



Environmental Club Handbook

A high school student's guide to creating a successful environmental club

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This toolkit was created by Abbie Darling, a High School student!

Introduction

As high school students, it can be difficult for us to feel as though we can make an impact in our community. We can't vote until we are 18, it's hard to get a job that aligns with something we'd want as a career, and we are often dismissed in important conversations due to our age.

While we may not have control over these things, we can still take action that stands up for what we believe in. Creating an environmental club at your school is the perfect option if you're interested in building a community where students can learn about the environment and take action, as well as have a safe space with individuals who share their values. Follow this guide to help you establish your own environmental club!

Creating the Club's Vision

Before establishing your club, it's important to ask yourself a few essential questions:

- What are your goals?
- What are your values?
- Are you partnering with any organizations?

Keep in mind: The club's vision determines the direction and captures the overall spirit you desire

Establishing Goals

It's important to create a list of short and long term goals before starting your club so you have an idea of the direction you'd like it to go.

1. Write 3 things you want the club to accomplish in the next year
2. Write 3 things you want the club to accomplish in the next 3 years.

[Check out this guide if you need help determining your goals.](#)

By establishing goals, you can keep your club on track. If you find yourself unsure of why you started, look back upon these goals and realign yourself to keep up with them. It also provides a way to measure how much you've accomplished; if you realize certain goals aren't attainable or don't make sense anymore, you can always change them!



Partnering with an Organization

Before establishing the club, decide if you'd like to partner with an environmental organization. [Check out this link if you would like a list of environmental organizations + descriptions.](#)

Considerations

- Coaches or mentors are often provided to guide you
- Some organizations have a focus around a certain goal or campaign, make sure to choose one that aligns with something you want to do
- Partnering with nonprofits often yields volunteer hours, which may be an incentive for club members
- You may have more opportunities (for action, careers, making connections) if you partner with an organization

- Organizations may be able to provide resources such as: connections, money, speakers, activities, action items, etc...
- Organizations often have specific actions you can take to support their campaigns, this can be helpful if you aren't sure how to take action

Creating a Mission Statement

A mission statement provides a short description of the club's activities and values. This is helpful to provide when people are signing up. [Check out this guide to help you create your mission statement.](#)

Tips:

- Keep it short and simple
- Why does the club exist? What does the club support? How does the club show support?
- Make sure the statement reflects the club's long term goals
- Don't be afraid to change the statement if the club's values change
- Make a statement in a series of bullet points if you don't like paragraph form

A mission statement is a declaration of what makes your club important. It clarifies the actions of its members and establishes a vision by explaining your values, actions, and what you intend to accomplish.



Creating Your Club

The process of creating your club involves an establishment process, creating rules, and forming club leadership.

The Establishment Process

AKA the steps you need to take in order for the club to be considered an on-campus organization. **This process varies across each campus, but here are a few basic things you may need to consider:**

1. [Do you need to acquire a club advisor?](#)
2. [Create a club name](#)
3. [Develop a relationship with an organization](#) (if you decide to form a partnership)
4. [Decide how often the club meets](#)
5. [Get the club approved](#)
6. [Create a club social media](#)

Club Leadership

The leaders of a club are generally known as the cabinet / executive officers / steering committee. In typical clubs, you have the President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer. You should aim to have leadership established before your first club meeting or even better, before the school year starts!

Here are a few tips when figuring out the details associated with club leadership:

- [Finding a title for each club leadership role](#)
- [Finding the right fit for leadership roles](#)
- [Have regular cabinet meetings](#)

Cabinet Rules + Expectations

It's important to have a set of rules that set expectations and consequences; this includes members, but more importantly: cabinet. Rules reinforce that the cabinet has a set of duties they are expected to follow, and consequences can follow if these duties aren't met. Especially if cabinet members are your friends, it's important to set a boundary between club life and social life.

Consider these example cabinet expectations + tips:

- Attend all club and cabinet meetings unless you have a valid reason
- Cabinet members are expected to respond to group chat messages and emails promptly (treat it like a job!!)
- If expectations aren't met, have a known tier of consequences (e.g. warning, penalty, formal apology, removed from their position)
- If you form a partnership, require that cabinet attend a meeting with that organization once a semester/quarter
- Do what your position requires of you! You signed up for this commitment and it should be treated equal to other commitments you made

Club Meetings

Club meetings are normally the main thing a club is centered around. Make sure to hold meetings on the same day a week regularly to keep up member attendance.

