



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA
www.gov.uk/Number10

From the Direct Communications Unit

14 July 2023

The Pupils
Year 1
Princes Mead School
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Dear Children

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your correspondence about the important matter of plastic pollution.

It is very encouraging to hear from young people who care about these issues and want to improve the environment. The Government share your concerns about plastic pollution and for ensuring we protect our natural environment. While plastic may play an important role in the modern world, plastic waste that is not managed properly can threaten our environment. Experts suggest human beings have produced 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic since the 1950s, which may increase to 34 billion tonnes by 2050. We all have a role to play in tackling this problem, by making sure we prevent plastic escaping into the environment and reducing the amount of plastic we make and use.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the aim to get rid of all avoidable plastic waste, and great strides have been made already. In December 2018, the Government published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how to achieve this and move towards a circular economy, which means to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastic and prevent them from escaping into the natural environment.

You may remember that in 2015, the Government introduced a charge for using single use plastic bags. By using a reusable bag over and over again, everyone can make a big difference in reducing the amount of plastic that goes into the bin, and potentially into the ocean. Since the charge was brought in, single use carrier bag numbers have reduced by 97%, highlighting the amazing impact we can all have when we collectively take action. In the same year, the Government banned microbeads from shower gels and soaps preventing thousands of miniature plastics entering the ocean with every shower. Then, in 2020, the Government went on to ban

single-use plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds, stopping yet more problem plastics entering our delicate ecosystem. There are many other problematic plastic items out there, which is why a ban on single use plastic plates, cutlery, balloon sticks and certain types of polystyrene food and drinks containers will come into effect from October 2023.

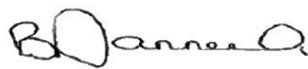
It is important that everyone works together globally to solve the plastic pollution problem. The Government continues to work with countries around the world to build a new global agreement to end plastic pollution and be a leading voice in these efforts. The UK is a founding member of the High Ambition Coalition, a group of countries calling for a new global agreement to end plastic pollution by 2040 and address how plastic is made and used, as well as take care of plastic waste without harming the environment.

Plastic pollution in our oceans is also a big problem. The Government is working closely with many countries across the world, through the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance, to champion ambitious ocean action within the new Global Biodiversity Framework. This will protect the global ocean and stop and reverse biodiversity loss. This action includes the UK's recent significant and proactive role in helping to secure the 'Treaty of the High Seas' Marine Biodiversity Agreement – a landmark agreement that will mean much greater protection for over 60% of the global ocean. The Agreement will be key in helping to deliver the Global Biodiversity Framework, including achieving the target of protecting at least 30% of the ocean by 2030. The Government will continue to work with global partners to ensure it is carried out quickly and effectively.

Every one of us can play a part to create a brighter, greener future free from problem plastic. If you are interested in doing more to make a difference, you may wish to read some extra information about how to convert your school to an "eco-school," if it is not already. The programme helps change littering habits and reduce waste. For more information visit: www.eco-schools.org.uk.

Thank you, once again, for writing. Please rest assured the UK Government shares your passion for reducing plastic waste and protecting our environment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Danner'.

Correspondence Officer