

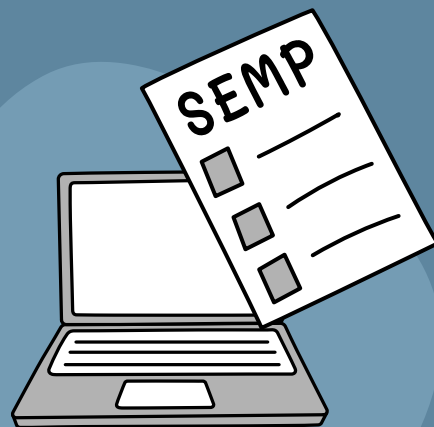


Sustainable
Schools
by **NATURE CONNECT**

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDE

2025

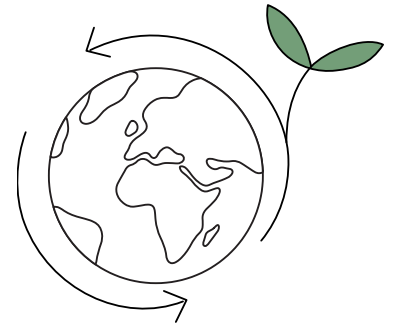
A Teacher's Guide
to Planning and
Implementation



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SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Introduction

A School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) is a tool used by schools to plan, implement, assess and report on whole-school participation in Education for Sustainable Development teaching & learning practices. It is a working document that contains continuously updated reflections of your school's environmental actions and learning process.

The School Environmental Management Plan serves as a guiding document to outline your school's commitment to promoting responsible environmental stewardship.

The SEMP details various aspects of daily operations, from waste management and energy conservation to curriculum integration and community engagement. It is a record of all your sustainability goals, plans, and project ideas. Using the School Environmental Management Plan, you will be able to plan each step of your sustainability journey.



You are able to plan for up to 3 years in advance but don't stress, this isn't a must, but purely there to help you visualise future sustainable change for your school community.

SEMP in your words



The School Environmental Management Plan is important because it creates a record of all of your school's sustainability work and tracks the journey over time so you can look back and see how far you have come and how much progress has been made!



Remember

You are celebrated and rewarded based on what your school is doing, so we need your School Environmental Management Plan to know what to reward and celebrate you for!



CREATING YOUR SEMP

1. Go to the Sustainable Schools Hub using [this link](#).
2. In your school group on the Hub, you will see a bar with various tabs underneath your school's name. Click on the "Start/edit SEMP" tab.

1. Planning

This first section is designed to assist you in visualising how you are going to implement your plans at school. You are prompted to think of all the components necessary to successfully initiate and sustain your chosen action project.

It includes:

- Actions identified to reach your sustainability goals
- Implementation steps for each of the actions
- Resources needed
- Persons responsible for the various steps
- Potential partners you'll be working with (if applicable)

2. Implementation

This section is for you to record and report all of the environmental and sustainability-related activities which your school has been involved with.

This can be done by submitting pictures or videos.

Can include:

- Involvement of the school in sustainability/ environmental activities
- Celebrating environmental calendar days
- Activities or excursions from any grade/ committee
- Activities that are run with the Nature Connect education team, for example

[View the Online
Teacher Workshop
Recording for help
with Planning](#)



Remember



Do the planning & implementation on your **own school group** and not on the 'Sustainable Schools' group.

PLANNING

SOME KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Establish your school's **mission and vision** statements
- **Multiple teachers** from your school can assist via their profiles on the hub.
- Click the **Save and Continue** button each time to save your edits.
- Once you click the **Submit** button, you can no longer edit your School Environmental Management Plan.

Vision = The sustainable future your school wants to create – your long-term goal or dream.

Mission = What your school is doing right now to work toward that sustainable future – your current actions and approach.

Have you finalised your SEMP Planning yet?

REMEMBER:

SAVE YOUR PROGRESS:

If you can't finish in one go, just click "Save & Continue Later" so you don't lose any of your work.

COLLABORATE & BRAINSTORM TOGETHER:

Take some time to chat with your action team or teachers to brainstorm ideas before diving in.

DON'T SKIP THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY:

Taking a bit of extra time to create a strong policy really helps guide your goals.

START SMALL & FOCUSED:

Pick one or two focus areas to begin with and really work on them before moving to others.

A basic School Environmental Policy usually answers:

- **What your school cares about** (e.g. saving water, reducing waste, planting trees, healthy living)
- **What your school will do** (e.g. run eco-club activities, teach sustainability in lessons, involve parents)
- **Who will be responsible** (e.g. teachers, learners, support staff, community partners)
- **How you'll keep it going** (e.g. through lesson plans, regular projects, Eco-Club, awareness days)

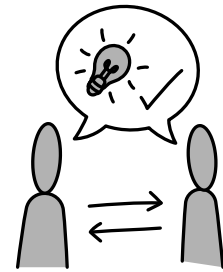
View our teacher-friendly Environmental Policy template here: [School Environmental Policy Template](#)



IMPLEMENTATION

Action Team Meeting Guideline

Check out this set of simple discussion pointers to use with your Eco-Committee or Adult Action Team. The prompts are designed to make your conversations **structured** and **purposeful**, while also helping you **gather all the key details** needed for your school's SEMP Implementation document. By using these pointers, you'll save time later when reporting, since most of the required information will already be captured during the discussion.



1. School Focus Area

Indicate your school's chosen sustainability focus area(s).

2. Action Projects & Activities

List action projects and activities done to make the school more sustainable.

Connect them to the chosen focus area(s).

3. Integration into Infrastructure & Operations

State how sustainability has been built into infrastructure upgrades and daily operations.

