



The Peaceful Schools Awards



Why do we need 'Peaceful Schools'?

The founders of the Peaceful Schools Movement believe that it is time to take a radical look at the kind of schools we want for the 21st Century. What is one of the biggest issues in society that we need to address? We believe that it is conflict resolution and peace-building.

We all know the terrible effects of wars and other forms of violence. But do we see the connection between the conflicts that ravage the world and the way that we live our own lives in our societies? Martin Luther King said: 'Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.' It is because of this connection that we all need to be equipped to work for peace in our own lives and communities.

Disputes and conflicts may be inevitable but violence is not. We believe that schools can play a key role in preventing continued cycles of violence by promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding and by teaching young people how to deal with conflict creatively and nonviolently. The General Assembly of the United Nations defined a culture of peace as: 'all the values, attitudes and forms of behaviour that reflect respect for life, for human dignity and for all human rights; the rejection of violence in all its forms and commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding between people'.

The United Nations has called on every country to 'ensure that children, from an early age, benefit from education to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance'. The Peaceful Schools Movement is about building positive, peaceful relationships within our schools. We believe that schools should be places where pupils have opportunities to feel peaceful, where conflict is handled constructively and where pupils learn how to be peacemakers.

We believe that peace needs to be cultivated in all areas: the individual, the group, the school and throughout the world. Therefore we encourage schools to work on four areas or levels: the individual's inner peace, peaceful relationships, peaceful school communities and peace in the world.

The individual's inner peace - the foundation level for creating a peaceful school is about the individuals within the school. We know too well that there are many pupils (and teachers!) being bullied, feeling stressed and suffering mental health problems. Peaceful schools can help pupils and all school staff by giving them opportunities to cultivate calm and develop inner resources through activities like yoga, meditation and mindfulness.

Peaceful relationships - there are many tried and tested peace-building activities that schools can choose from to suit their needs and interests. A key aspect of this is the modelling of positive relationships within a whole school approach; finding ways to work together, cooperate, listen and talk things through. The 'Peacemakers' organisation in Birmingham and other organisations that are members of the Peace Education Network support schools in this. There are also many different kinds of peace projects for schools, from 'Peace Mala' which foster inter-cultural and inter-faith tolerance, to peace weeks or days which Quaker Peace and Social Witness's Peace Education Programme can support.

Peaceful School communities - the ethos of a school is almost instantly felt when you enter a school and it influences the way everyone in the school behaves. A proven approach to creating a peaceful whole school ethos and behaviours is the 'Values-based Education' approach pioneered by Dr Neil Hawkes. Also, it is important to create peaceful places indoors and outdoors. Organisations like 'Learning Through Landscapes' work with schools to help them create peaceful gardens. Woodheys Primary School in Cheshire is a great example of a peaceful school with wonderful schools grounds. Peaceful rooms within schools can be created to supplement the peace of the school library. Such rooms can be used for therapeutic help for children as well as places where children and teachers can escape from the noise and bustle of the school day. Organisations like 'A Quiet Place' in Liverpool are pioneering this.

Taking peace out into the world - schools can equip pupils to go out into the community as peace ambassadors. There is a wide range of materials to support schools to help children explore peacemaking in the world, from organisations such as Amnesty International, Pax Christi, CND and Quaker Peace and Social Witness, as well as the Peace Education Network: <http://peace-education.org.uk>.

There are many ways to build a more peaceful school. To find out more, check out the resources and information on the Peaceful Schools website www.peacefulschools.org.uk.

About the Peaceful Schools Awards

The Peaceful Schools Awards scheme has been developed in order to promote the important role that schools can play in equipping children and young people with the skills and experience to be peaceful and to act as peacemakers. The Awards scheme aims to raise awareness and spread understanding of peace in our schools by acknowledging, valuing and publicising the superb work that schools are already doing in relation to:

- having a commitment to being a peaceful place,
- adopting peaceful values,
- working to promote peaceful practices,
- embedding peace education throughout the school,
- going on a journey of peace,
- being a peaceful community,
- working towards a peaceful world.

The Peaceful Schools Awards scheme will help to:

- encourage schools to have 'peace' at the heart of their ethos and values,
- recognise the energy and commitment schools have given to developing a peaceful culture and ways,
- celebrate achievements in the promotion of peace,
- facilitate the sharing of information about good and innovative practice.

The awards are given to schools that promote any, or all, of the following areas/levels:

1. Individual peace
2. Peaceful relationships
3. A peaceful school community
4. A peaceful world

'Individual peace' focuses on the ways in which we help our children and young people to explore and experience personal peace within their lives.

'Peaceful relationships' is about the ways in which we help our children and young people to live in peace with each other.

'Community peace' looks at the ways in which we establish, maintain and enhance a peaceful school community.

'A peaceful world' is about how we help our young people to understand and respond to local and worldwide peace issues and enable them to be at peace with those around them in the wider community.

There are three different award categories:

1. The Peaceful Project Award,
2. The Beacon Peaceful School Award,
3. The Peacemaker Award

The Peaceful Project Award

In order to be given the **Peaceful Project Award**, schools are invited to submit projects that meet **any or all** of the following three criteria.

Criteria for the Peaceful Project Award

1. A peace-focused project with a specific timescale that has been undertaken and completed.

Example: When a school works on something specific with a partner organisation for a limited number of weeks.

2. A peace-focused project that has been put into place and is then ongoing.

Example: The creation of a peace garden or quiet indoor area.

3. Changes to school practice, policies and organisation that have been put into place with the specific aim of promoting and enhancing peace.

Examples: Changing the behaviour policy to a relationships policy. Redeveloping the rewards system to ensure that it reflects children's contribution to peace within the school.