Meeting Content

The content of club meetings can encourage students to attend if it's interesting and fun, or dissuade students if it isn't. [Check out this link for topic and activity ideas](#). **Here are examples of different kinds of meetings:**

- **Educational** - This is where you teach the club about a specific topic. You can do this via a presentation, documentary, video, etc...
- **Action** - These meetings consist of action items such as activities or large goal-oriented focus. If you are partnered with an organization, this can look like taking action to support one of their important campaigns.
- **Kickoff** - Kickoff meetings are perfect for introducing your club to a new focus or to reorient the current focus. These are also generally held at the beginning of the year to introduce people to the club. Think of this like a reset button where you explain what it'll be focusing on for the time being.
- **Relaxed** - A lot of times we think we have to be taking action all the time, but it's good to have a relaxed day once in a while to recuperate and show your members appreciation. Try doing a relaxing activity like drawing, painting, a potluck, writing a letter to your future self, writing down your long and short term goals, etc...
- **Goal oriented** - These are similar to a community input session, it's good when you want to hear what club members want to focus on and see more of. This can be held at the end of another meeting since they usually don't take up a lot of time.
- **"Club bonding" or "team bonding"** - We have all had a time or another where we've been thrown into awkward breakout rooms. The goal is to create cohesion so members are presented as a group instead of many little groups that make up the club.



Incentives

Even if you gain members, it can be hard to keep attendance up. Thankfully, there are incentives you can provide to keep them coming. Keep in mind clubs are a commitment, so always show appreciation for members & give back when you can.

1. **Food** - This can oftentimes be a dealbreaker, especially for hungry high school students. Providing food at every meeting can also make meetings feel less professional and shows that you appreciate their attendance. You can get money for food via an organization you partnered with, through grant money, or by asking a local business to help you out.
2. **Consistently meet** - Everyone can be benefitted by consistency; members may feel like more is being accomplished and their time is being well spent. Having regular and consistent meetings also lets people know to block off a certain day and time frame so they can attend.
3. **Logging hours + attendance** - If you partner with a non-profit organization, any time members spend in the club is considered volunteering. You can ask members to log their own volunteer hours or you can do it for them. If you can't provide hours, you can take attendance so they can list club participation on college applications.
4. **Provide a timeline** - This can help members develop a vision of what the club hopes to accomplish. It can also show them that there's structure and they won't be wasting their time.
5. **Schedule multiple relaxed meetings** - Clubs can sometimes be stressful in addition to school, so it's important to schedule downtime. Your members will always appreciate a safe space to relax with their peers. Provide food as a way of giving back for their work and participation!



Club Promotion

Promotion is important to gain and keep members. It's more than trying to gain attention— it's promoting the work your club does so members feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

Social Media

We are at a day and age where social media is one of the most effective ways to broadcast events and activities. Creating a club Instagram is a great way to gain publicity and members.

Check out [this guide](#) that goes over creating a username, setting up a profile, how to use the account, logistics, and engagement.

Remind

Remind is a free application that allows you to contact all club members at once. [If you are unfamiliar with Remind, check out this link](#). You can provide the Remind account at Club Fair to let people know when your first meeting will be.

- Remind members about an upcoming meeting or event
- Provides a way for members to DM you without giving out your personal information

Event Promotion

If a specific event or meeting is to be promoted, you can use social media, Remind, posters, and the school's intercom. Don't be afraid to overpromote, sometimes people need constant reminders!

The Future of the Club

There will come a time where you leave highschool, it's inevitable. While you may feel like your responsibilities are over, it's important to leave your club in a place where it can continue. Its future lies within the hands of the next leaders, so focus on them.

Here are some things you should consider as your club enters a new generation:

- [Who will be taking over the leadership positions? How long will positions be held? How will cabinet positions be decided?](#)
- [How will the new cabinet be trained?](#)
- [What resources do I need to provide for the club's future success?](#)
- [How can I keep a relationship between the organization and future club leadership?](#)
- [Can I count on my club advisor to provide the support necessary for the club to continue?](#)

My Experience as a Club Leader

I founded Greenpeace Club in 2020 as a Sophomore. The club has grown from 15 members over Zoom to around 65 this past year. I am a current Senior, so I will be passing my club onto someone else very soon. Here's what I've learned in the past 3 years:

- **Delegate and don't be afraid to ask for help** from your cabinet members, teacher advisor, club members, even your parents or friends. You may be the president, but you don't need to do everything!

- **The key to growing your club is consistency and publicity.** Make sure you're having regular meetings and are posting photos of club members on Instagram. When people see club members consistently having fun, it gives them FOMO and they want to join.
- **Food attracts club members!** Seriously. After we started providing food at club meetings, we gained more members. Students will generally enjoy your club meetings, but they may need an incentive to take them away from their lunch break.
- **Don't take everything so seriously.** It's important to stay on task and do what your club is meant to do, but have fun with it. Be informal and make club meetings fun to be at; enjoy your time as a highschooler.



Greenpeace Club members 2021-2022 school year

Have questions or ideas to improve this toolkit? Send them to Abbie, aabbiedarling@gmail.com