Examples: solar panels, rainwater tanks, recycling systems.

SHOW & WIN!

Snap a selfie to show us that you and your team met for discussion and send it on the Sustainable Schools group on the Hub with your school's name and the Action Team's members' names in order to be in the running for the prize!

Competition closes on 25 September 2025.

IMPLEMENTATION

Talking Points

4. Usage of Learning Tools

- **Explain** how projects are used as teaching and learning tools.
- Note lessons taught through projects.
- Record average lessons per month related to the focus area.

5. Other Sustainability Efforts

- Describe other ways the school addresses sustainability (e.g. water, waste, energy saving, biodiversity).
- Indicate whether there is a new or updated environmental policy.

6. Partner Support

- **List** partner organisations or schools that supported the work.
- Describe the **type of support** received.

7. Learner Activities & Nature Connection

- Record **learner involvement** in field trips and nature-based activities.
- Include activity name, destination, and purpose.

8. Environmental Action Days

- **List** how action/environmental days were celebrated.
- Include details of workshops held (if any).

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Reach out to your
School Coordinator for
further assistance with
your SEMP
Implementation

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SEMP FAQ

How do I view previous School Environmental Management Plan submissions?

- You can find a link to download your submitted School Environmental Management Plan documents in the activity feed of your school group. For step-by-step instructions, follow [this link](#).

Can I get an extension on my submission?

- Please contact your School Coordinator or the WhatsApp Hotline to request an extension: +27 74 526 9666

Can a school have only one Focus Area per year?

- Yes, we would recommend focusing on one focus area, and starting with a small project within that focus area.
- One project can even be done over multiple years.
- The goal is to rather ensure the project becomes ingrained in the school, so rather take on fewer projects but ensure that they are self-sustaining.

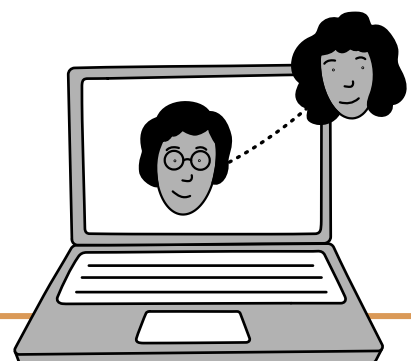
How many environmental calendar days does a school have to celebrate?

- As many as you want! Take some pics and share them on your school group!

What information do I include in the School Environmental Management Plan?

- We recommend adding information as you work on and plan your projects throughout the school year.
- Record all school activities such as excursions, eco-club activities and celebrations of environmental days.
- You can make it as detailed as you want – details help you implement and plan, as well as helps your School Coordinator assist you.
- Don't forget to include curriculum links to action projects under 'chosen Focus Area.'

Tip: Gather information from teachers who are not using the Hub to find out what they may be doing. Better yet, invite them to join the platform and have them add to your School Environmental Management Plan!



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Activities & Projects

Can you include workshops teachers attend, other than Sustainable Schools'?

- Yes! Please include any and all workshops you attend.
- The goal of the School Environmental Management Plan is to be a tracking tool of all environmental-related activities your school is involved in. We love seeing teachers connect with other partners, organisations, businesses and government departments.

Are Nature Connect activities only available to Cape Town Schools?

Yes, currently Nature Connect activities are only based in the Western Cape region. However, we have ensured that there is an implementing partner in each province who provides 'Connect to Nature' activities.

Does an excursion count as an action project?

- No, an excursion would count as one of the activities that the school has done and can be reported on in the implementation.
- The action project is a sustainable project that the school has chosen to work on throughout the year or build on over the course of a few years. It should aim to involve whole school participation. Some ideas include recycling, a water-saving initiative, a veggie garden, etc.

Partners



Sustainable
Schools **Partner**

Once the School Environmental Management Plan is submitted, what would the protocol be to get partners or sponsors?

- You can find the contact details of our official partners on the [Schools and Partners page](#) under the "Community Network" tab.
- Partners can be filtered according to focus area and province.
- You can also contact your School Coordinator to see how they can further assist you.

For any unanswered questions view the FAQ page on the Hub

CLICK
HERE



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Uploading Photos

How to load media onto your SEMP:

- You can load photos, videos or PDF files
- Click [here](#) to find how to add pictures to a School Environmental Management Plan.



For the Implementation, uploads are **limited to 5 files** and the **maximum size** of each file **cannot exceed 5MB**.

Link photo albums to your School Environmental Management Plan?

- You can link a photo album from your school group by copying and pasting the URL next to the action project description box.
- **Note:** Updates posted on your school group feed will be considered alongside your Implementation document, and will not need to be uploaded again.

How can you edit photo albums?

- Once photo albums have been created, changes cannot be made, however, photos can still be added.
- We encourage posting updates via albums on your school feed regularly, since there is only space for 5 pictures on your Implementation form.



WHATSAPP HOTLINE

For technical queries

+27 74 526 9666

Contact your School Coordinator for queries relating to your school and your action projects.

SHARING & CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Reflect & share

Your successes – big and small – can provide enormous encouragement to others on their sustainability journeys. Just as you can be enriched and encouraged by their efforts!

The combined efforts of all school staff, learners, partners and community members, supports whole-school learning, and turns your school's chosen Focus Areas into reality!

Reflect on your successes so far in your SEMP and remember to share photos and stories on the Hub and social media!



Remember, success looks different for everyone - every step is worth celebrating!

RESOURCES & REMINDERS

Make sure to download the 2025 Sustainability Celebration Days Calendars if you haven't already!

- [A4 Month by month](#)
- [A4 Poster](#)
- [A3 Planner](#)



Implementation
due date:

21 NOVEMBER