



Climate Strike Toolkit

For High School & College Organizers in San Diego

Everything you need to organize an effective Student Climate Strike

Join youth activists across San Diego County and around the world in a massive **climate strike** on **September 15th, 2023**.

This toolkit is here to help you organize a successful event. Use whatever parts of the toolkit are helpful for your event.

First Step – Register your School Strike now. [Fill out this form](#) with your info, and we'll reach out!

Second Step – Sign our Climate Strike Petition. [Fill out this petition](#) demanding President Biden acknowledge the current climate crisis and champion climate action at the 2023 UN Climate Summit.

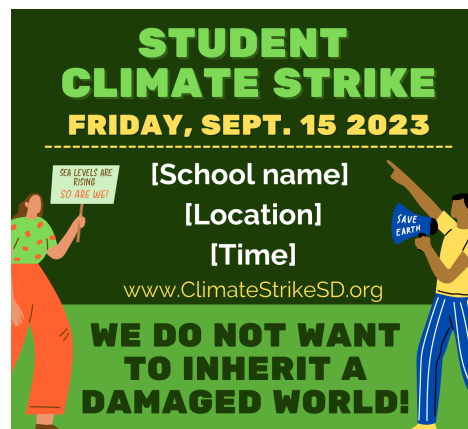
The Basics – If you don't have much time, this is all you need to get started:

1. Talk to your friends and pick a place and time to gather on Sept. 15.
Note for high schoolers: Consider your [school administration's likely reaction](#).
2. Get others to join you. (See tips on [Promoting your event](#))
3. Make signs. (See [Sample signs](#) for some ideas)
4. Share photos and videos of yourselves demanding climate action on social media and upload them to our [Climate Strike Google Folder](#)!
 - a. Use the hashtag #ClimateStrikeSD

Power up – If you have more time to plan, take what you find helpful from this toolkit.

Toolkit Contents

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1. BUILDING YOUR TEAM

Your team might be two people or 10 or more. Start with a core group of people who are fired up about the Climate Strike.

A. Recruiting team members

1. Plan an introductory meeting to discuss the purpose of the 9/15 global climate action and develop goals for your school.
2. Invite your friends and anyone who is concerned about the environment to the planning meeting.
3. Contact relevant clubs and ask them to come (eco club, social justice club, cultural club, science club)
4. Invite people by email, text, Instagram, facebook event posts, and phone calls.
5. Follow up with people one-on-one to find out what they're interested in doing.
6. See the [Promoting Your Event](#) section for more outreach ideas.

B. Assigning key planning roles and coordinating the work

Depending on the size and style of your event, assign people to lead on each of these responsibilities. If possible, it's great to have co-leads - two people sharing each duty. Or, if your team is small, one person may have more than one of these roles.

It's helpful for the whole team to meet face-to-face several times to tackle challenges together.

Planning and advance roles (see day-of-event roles under Logistics)

- **Overall manager / coordinator(s)** – Make sure everything gets done for a successful event: logistics, materials, roles
- **Promotion + social media coordinator** – Plan and organize outreach to bring more people to the event, including creating and posting info, photos & videos before, during and after the event
- **Arts designer** – Plan the signs, colors, graphic designs needed and coordinate folks to make posters and banners
- **Photographer** – Take photos on the day of the event
- **Music/chant coordinator** – Plan how the event will sound, arrange for live or recorded entertainment, plus songs and chants for the crowd
- **Safety manager** – You will need to assign someone to ensure safety of participants, Non-Violent, & communicating with police (if present)
- **Administration Liaison** -- Communicate and coordinate with school administration as needed

2. PLANNING YOUR EVENT

A. Decide on time and place

You need to make **two main decisions**:

1. What **time** is your event on Friday, September 15th - and how long will it last?
2. **Where** will your event take place?

Time: You might rally for 15-20 minutes at lunch time, to march or stand with signs. Or you might walk out for the whole day, or a couple hours. Think hard about your capacity, what will get students engaged and likely consequences at your school. The SanDiego350 coaches can help with this.

Place: Choose a location where you will be highly visible, preferably with lots of pedestrians. You could be in front of the school, or march to a government building or some other location.

Some things to consider:

- Do you need a stage and access to power outlets?
- Do you want to march or stay in one location, or some of both?
- Where will you be most visible?
- Consider what will be needed for different locations, e.g., a permit for a park, marshals if you walk in the street, etc.

B. Clarify your goals

What does a successful event look like for your team?

