

Greener Henley Schools Alliance

Green Futures Awards - Programme Guide

Purpose:

The Greener Henley Schools Alliance **supports** and **celebrates** schools in their **journey** towards environmental **sustainability**, nature **connection** and climate **resilience**. Through a tiered Award structure – **Bronze, Silver and Gold** – schools can **progress** at their own pace, deepening their **commitment** and taking measurable **actions**.

We've designed a tiered programme called Green Futures Awards. It contains elements that we understand many schools are aspiring to achieve, and indeed, some that you will need to do anyway. We hope the framework and resources make it easier, more fun and help your school feel a sense of achievement as you progress.

We are confident that together with your school community, the peer network and Greener Henley support, you will make the progress you hope for, faster than you would alone.


Benefits of taking part in the Green Futures Awards programme:

- Be part of our Greener Henley community working with like-minded individuals to create a safer, cleaner and greener environment for our children, for generations to come.
- Invitations to attend Greener Henley events with other local schools encouraging collaboration and discussion between both staff and students.
- Support and advice offered, with opportunities to share 'best practice' examples and ideas towards achieving your goals, and in some cases, your dreams!

Table of Contents


BRONZE - Connect and Communicate	3
1. Designate your Point of Contact.....	3
2. Celebrate and share your wins.....	3
3. Share Greener Henley updates.....	3
Annual verification for the Bronze Award.....	3
SILVER - Take Action and Prepare	4
Includes all Bronze commitments and benefits plus:.....	4
4. Pupil participation.....	4
5. Create wildlife-friendly spaces.....	5
6. Integrate sustainability into lessons.....	5
7. Estimate your carbon footprint.....	6
8. Plan for climate resilience.....	6
Annual verification for the Silver Award:.....	6
GOLD – Lead the Way	7
Includes all Bronze and Silver criteria plus:.....	7
9. School Climate Action Plan in place.....	7
10. Advanced pupil engagement.....	8
11. Promote green careers and climate education.....	8
12. Include climate-related risks in planning.....	8
Annual verification for the Gold Award:.....	8
Membership Process	9
Monitoring & Review	9
Terms and Responsibilities	9
Main points of contact at Greener Henley for Schools Alliance	10

The Greener Henley Green Futures Awards



Connect & Communicate

- Designate point of contact ✓
- Celebrate and share your wins ✓
- Share Greener Henley updates ✓



Take Action & Prepare

BRONZE plus...

- Pupil participation ✓
- Create wildlife-friendly spaces ✓
- Integrate sustainability into lessons ✓
- Estimate your carbon footprint ✓
- Plan for climate resilience ✓



Lead the Way

SILVER plus...

- Climate Action Plan in place ✓
- Advanced pupil engagement ✓
- Promote green careers and climate education ✓
- Include climate-related risks in planning ✓

The joining criteria and associated benefits



BRONZE - Connect and Communicate

1. Designate your Point of Contact

A designated staff member and/or parent representative to liaise with Greener Henley and be part of the peer network.

- You'll join a network of peers and experts that can support you - we encourage active participation and will make this easy through online communications and best practice and Q&A sessions.

2. Celebrate and share your wins

Connect with your network by sharing your school's environmental activities and progress through social media and newsletters, tagging @greenerhenley (and following us so we can follow you back, then we are more likely to see your posts).

- That way we can champion you and celebrate your successes

Example activities could be progress on developing nature-friendly areas, pupil participation and, of course, the good news about joining the Greener Henley Schools Alliance and receiving your Award!

3. Share Greener Henley updates

Where appropriate, leverage relevant Greener Henley's news and updates to share in your newsletters and social media.

- We're keen you can engage your community and that Greener Henley campaigns and invitations find their way to as many people as possible.

Examples of communications to share onwards to staff, pupils and parents are the [Pledge for the Planet](#) online platform, Great Big Green Week (June 2026) and [many others](#).