Evidence required

To achieve the award you will need to tell the Peaceful Schools Awards Committee all about the project or changes made. In doing so you need to show:

- why you did the project or changed things,
- what you did,
- how you went about things,
- who was involved,
- the ways in which it has promoted peace in relation to any of the four areas/levels of a peaceful school – individual peace, peaceful relationships, a peaceful school community and a peaceful world.

How you evidence each of the above, in what format, and what else you include is up to you, but it would be expected that you would show:

- the clear and significant involvement of children and young people in both the project and the award submission,

- a response to the last question (*the ways in which it has promoted peace in relation to any of the four levels of a peaceful school – individual peace, peaceful relationships, a peaceful school community and a peaceful world.*) that includes children/young people, staff and parents/carers,
- how you are sustaining the project if it is ongoing,
- any plans you have for future developments in relation to it.

The first step in applying for this award is to make contact with: **DAVID HOLMES, the Peaceful Schools Awards Coordinator: davidholmes50@hotmail.co.uk** to register your involvement. He will then put you in touch with a member of the Peaceful Schools Awards Team who will be your supporter through the process should you need it.

When you feel that you are ready to apply for the project award, you will send evidence/information to David Holmes, the Coordinator of the Awards scheme. All evidence/ information should be sent in the post or in a format that can be downloaded and printed out.

If the moderators are satisfied that your peaceful project / changes have met the criteria, your named point of contact will inform you as soon as possible that you have been awarded your **Peaceful Project Award** and you will be sent a certificate in recognition of your achievement.

There is no limit as to how many Peaceful Project Awards you can apply for, but only one can be applied for at a time.

If the award has been given for an ongoing project, it will last for three years after which the project will have to be resubmitted for consideration.

All those who are successful will receive a certificate from the Peaceful Schools Award Committee.

Be creative in your thinking – if you believe that a project that you have been involved with has made a positive contribution to any of the four levels of peace and has helped to promote an understanding of peace or peaceful behaviour, please share it with us and hopefully we will be able to acknowledge what you have been doing and give your achievements the recognition they deserve.

The Beacon Peaceful School Award

Criteria for the Beacon Peaceful School Award

The **Beacon Peaceful School Award** will be awarded for achievements in **all four** of the peaceful schools areas/levels.

1. Individual peace
2. Peaceful relationships
3. Peaceful communities
4. A peaceful world

In order to achieve Beacon Peaceful School status, you will need to demonstrate:

- what you have done in relation to **all of** the above levels,
- the positive impact that your actions have had on promoting them,
- how you intend to move forward.

As with the Peaceful Project Award, it is for you to decide what supporting information you wish to submit and in what format. The award moderators will be looking for the following to be reflected in what you send to them:

- the involvement of all members of the school community,
- a holistic approach ie how you promote peace in various aspects of the school,
- the reasons you had for having the peaceful projects and activities,
- thoughts on why things worked well or weren't as successful as hoped,
- the nature of the projects, ie. were they a one-off or ongoing, carried out in partnership with another organisation etc.,
- sustainability,
- people's thoughts on how things have impacted on them
- how 'peace' permeates all aspects of school life and culture.

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When you feel that you are ready to apply for the project award, you will send evidence/information to David Holmes, the Coordinator of the Awards scheme. All evidence/ information should be sent in the post or in a format that can be downloaded and printed out.

If the moderators are satisfied that your school has met the Beacon Peaceful School criteria, your named point of contact will inform you as soon as possible that you have been awarded your **Beacon Peaceful Award** and you will be sent a certificate in recognition of your achievement.

Beacon Peaceful School status will be valid for three years, after which you will need to have it reconfirmed by showing:

- what is now in place and why,
- a focus on new initiatives,
- on-going and new impact on people,
- the ways in which projects have been sustained,
- a continued and consistent holistic, whole-school approach,
- future development plans.

Being a Beacon Peaceful School is all about your school. It is important that it reflects you as a community and how the journey of peace has impacted on those involved. Please remember that the award is not about ticking boxes to show what you have done but sharing and celebrating with you and others, why peace is important to you, and how your commitment to it has impacted on lives, ethos, culture, practices and purpose.

The Peacemaker Award

The Peacemaker Award is an award for individuals. It is for children and young people and for adults working in or with a school. It is given by the Peaceful Schools Awards Committee to acknowledge and recognise those individuals who have made a significant personal contribution to promoting any or all of the following:

- The personal peace of others
- Peaceful relationships
- Peaceful school communities
- A peaceful world

To be recognised as a Peacemaker, the following should be seen in the nominated child, young person or adult:

- an understanding of what peace means – this may be age-appropriate for younger nominees,
- the sustained modelling of peaceful relationships,
- a significant contribution to peaceful activities beyond those made by others,
- personal peace values.

In celebrating the achievements of individual peacemakers, two things are central to this award, as follows.

It is open to children, young people and adults of **ALL** ages because no one is too young or too old to be an ambassador of peace.

It is about recognising those individuals who have helped to promote peace in and **between others**. Being a 'Peacemaker' is not about a personal journey of peace - although that can of course be a part of why they have made the contribution that is being celebrated.

To nominate someone as a Peacemaker, email a brief biography to: **DAVID HOLMES, the Peaceful Schools Awards Coordinator: davidholmes50@hotmail.co.uk**

The biography can be in any format that can be sent as an email attachment and can include anything, such as photographs, that you consider appropriate and supportive to the nomination. The information shared should clearly show:

- what the nominee has done,

- why you regarded this to be beyond expectations or special,
- the impact that this has had on others,
- the impact that it has had on the nominee.

All those who are successful will receive a certificate from the Peaceful Schools Awards Committee.

It should be stressed that the Peacemaker Award is only for those who have 'gone the extra mile' towards the promotion of peace between others/ people of any age.