



# GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Sustainability Plan</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Sustainability Lead</b>	
<b>Date of most recent review:</b>	<b>December 2024</b>	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>December 2025</b>	
<b>Sustainable GA: the George Abbot School Sustainable Transition</b>		

## Premise

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The Decade of Action calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges by 2030.

Climate change is fundamentally the largest, and most complicated socio-economic and environmental issue that humans have faced yet, we need action now, and it is going to need change on an unprecedented scale.

The [recent IPCC report](#) is unequivocal in its articulation that climate change is progressing more quickly than previously thought, requiring immediate and scaled up investment, ambition and transition.

In September 2020 the UN announced that the world failed to meet a single target to slow the loss of the natural world for the second consecutive decade, including goals to protect coral reefs, preserve natural habitats and reduce plastic and chemical waste to levels that do not damage ecosystems. The UK has committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 through [the Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#).

Surrey County Council has declared a climate emergency; this is a commitment to act on the causes and impacts of climate change in the County we are in.

2021 was a tipping point for us, which is why George Abbot supports the climate action movement, and champions sustainable principles for students. George Abbot envisions a sustainable school community with climate justice and the protection of nature at its core, through the implementation of its sustainable principles in full by 2030.

We are working towards a more sustainable future for the school community, beginning with this document which proposes the steps to undertake for a sustainable transition of George Abbot school. This initiative is over and above legal and educational requirements.

It is vital that schools lead the just transition to a more equitable society. By beginning with in-school actions we can set an example for the wider community that climate actions can be scaled up to create greater impact from the grass-roots up. While our governments, institutions, and corporations must be held accountable for progress made towards [the global goals](#) and contributions to the [Paris Climate Agreement](#); we do not have time and do not need to wait to act to create change.

This process of change will be:

- Participative (involving pupils, staff and where possible the local community),
- Holistic (employing an integrated approach to school management involving the whole site, the whole-school community and all aspects of the curriculum), and

- Sustainable (becomes an ongoing part of school management with continuous improvement)

The proposed process

- Make a whole-school commitment – a “whole of school” cultural change – sign off by the Governors on 20/10/2021
- Form a School Sustainability Plan (SSP) Team to guide sustainability – including teachers, students, parents and community groups, establishing ownership to all sectors and a distributed workload
- Develop a School Sustainability Plan(SSP) a structured way to achieve outcomes within a given timeframe related to, for example: *Governance; Curriculum, Teaching and Learning; Human Capacity Building; and Facilities and Operations*
- **Implement plans and actions without implementing plans and assigning** tasks, limited progress occurs
- Monitor and report on progress – assisting the school in measuring progress and improving plans and actions, while remaining accountable

To be discussed:

- These four areas are suggested by the Manitoba schools guide and are largely similar to those suggested in other guides online. Obviously GA can choose which key domains it want to work in and we need to think about how understandable these key area names are to pupils). We suggest that all four key domains are not worked on at the same time and that the priority should be Facilities and Operations, followed closely by curriculum, teaching and learning.

Governance	Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	Human Capacity Building	Facilities and Operations
<p>A systemic approach to implementing sustainable development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority in division strategic plan</li> <li>• Board and policy development</li> <li>• Committees</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> <li>• Evaluation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<p>Students acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and life practices that contribute to a sustainable future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-curricular focus of ESD in all subjects</li> <li>• Project-based learning focused on ESD</li> <li>• Pedagogy focused on systems thinking, inquiry, active learning, futures thinking, problem solving from a local and global perspective</li> <li>• Connections to student engagement, citizenship and relevance</li> <li>• Opportunities exist to engage parents and the community in the practice of ESD principles</li> </ul>	<p>Human resources policies, practices and development plans are aligned with sustainable development principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development is provided for professional and support staff</li> <li>• ESD resources are provided for teachers</li> <li>• ESD practices are profiled and recognized</li> <li>• Succession planning (e.g., leadership development)</li> <li>• Develop and implement a staff wellness plan</li> </ul>	<p>Adopt and demonstrate sustainability principles</p> <p><i>Facilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability principles are applied to the design, construction and renewal of school buildings, including innovative financial models</li> <li>• Schools structures and outdoor spaces are “facilities that teach” sustainability practices</li> </ul> <p><i>Operations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability principles apply to all aspects of school management, procurement and resource use</li> <li>• Sustainability principles apply to transportation decisions</li> <li>• Audit tools are used to assess impacts and improve efficiencies</li> </ul>

## **Step 2: Build the SSP team**

The SSP team will work together to develop and implement the SSP. It should first and foremost involve student(s) and also include school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff, school custodians, parents, and if possible members of the local community. The team:

- takes the lead in developing, implementing and reporting on the SSP
- aims to keep the whole school and community informed about the SSP and involved in the projects that will take place
- aims to ensure that all sectors of the school community are represented in the decisions related to the SSP
- ensures support from school administration

## **Step 3: Develop a school sustainability plan**

A School Sustainability Plan (SSP) is a document that establishes the school intentions with regard to sustainability. It represents an agreement to work together across the whole school. An SSP helps to integrate sustainability considerations into whole-school planning, addressing key issues facing the school.