Annual verification for the Bronze Award

- a) Active participation by the Point of Contact with Greener Henley Schools Alliance. We anticipate organising online meet-ups / teach-ins across the academic year and request you join at least one so you feel part of the network.
 - That way we get to know you and can better support you
- b) Display of your school's Green Futures Award Award (e.g. on school website, noticeboards, school gate)
 - So, your community know you are part of the Alliance and seeking to improve the environmental status of the area
- c) Evidence of information sharing per point 2 and 3 above



SILVER - Take Action and Prepare

Includes all Bronze commitments and benefits plus:

4. Pupil participation

Going beyond the bronze requirement of sharing the campaigns, for the Silver tier we hope to see you and your school taking part **in** campaigns, initiatives and events linked to Greener Henley. There are lots to choose from – some are low effort, others require heavier lifting though are worth it.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Year-round:**
 - [Nature Squared](#), [Bee Friendly](#), [Clean Air for Henley](#), [WOW - Walk to School Challenge](#), [Young Climate Warriors](#) (e.g. Weekly Challenges)
- **Autumn term:** [Schools Science Fair](#) (12 November 2025)
- **Summer term:** [Environmental Science Challenge](#), [Walk to School Week](#)

- Alliance members can share ideas amongst each other, building up momentum and becoming a leading hub for inspiration and engagement opportunities for pupils and the broader school community
- Simplified sharing of key resources related to pupil engagement initiative and campaigns

5. Create wildlife-friendly spaces

Having wildlife-friendly spaces in or around your school can bring health and wellbeing benefits to the school community, as well as help fight climate change, support wildlife and build resilience into local infrastructure. Find spaces that could be improved and think holistically about what would work best over the long-term.

Ideas include:

- School site registered on [National Education Nature Park](#) platform
 - Development of habitats such as meadows, hedges, or ponds - you can think about onsite activities, and/or partner offsite
 - Participation in actions recommended by [Nature Squared](#) (a campaign we run in partnership with Henley Town Council and Henley Standard) and [Bee Friendly](#) (a campaign Greener Henley run in partnership with Henley Town Council)
 - Evidence of baseline site mapping (e.g. biodiversity, habitats, land use)
- Greener Henley can signpost resources and facilitate introductions to people and organisations who can help with planning and/or funding

6. Integrate sustainability into lessons

- At least one curriculum subject (e.g. science, geography, design & technology, English) should show evidence of how environmental or sustainability themes are embedded into teaching and learning.
 - This could be demonstrated through lesson plans, pupil work, projects or cross-curricular links that highlight how the subject contributes to wider sustainability goals
- Resource suggestions will be shared by Greener Henley and peers in the network e.g. [Young Climate Warriors](#) Climate Change Club in a Box for KS2.
- Further support can be provided by connecting with [Let's Go Zero](#) and [Eco Schools](#).

7. Estimate your carbon footprint

Finding out the school's carbon footprint is an important step, and connects into your Climate Action Plan, which hopefully is taking shape.

- Using recognised school tools or guidance, calculate your baseline level of carbon emissions generated by your school's activities

This will involve collecting data on the following:

- Energy (including electricity and gas use), Waste and Water
- Transport (school buses, staff/student commutes)
- Food
- Purchasing (ie furniture and supplies) & Uniform

Then applying appropriate carbon intensity factors to these figures to estimate the total greenhouse gases (CO₂e) produced.

- This process involves using tools like carbon calculators ([Count Your Carbon](#)), government-provided emission factors, and tracking energy bills to determine both direct and indirect emissions, ultimately creating a school-wide carbon footprint.
- Evidence steps you have taken towards the [Climate Action Plan](#) as mandated by the Department for Education.

8. Plan for climate resilience

Start planning for operational continuity by thinking about how the way things are currently done might be impacted by climate change impacts that we are currently seeing, namely, flash flooding and overheating. By assessing these impacts now, you'll be able to respond and therefore promote safety and resilience.

Once these risks have been identified, risk registers should be amended/risk assessments conducted, with mitigation actions underway to support ongoing business continuity.

Ideas include:

- Mitigating overheating risks, with enhanced shading and ventilation.
 - Minimise flooding risks, by checking drainage, water storage and enhancing planting
 - Prepare for resource shortages – what will you do if there is a multi-week shortage of food? How can you support with water conservation during drought periods?
 - Support can be sought through the Oxfordshire County Council's [Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools programme](#) and [Community Resilience](#)
- We will signpost resources, and seek to bring together specialists in these topics for online training to answer your questions

Annual verification for the Silver Award:

As well as the verifications in Bronze, schools must provide:

- i) Updates as appropriate – at least annually (via google form or email) on activities, progress and support you'd like related to the criteria above



GOLD – Lead the Way

Includes all Bronze and Silver criteria plus:

9. School Climate Action Plan in place

Per the Department for Education mandate, the school has in place a holistic climate action plan (see [Government guidance](#)) which should cover the following 4 areas:

