you use the natural resources in your school grounds, the tech kit (microscope camera, microphone, and tree ID charts) and your trees. Activities can be done as a club during lunchtime or during a class, or even as a cross-curricula enquiry-based project for your year group centred on, for example, unlocking trees and our health.

CARE: What activities will you deliver to care for your trees and nature more widely?

In this section, please detail how you will care for your trees and for nature more widely in your school grounds and beyond. Trees require care especially in the first three years to help them establish in a new environment! Your new trees will need to be watered regularly (around 20 litres per tree each week), weeded, mulched and guarded to prevent strong winds, potential vandals/balls etc. and animals from damaging your young trees.

Activities could include:

- Caring for your trees and installing a tree guard, stake and tie (provided in your pack).
- Delivering a watering rota.
- Learning about identifying tree health.
- Protecting the young trees from animals and other damage.
- Mulching your trees (you can get free wood chips here).
- Leaving space for nature in your school grounds like a nature corridor.
- Creating 'nature havens' within your school grounds to increase biodiversity. For example, a pond, insect hotel or log pile.

SHARE: How are you going to share your project activities with your school community and the national network?

To help grow our national campaign, we encourage schools to use **#ForceForNature.** It's important that Young Tree Champions use their voices to speak up for trees and nature and to demonstrate that they care and are taking responsibility to share their knowledge, experience and passion to inspire others. Consider how you are going to share your project with the school and the wider community. If you select a Speaking Up workshop with Speakers Trust as part of your application then if successful you will receive free teacher training and a pupil workshop to help your Young Tree Champions find their voice and become a #ForceForNature.

Examples of how you can share your project activities and impact are:

- Providing updates during school assemblies.
- Putting information on notice boards, the school website and/or newsletters to parents.
- Creating a podcast, animation, video or musical performance.
- Posting your news on the Club Space and your social channels using #ForceForNature to engage the national network.
- Planning and delivering a school campaign to empower others to act.
- Writing a press release and inviting in local press, your local MP or councillor to help raise the profile of your project and message.
- Plan and deliver a festival or celebration event and invite your local radio or TV channel to get involved.

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You should also consider how you are going to share at a national level through your youngtreechampions.org **Club Space** - you might share a blog post, photos, lesson ideas or a video with other YTC schools. See Club News for ideas of what other schools have posted.

Measuring your impact

How are you going to measure your impact?

We are really keen to make every step of the project fun and manageable. The best way to measure your impact is to post evidence of the outcome of your activity on club space. For example, the outcome of your connection activity might be a post of a poem written by your Young Tree Champions on the importance of connection. Your learning activity might be a picture of a new skill or knowledge gained, for example Young Tree Champions mapping your trees in your school grounds. Your caring activity might be a macro photo diary using your microscope camera of your trees posted on club space or the results of your bio blitz before and after the project. Your sharing activity might be a club post on a school assembly presentation delivered by your Young Tree Champions.

You can evidence and demonstrate your impact by completing your project self-assessment form by 7 June 2022. This is a really great way of reflecting and helping your Young Tree Champions appreciate their personal, wider group/class and school achievements. Throughout your YTC project, we really encourage schools to celebrate every achievement no matter how big or small by posting them on your Club Space. Remember every question, every activity, every action helps to grow your Force for Nature. Make sure you post and share all your activities (pictures, lesson ideas, opportunities, resources) on your Club Space and your social channels using #ForceForNature.

We will use your project self-assessment form and club posts as evidence to assess your impact and to award **National Beacon School Status**. By **7 June 2022** you will need to submit your project self-assessment and return it to us at schools@treecouncil.org.uk. The form mirrors your action plan, so have the two forms in mind when planning your project.

Top tip! Explain how you are engaging the whole school and embedding your YTC project into your school improvement plan, across the curriculum, on campus and in the school community and how you're going to measure progress.

Consider evidencing:

- Curriculum: Development of new resource, progress in key skills, learning outcomes that are linked to attainment targets.
- Campus: Extent of planting, increases in biodiversity.

- Community: Numbers engaged in the school or across your community, numbers of events, press coverage, number of Club News posts etc.

What are the wider benefits for your pupils and school?

We have been working hard to align the programme with key partners in the environmental education sector, including with Eco-schools and Learning through Landscapes. In this section, briefly explain how this project supports wider school initiatives such as:

- Eco-schools
- John Muir Nature Detectives initiatives
- Healthy schools initiatives
- Forest Schools
- RSPB wild schools
- The Soil Association's Food for Life partnership
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- Well-being and/or learning outside the classroom initiatives
- WWF learn to love nature
- UNEP Education and Environment

Resources, permissions and delivery

Which resources are you applying for?

We have a selection of resources and support we can offer schools that are applying to deliver a YTC project. On the application form, please tick the box for each resource you would like to apply for. We are here to help you deliver your project from start to finish and beyond. Specific project-related questions can be sent to schools@treecouncil.org.uk.

How resources will be awarded

The resources will be awarded as part of a needs-based assessment of your project, so we ask you provide information such as percentage of students eligible for Free School Meals, percentage EAL and your expected project impact. Schools that score highly are put forward to our expert panel to finalise selection.