### **3.1 Develop a vision**

Developing a shared vision is a vital part of the process of becoming a sustainable school. A vision statement is a declaration of a shared sense of purpose. A shared vision is an important element within the whole-school approach to environmental education and communicates clearly to all stakeholders what the meaning of a 'sustainable George Abbot' is to the school community.

As the SSP team develops a vision, we need to consider the following issues with respect to sustainability:

- Where the school is now
- What relevant emerging issues or impacts are affecting the school community
- Where the school wants to be in the future

*Note: using Big Green Week to ask pupils during form time or IT lessons to input to the vision of a sustainable GA school (A Vision is a brief picture of what GA would look like in, for example, 2030, and idealises where we want to go with this process). The idea for now is to come up with statements about different aspects of a sustainable school and get pupils to prioritise them....open to discussion). Could also be done with GA staff. Staff and pupil input to the Vision makes it much more robust.*

### **3.2 Conducting a self-assessment**

The purpose of a self-assessment is to give a realistic picture of the school's current performance related to sustainability, highlighting where the school is doing well and what it needs to work on. It should tell us what we are doing well and what we might need to work on. Conducting a self-assessment allows the SSP team to determine the key issues facing the school community, preparing us to develop SSP Priorities and Expected Outcomes. A light touch self- assessment should be repeated annually.

**Note:** depending on the areas/domains we decide to work on, self assessments/audits would be conducted for each of them. There are different instruments on the internet which can be used to do this ( e.g.: EcoSchools Environmental Review Checklist – <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/documents/environmentalReviewChecklist.pdf>). There is great potential here for 6<sup>th</sup> form Geography/science pupils to assist with these audits.

All work carried out by school staff and sixth form to date on sustainability will be picked up in these audits.

### **3.3 Determine priorities, strategies, expected outcomes, and timelines**

Priorities should be developed based on the key topics areas (For example: Governance; Curriculum, Teaching and Learning; Human Capacity Building; and Facilities and Operations).

As the SSP team develops Priorities, consider:

- What key issues are affecting our school and local area?
- What opportunities do we have to consult with the broader school community and ensure ownership and willingness by the school community to implement the SSP?
- For each Priority, we will then come up with Strategies, Curriculum Connections, Expected Outcomes, Timeframes or Deadlines, Indicators, Data Collection Mechanisms, and Results.
- What are these?
- Strategies: the actions we undertake

- Curriculum Connections: possible learning activities connected to the issues at the heart of or the sustainable George Abbot process itself (eg using school energy consumption data in a maths lesson, discussing climate action in PSHE),
- Expected Outcomes: the observable, measurable outcomes we are trying to achieve
- Timeframes or Deadlines: time frames for the achievement of outcomes
- Indicators: the milestones to know if we are making progress
- Data Collection: how we collect evidence of progress
- Results: the status, data or anecdotal evidence tied in to the timeframe or deadline

As the SSP team develops Strategies and Expected Outcomes, consider:

- Starting small and aiming for the achievable
- Focusing on achieving specific and measurable outcomes in, e.g., reducing litter and waste to landfill, reducing water and energy use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing gardens areas and biodiversity. For example, you might decide to: Reduce litter in the yard and waste to landfill by 50 per cent, Reduce water use in the school by 15 per cent and improve stormwater quality, Reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in the school by 15 percent, Expand the area of gardens by 20 per cent, Increase biodiversity in areas of the school ground by 50 per cent, etc.

The heart of the plan could look like this:

Priority	Strategies What actions will you take? Who is responsible?	Curriculum Connections	Expected Outcomes What specifically are you trying to improve? (Observable, measurable)	Timeframe/ Deadline	Indicators How will you know you are making progress?	Data Collection By what means will you collect evidence of progress?	Results Status, data or anecdotal evidence

### 3.4 Determine monitoring and evaluation activities – Indicators and data collection techniques

Information and methods of gathering data as part of the monitoring and evaluation process will depend on the topics under investigation, and the age and ability of the students involved, but could include:

- Measurable improvements or cost savings—records from gas, water and electricity bills
- Litter/waste audits to show the effects of litter/recycling initiatives, e.g., weighing litter and material collected for recycling or composting
- Feedback from questionnaires and surveys or interviews—gaining personal impressions of the changes that have taken place from students, staff, residents, and the local community, which also complements whole-school involvement
- Graphs, charts or photographs, e.g., before and after photographs
- Information on leadership opportunities and activities for students
- New opportunities or links to local or state organizations and businesses
- Listing evidence of wildlife/species to show the effect of school grounds development
- As the SSP team develops Indicators and Data Collection Techniques, consider:
- Effective monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing part of any project and should be built into the entire process.
- Students should be actively involved in the gathering of evidence and given responsibility for carrying out the monitoring of SSP activities to give them a greater sense of ownership.
- Evaluation follows from monitoring. Evaluating the success of activities will allow us to make changes to the SSP if required and allow us to judge the success of the activities and plan any necessary changes; continual monitoring will ensure that enthusiasm for the program is maintained throughout the school.

### **3.5 Record baseline data**

While building the SSP, the team identified Strategies and Expected Outcomes. In order to measure progress, we will need to record (or estimate) the current status of each area we hope to improve, creating your baseline data

### **3.6 Determine Reporting and Communications Activities**

As the SSP Team develops Reporting and Communication Activities, consider:

- Posting and/or distributing your SSP results within the school, and to the local community, including updates and descriptions of some of the SSP activities and progress
- in school assemblies, letters home to parents, articles in a local newsletter or paper, letters to the local authority/local recycling companies or letters to local businesses seeking resources
- Sharing results of resource use changes and savings, e.g., current costs of water use, energy use and waste disposal, or current greenhouse gas emissions
- Sharing tips for parents to introduce sustainable practices at home, e.g., recycling, composting, cutting energy and water use, planting indigenous plants
- Organizing a regular, school-wide “Day (or Week) of Action” as an opportunity for everyone in the school community to get together to work toward achieving some of the targets set out in the SSP
- Conducting surveys within the school and wider community to seek input and opinions
- Arranging visitors from outside organizations and businesses

### **Step 5 Implementing the SSP**

While implementing the SSP, consider:

- Who is responsible for specific actions
- How you will aim to involve and update the whole school and community
- Who is responsible for the data to provide evidence of progress and to keep track of Indicators toward reaching Expected Outcomes

### **Step 6 Monitoring and reporting on your SSP**

As the SSP team monitors and prepares to report on progress, use the Baseline data to compare with the final results and evaluate the success of the Strategies. The Results or the Status, data or anecdotal evidence should be in the final column of the SSP for reporting purposes.

The methods of monitoring used will depend on the targets and measurement criteria set out in the SSP, as well as the age and ability of students.

Consider the following forms of monitoring:

- Encourage students to undertake the monitoring wherever possible to help foster a greater sense of ownership toward the project
- Display the monitoring results (e.g., in graphs, charts) and use the data to deliver aspects of the curriculum; many types of evidence also provide valuable real-life data for curricular activities eg Maths and ICT
- Make sure that the whole school is kept up to date, perhaps posting ongoing results on notice boards or by celebrating the achievement of an Expected Outcome in assembly
- Produce a regular report
- Retain collected data so that you have the evidence required to review your work

### **Extra Notes**

#### **Building community links and partners**

The process should be accompanied by building community links and forging partnerships. These will enrich the school’s programme and bring valuable resources, expertise and support.

#### **Eco-schools**

Through the global eco-schools programme it is possible to apply for the Green Flag. There is a 7 step process which appears compatible with the process outlined above. The Green Flag would provide a good hook for communication and possibly support from the organisation responsible for it here in the UK (Keep Britain Tidy). This and other award programmes should be looked into further.

<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/eco-schools-green-flag-other-awards/>

**Other Useful awards/resources**

Organisation /resource	Use	
<a href="#">Gov tips for sustainability in schools</a>	Vision/strategy	
<a href="#">Sustainable Schools Alliance</a>	Partnership/stakeholder/vision and goals	
<a href="#">Eco Schools</a>	strategy/ steps to green flag assessment	
<a href="#">Zenergi</a> (Energy provider) Richard Tandy Richard.tandy@briar.zenergi.co.uk 01384397777. (In touch via Sisia Magaya)	Contact to ensure energy sustainability	
Eden Project SKendall@edenproject.com	Vision to be shared on Eden website & collaborative work on sustainability in schools 'Inspired by Eden project	
Esmee Stallard from SCC (designed their climate strategy) esme.stallard@surreycc.gov.uk		
Local community stakeholders: WWF, SCC, Surrey University		
<a href="https://www.theclimatepledge.com">https://www.theclimatepledge.com</a>	Pledge	
<a href="#">Activist toolkit</a> - a guide for school students into environmental activism	Climate curriculum/careers resource	

**Timeframe for action: tbc**