Here are some sample goals - feel free to change:

- Recruit students to [sign the petition](#) demanding President Biden declare a climate emergency
- Raise awareness about the climate crisis at your school and in your community
- Motivate your peers to participate and become active in the climate movement
- Gain experience being a youth climate leader

C. What will happen at your event?

Some ideas to jolt your creativity:

- Eloquent speakers to inform people of the facts (Keep it short – each speech 1-3 minutes)
- Music by student bands
- Dance for the planet
- Soccer game with earth ball
- Planting trees or a vegetable garden
- Activities like art-making or writing postcards to elected officials
- Each student pledges to make one earth-saving lifestyle change, on cards or a poster
- A march around the block, in circles in front of school, or to a government or industry office
- Everyone dress in certain colors or wear stickers, ribbons, etc
- A sit-in at a climate-wrecking megabank
- Rally at City Hall for a local Green New Deal
- A die-in at the HQ of a fossil fuel corporation
- For some inspiration: here's 1) a compilation of news coverage from [2021](#) and [2022](#); 2) [photos from last year's strikes](#), and 3) [short video](#) from youth-led strikes in SD in 2019.



As you plan your event, consider your action logic – the reason you are taking the action compilation of news coverage from 2021 and 2022 on.

Ask yourself questions like:

- Will this action help us achieve our goals?
- Will this plan bring people into the movement and to our side of the argument?
- Does this plan meet our principles of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion?

D. Logistics - materials and roles you'll need on site

Materials you may want to have:

- Sound system and/or megaphones - make sure you have the necessary mics, cords, etc

- Steps, a ramp, fountain, or a sturdy box for speakers to stand on, if no stage
- Sign-in forms on devices (e.g., google form on a phone or tablet), or sheets and clipboards, pens
- Snacks, water
- Sunblock, first aid kit
- NOTE: For school districts who are committed to supporting student leadership - find out if you can use your school megaphones, sound system, etc.

Jobs and roles during the event

- Event coordinators: 2-4 people who are in charge of making sure things run smoothly, and troubleshooting problems
- Student MC to run the program
- Public speakers: All or mostly students, maybe with a politician or local celebrity
- News media liaison and Media spokespeople (including the speakers)
- Social media leaders and Photo/video documenters - Drone shot?
- Welcomers: sign people in, hand out materials, answer questions, etc.
- Chant leaders
- First aid and safety volunteers - peace monitors
- Helpers to set up and clean up after
- Sound system/AV techs: Set up, monitor, troubleshoot, and safeguard sound system

Safety and nonviolence

- Decide on your own brief rules for conduct, to ensure safety and a powerful event. Any violence or misconduct will distract from your message. Here are [samples of a Code of Conduct and a Nonviolence Pledge](#)
- Designate two or more students or parents – or both – as peace monitors, who will watch for and defuse any developing problems and **make sure nobody risks injury or arrest.**
- Road safety: If you are planning a march, be sure your entire route includes adequate sidewalk space and street crossings.

Documenting your event

It's important to have a plan for how you will document the event and share your message with people who weren't there. Don't just assume somebody will take good pictures: Make a plan and assign roles!

- Here are quick and effective [tips for the best live-streaming of your event!](#)
- [Here is a training on effective use of social media for live action coverage](#)

E. Navigating your High School Administration and Other Considerations

In 2019, 2021, and 2022 the school board of [San Diego Unified School District](#), and the board of [Sweetwater Union High School District](#) in 2019, approved resolutions supporting students' participation in Global Climate Strike events, and we are working on asking those districts to do the same thing this year. Hopefully, some districts will direct their principals and teachers to support students planning and participating in climate strikes without penalty. If you're interested in working on this contact Xavier at: xavier@sandiego350.org

In other districts, or in case of a resistant school administration:

Active civic engagement is part of the democratic process, like voting. Protest is an American tradition. However, California law gives school principals the right to classify K-12 students as truant for missing more than 30 minutes of school without an excuse that the principal considers valid. One truancy should not carry notable consequences, but multiple trancies can result in suspensions or other discipline.