- A. Decarbonisation, for example calculating and taking actions to reduce carbon emissions, such as becoming more energy efficient
- B. Adaptation and resilience, such as taking actions to reduce the risk of flooding and overheating
- C. Improving the environment and biodiversity, for example engaging with the [National Education Nature Park](#)
- D. Climate education and green careers, such as ensuring the education you provide gives knowledge-rich and comprehensive teaching about climate change, and that your teaching staff and lecturers feel supported to offer this

The written plan should have targets and actions across the following domains, in the area of "A. Decarbonisation", for example:

- **Energy** (ie LED lighting, heating reviews, solar plans), **Waste and Water** (ie plastic audits, composting, reuse programmes).
- **Transport** – e.g. active travel plans, EV charging, school travel surveys.
- **Food** – e.g. sustainable food education, food waste audits, more plant-based options.

- **Purchasing** (ie furniture and supplies) & **Uniform** – e.g. ethical suppliers, sustainable materials.
- Greener Henley will signpost resources, and seek to bring together specialists in these topics to answer your questions

10. a) **Advanced pupil engagement**

Take your pupil engagement to the next level, building on element 4 (*Pupil Participation*) in Silver to demonstrate a comprehensive agenda for pupils.

We'd like to see:

- Advanced pupil engagement with all core elements of your Climate Action Plan e.g. pupil-led initiatives.
- [The Eco-Schools Framework](#) is a great resource for advice on establishing an eco-committee.

10. b) **Advanced pupil engagement: Engagement with the National Education Nature Park**

- Evidence of pupil engagement in nature-based learning, particularly through engagement with the [National Education Nature Park](#), including creating a site boundary and completing habitat mapping.

11. **Promote green careers and climate education**

Take your education integration and career ideas to the next level, building on element 4 (*Pupil Participation*) and 6 (*Integrate sustainability into lessons*) in Silver to demonstrate a comprehensive programme that actively engages pupils, teachers and parents.

This could include:

- A culture of sustainability visible in assemblies, projects and the school ethos
- Evidence of learning and career opportunities related to sustainability
- Build on element 4 of Silver as regards green career ideas, information or events - showcase a consistent and strong track record of sustainability themes through school assemblies, [Climate Ambassadors](#), parent networks and [Young Climate Warriors](#), for example

Green careers can span to school staff too!

- Demonstrate that the school supports teaching staff to embed climate themes across subjects (e.g. CPD, resources)
- Host (or participate in) one peer learning event for fellow staff or representatives in the Greener Henley Community every two years to share your journey and support others

→ Greener Henley can signpost resources

12. Include climate-related risks in planning

Point 12 ensures schools continue planning for operational continuity by thinking about how the way things are currently done might be impacted by additional climate risks that complement active risks identified in point 8 (*Plan for climate resilience*), namely river flooding, groundwater flooding and wildfires.

→ Greener Henley can provide a proforma of how these risk register adaptations could look, and seek to organise an online training

Annual verification for the Gold Award:

As well as everything in Bronze and Silver, schools aiming for the Gold Award will be requested to provide evidence to Greener Henley of each of the additional elements listed above.

Membership Process

Joining

- Schools complete an application form expressing interest, and detailing your commitments and progress on each element as detailed in the three awards tiers. This will allow you to see what tier you are starting at
- Greener Henley will confirm membership tier and provide relevant resources

Progression

- Schools can progress tiers annually – evidence submission will happen during the summer term, with the review on Greener Henley's side typically happening over the summer break, ready to be confirmed at the end of September.
- Greener Henley offers support and peer learning to aid progression

Recognition

- You are welcome and encouraged to display your Award in your school and on your website
- Celebration in local press and Greener Henley media
- Opportunities to be showcased at community events or trustee meetings

Monitoring & Review

- **Annual Review:** Each school's award level will be reviewed annually (review period: May-September) through a self-declaration process with optional site visits for Gold.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Schools are encouraged to provide feedback to help evolve the programme.
- **Governance:** The Green Futures Awards programme is overseen by the Greener Henley Schools Alliance and reports to the Greener Henley Board of Trustees.

Terms and Responsibilities

- Schools must commit to the principles of environmental stewardship and act in good faith.
- Any misuse of branding or failure to meet minimum standards may lead to review or suspension from the awards programme.
- Greener Henley reserves the right to revise this framework as it sees fit.

Main points of contact at Greener Henley for Schools Alliance

Georgia - Schools Coordinator: GH.Schools25@gmail.com

Kate - Volunteer Executive Director: greenerhenley@gmail.com