

# Waikato

# ENVIROSCHOOLS



## Sustainability - The Big Picture Caring for the Earth

How can we take action to make a positive difference?

The way we live has an impact on the health of the planet. If we use less energy, make less waste and use less resources we can tread more lightly on the earth and be kinder to the planet.

One of the ways our impacts on Earth can be measured is by looking at our Carbon Footprint.

### Measure Your Carbon Footprint

A **carbon footprint** is created when people use energy sources called fossil fuels that release **carbon dioxide**, which is a type of greenhouse gas.

[Measure yours now!](#)

### Make a pledge, take action for the Earth

People can reduce their **carbon footprint** by turning off lights to conserve energy, walking or biking instead of travelling by car, having shorter showers, having a meat-free meal, reducing food waste, buying second-hand instead of new, planting trees, growing fruit and veges and recycling items to create less waste.

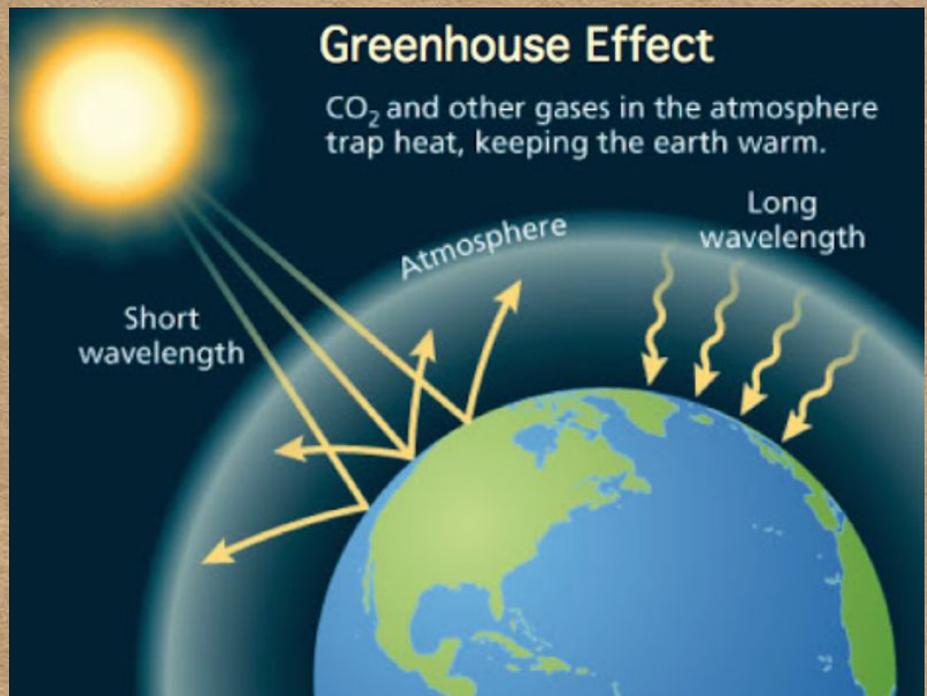
What could you do? [More ideas here](#)

- Choose an action to do to reduce your carbon footprint
- Create a pledge and stick it on the fridge, or somewhere where you see it every day
- Can you do this for a day? A week? A month? A year?
- Can you help your family members to make a pledge too?



## What is Climate Change & the Greenhouse Effect?

Understanding climate change starts with the atmosphere. The atmosphere surrounds the Earth like a bubble and protects us from the harshest rays of the sun and the cold of space. It contains greenhouse gases, which include the air we breathe (oxygen) and others gases (including carbon dioxide -CO<sub>2</sub>) that help keep Earth at the right temperature.



The energy we use (for driving cars, heating, lights, refrigeration) that comes from burning coal, natural gas, and oil, releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Over the last 150 years, the levels of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere have increased a lot, and this is causing a warming of the climate.

### How does this change the climate?

Think about the steam created when someone showers with the bathroom door closed. The steam is trapped and warms the bathroom. **Too many** greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are like the steam in the bathroom: The gases are trapped and warm the planet. And when the Earth warms, its climate changes.

[YouTube - Climate Change a kid's perspective - 10 and under](#)

[YouTube - An introduction to climate change - for 10+](#)

[YouTube - Climate Change - Earth's giant game of Tetris](#)



**Trees please!** Trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen. One of the easiest things we can do to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is to plant more trees. The more trees, the healthier the atmosphere!