Steps for student organizers:

1. Talk with students who have organized previous events, such as the *March for Our Lives* after the Parkland shooting in 2018 or the 2019 global climate strikes, or supportive teachers to evaluate what kind of school administration you have:
 - Progressive Administration-- Your administration is open to political action and may have supported it in the past. You could collaborate with this type of administration in planning your school event on September 15.
 - Strict Administration-- Your administrator is not open to political action and has reacted harshly in the past. In this case, participants may risk suspension or other discipline. One option might be to plan your event right **after** school.
2. Decide whether you want to alert the administration to your plan or wait until they find out. Understand that teachers may not be able to support you without risking their jobs if the administration is unfriendly. Depending on your administration's attitude and the potential repercussions, consult your peers on what type of action they're willing to participate in.
3. Enlist your parents' support. Ask them to send emails or letters to the administration saying they support your actions. [Here is a sample letter parents can send to your school principal to support you.](#)
4. If you decide to alert your administration (which we recommend), schedule a meeting.
 - Email your admin to schedule a time to meet, preferably two weeks before the event.
 - Prepare talking points for the meeting:
 - Why you want to take part in the global Sept. 15th action
 - How this will benefit students educationally
 - How you are ensuring safety and nonviolence--a positive event
 - What does your admin think would be the ideal event? (Hopefully get their input, not control.)
 - Receive approval from the administration. Send a follow-up email to the admin immediately about what was discussed and approved in the meeting, and ask for confirmation.
5. Designate one person as the liaison to speak to the administration on the day of the event and handle any objections that come up. If you are told to stop the event, ask what alternative action could allow you to raise awareness about the climate crisis.

[Watch promo video](#)

3. PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Here are some ways to get the word out and make your event as big as possible! Direct person-to-person contact is best. Digital tools can multiply word-of-mouth buzz.

Here are some local photos you can use from the [2021 climate strikes](#) and the [2022 climate strikes](#) for any promotional materials.



A. Social Media

Use social media to recruit helpers, build awareness and excitement, and document your event as it happens. Use the platforms you and your team know best.

[Here's the 2023 Social Media Resources guide.](#)

- Create a **facebook** event and share it with friends, and ask them to share. Post frequently in the facebook event to boost its reach.
- Create an **Instagram** account with daily posts counting down to Sept. 15 (or incorporate a countdown using Instagram stories if your organization already has an account). Be sure to include videos of students talking about why they're excited about the event, such as on the stories or IGTV, to build energy!
- Post short interviews or photos with personal quotations as captions on **Instagram**, telling why people will be participating in the strike (like *Humans of New York*).
- Sharing promotional videos from personal accounts on **TikTok** can be helpful.
- **Snapchat** during the event if your organization has a Snapchat (like a live stream). Or add to local stories to get the word out beyond your school.
- On **Twitter** and all social media, stories, **photos and short videos** of you with a sign are effective. Hold a hand-made sign with your message and: Join the **#ClimateStrikeSD**. If it's a video, say briefly why the climate crisis is important, why you are protesting. Tag your friends and @350org. Other hashtags: #ClimateCrisis #ClimateStrike #FridaysForFuture.
- Ideas here: [social media toolkit here.](#)



B. Texts and Phone calls

Reach out to your school and neighborhood contacts individually, with a text or phone call. Develop a list of contact phone numbers. Try each of them at least twice. If the list gets too big, assign others on your team a few people each who they are responsible for contacting. [See sample text.](#)

C. Email

Yes, it's old-fashioned. But email is a simple way to reach lots of people and give them the info and links they can easily share with their own contacts. Keep it as short and snappy as possible.

[Here is a presentation on effective email strategy and writing](#)

D. Flyers & Posters

Make a basic poster/flyer for your event. Post around the school if possible and around the community. Print flyers and hand out to interested students. (Save paper: Don't give flyers to people who don't want them.) The words **September 15th Climate Strike** should be prominent. In smaller type, include contact info and #ClimateStrikeSD.

Some printable posters are [here](#).

Black & White printable version of the flier [can be accessed here](#)

Note: Before distributing flyers, make sure you are ready for your school administration to know what you're doing.

E. News media

If you have a school newspaper or radio station, or a neighborhood newspaper, send them a press release describing your event, including the reasons you are demanding urgent action on the climate crisis. Call them first and find out how they prefer to receive information and especially **how soon they need it** to get it published in advance of Sept 15th.

For help writing your press release and reaching out to local news media, reach out to your coach.

4. FACTS AND INFO SOURCES

Climate scientists have warned that governments have only 12 years to take bold action to avert catastrophe. We must stop burning fossil fuels – oil, coal, natural gas – and replace them with renewable energy sources like wind and solar. That transition must start now!

Make sure to [SIGN OUR Petition](#) calling President Biden to demand a climate emergency and champion climate action at the 2023 UN Summit happening in New York City on September 20th.