If your school isn't selected for specific resources, we will continue to support you in reaching Beacon School status. Resources are provided based on which schools need them most. To help schools that aren't selected for specific resources we are running a feedback day on **Monday 7 February**. This will be a chance for you to email any questions you might have about why your school hasn't received resources. We will respond with feedback and tips to help you move forward and deliver an exciting project.

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Do you have permission and space to plant your trees?

It's important that you have the space and formal permissions to plant your trees before you apply. It may be worth checking your school improvement plan for any new proposed developments onsite. It's also important to consider access to your trees to water and care for your trees.

Are you applying for a tree pack?

Our tree packs have been specially selected by our experts and award-winning suppliers Frank P Matthews. Here is some further information to help you plan where your trees should be planted in your school grounds.

- **Container fruit tree pack:** Five fruit trees that will grow to between 5-10m in height and need to be planted between 3-5m apart or in a container (approximately 1 cubic meter in size and with drainage holes). The tree varieties in this pack have been specially selected for ease of growing, cropping and taste.

- **Broadleaf tree pack:** Five trees that have been selected for schools with more space, for example, a playing field, wildlife area or hedgerow. These trees grow to 10-15m in height and need to be planted 5-8m apart. Broadleaf species mix includes trees like birch, hornbeam, wild cherry, rowan, oak and lime.

- **Orchard tree pack:** Five fruit trees that will grow to 3-5m in height and need to be planted 3m apart. The orchard tree varieties will include a mix of apple, pear, plum and cherry trees.

- **Hedgerow pack:** Hedgerow packs contain 90 whips (young trees) which are 0.4-6m in height and will grow to form a hedge between 2-3m in height and 15-18 metres in length. Each whip will need to be planted between 15-20cm apart. The species mix includes alder, field maple, birch, hornbeam, hawthorn, beech, crab apple, wild cherry, oak, rowan and lime.

Your young trees will arrive 'bare-rooted' and ready for immediately planting out. Your tree pack (container fruit trees, broadleaf and orchard fruit trees) will include stakes, wire guards and hessian ties to support the tree for the first two to three years of its life. Hedgerow packs do not

include stakes, wire guards or hessian ties. You'll receive full planting and care instructions through our webinar (Tuesday 8 February) and detailed guidance document.

Accessing and caring for your trees

For the first two years your trees will need to be watered regularly (two to three times a week), so it is best to plant your trees in places where students can easily access them and ideally that are close to an outdoor tap. Consider developing a tree trail or creating an outdoor learning space.

Are you applying for a tech kit?

Our tech kits are intended to help your Young Tree Champions with limited resources explore the wonder of trees and express their passion in creative ways. The kit will include a microscope camera to explore the science of trees at the macro level, a microphone to record pupil speaking up for trees and nature and to record the sounds of nature. Tree ID charts and information on a range of free apps which you can access, also training to help you make the most of your tech kit. Schools will need access to a smart phone or tablet to make best use of their tech kit. The kit comes with an adaptor so you can plug the microscope camera into a tablet.

Are you applying for a Speaking Up for Trees and Nature workshop led by Speakers Trust?

Speakers Trust teacher training and pupil workshops are designed to give teachers the tools and skills to inspire their pupils to speak up for trees and nature and express their passion, in a confident and creative way. They are run by award-winning trainers from Speakers Trust. Teachers that sign up will receive a comprehensive two-hour online training workshop, providing breakout sessions on oracy, storytelling, planning sessions and more, to prepare lead teachers in school to support in the delivery of the pupil workshops.

The pupil workshops are a full day (two x two-hour sessions) and will be tailored to support your school. Speakers Trust will contact successful schools directly to arrange an appropriate time for your workshop and plan the session accordingly. The day is likely to be delivered online to either your club of Young Tree Champions (5 - 10 children) or a class (max. 32 children).

Delivery information

All schools that request either tree packs, tech kits or Speaking Up workshops will be notified by **Friday 4 February 2022** if they have been successful. Tree packs and tech kits will be delivered in early **March 2022**. Please also remember that deliveries must be made to manned sites, so ensure

you note a delivery address where someone will be available to receive the packs during working hours.

If you are awarded a Speakers Trust workshop, the teacher training workshops will take place on 10 February (Secondary aged schools) and 1 March (Primary aged schools). This workshop will be up to two hours. The whole-day pupil workshops will be arranged with the selected school between March and May. Speakers Trust will get in touch with you directly to arrange a preferred time for the pupil workshop.

Data protection and safeguarding

We will share the details you provide us with third parties such as our tree nursery, contractors, couriers and sponsors and anyone involved directly in the funding, delivery or monitoring of the Young Tree Champion programme. This is necessary to deliver your packs. The Tree Council or a nominated partner (for example, the tree nursery who is supplying your trees) may make contact to process your order. We will also keep in touch regularly by email, and occasionally by post, with relevant information and resources to help your school deliver the YTC programme. You can unsubscribe from these communications at any time by contacting us at schools@treecouncil.org.uk.

We will keep your data for up to three years. We will use it only in the ways outlined above and observe all UK GDPR and other relevant data legislation. Click the links to read our Privacy Statement and our comprehensive Safeguarding Policy.

Summary form

The summary of your application form will allow you to check and keep a record of all the information you have provided. Once you have submitted your form, you'll also receive a PDF of your application in an email confirmation.

Thank you, so much for reading our guidance and taking the time to develop your project application. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you might have or to request more information as and when you require it at schools@treecouncil.org.uk

Good Luck!