Youth4Climate's 2022 Climate Strike Demands:

- **All Levels of Government:** Demand an immediate, just, and equitable transition to renewable energy. Sign the petition [here](#).
- **State:** Demand that Gov. Newsom make executive orders to end oil extraction in California.
 - (Stop oil production, drop existing leases, and roll-out 3,200-foot safety buffer zones between communities and oil drilling sites)
- **National:** President Biden must acknowledge the current climate emergency by championing climate justice at the UN Summit

Governments of the worst polluting countries, such as the United States, have been slow to act. The buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is at a crisis point. Heat waves, floods, droughts, hurricanes, and wildfires already are killing people and devastating communities.

KEY FACTS - WHY WE #CLIMATESTRIKE - More at GlobalClimateStrike.net

Here are some key facts you can use to talk to your peers about why you're going on #ClimateStrike:

- There is no debate among climate scientists that human-generated carbon pollution is the primary cause of global warming. The IPCC recently released a report that marked "code red" for humanity.
- The highest safe level of carbon in the atmosphere is 350 parts per million. We're at 419 ppm.
- Climate-related disasters like floods, hurricanes, heat waves, and droughts cause hundreds of billions of dollars of damage every year, destroying lives and communities across the world.
- **We have the solutions.** Renewable energy like solar and wind power can replace fossil fuels and reverse the crisis. We just need the political will.

More useful links from 2019:

- [More messaging from 350.org is here.](#)
- [Here's the strike invitation published in May by Greta Thunberg and 46 other youth activists](#)

5. ARTS: POSTERS, BANNERS, CHANTS AND MORE

What your event looks, sounds and feels like is important to its success. You want your message to be crystal clear to passersby and people watching on TV, and in photos you post. You want your participants to feel inspired. So use visuals, music, and chants that are on-message and exciting.

All you really need is a piece of cardboard and some markers or paint. (Consider the environmental impact of your signs. If possible, cut cardboard from shipping boxes or cover old signs with printer paper, rather than buying poster boards.)

Your posters don't have to look professional. Just be sure the **letters are clear and thick enough** to read from a distance. Write what you want to express, the fewer words the better.

Sample Signs

Here are some sign ideas from SanDiego350 and local student actions:



Other signs made by San Diego students. Bring your own creativity!

- Don't burn my future!
- Raise your voice, not the sea level
- Protect your mother (*with drawing of earth*)
- I stand for what I stand on
- Our planet, our future
- Climate action can't wait!
- Clean energy NOW
- We want POLICIES not PROMISES
- Raise the alarm!

Sample Chants - [Download page of chants here](#)

- Our planet, **our** future
- Stop denying our earth is dying
- What do we want? CLIMATE ACTION! When do we want it? NOW!
- Que queremos? ENERGIA VERDE! Cuando lo queremos? AHORA!
- Show me what climate action looks like. (*call*) **This** is what climate action looks like! (*response*)
- We're here and we're loud - Leaders take note. Show us climate action - We'll show you our vote!
- Hey, hey, ho, ho! Fossil fuels have got to go!
- Climate justice is what we need - We say NO to corporate greed
- The WORLD, the WORLD, the WORLD is on FIRE / We don't need your OIL / KEEP IT DOWN, IN THE GROUND

6. WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

A. Sharing photos and video

Make sure you tag @SanDiego350 and @Youth4Climate.350 and use the hashtag #ClimateStrike whenever you post. Send your best photos and short videos to SanDiego350: photos@climatestrikesd.org (If photos are taken inside the school, we can share them only if anyone under age 18 has signed a photo release form.)
[Here are quick tips for the most effective live-streaming.](#)

Be sure to share photos with friends who weren't there. Explain briefly why climate action is so important to you and encourage your friends to join the progressive climate organizations that helped organize this event.

B. Follow up with your participants

- Make sure you thank all your participants for participating, and ask them to stay involved. For example:
 - Post messages on social media thanking everyone who showed up.
 - Text or dm helpers and participants
 - Email links to news coverage of Sept 15.
- Let your participants know how they can stay involved, such as joining your eco-club and volunteering or interning with SanDiego350.org

C. Next steps

- Debriefing - Get together with your fellow planners to talk about what went well, lessons learned, and what you can do better next time. Celebrate your good work!
- Keep and build a contact list of everyone who actively helped and another list of people who indicated interest and might help next time.
- Plan for future actions to keep your group engaged. Examples: Organize an eco-club, lobby your school board or city council for conservation efforts



Have ideas for improving this toolkit? Send them to Xavier, xavier@sandiego350.org