

# Guide to creating your School Environment Management Plan

## What is a SEMP?

A School Environment Management Plan (SEMP) is a document that sets out the school community's intentions in regard to environmental education and environmental management. It represents an agreement to work together across the whole school.

The final SEMP is in two parts. The first section describes the overall vision and sustainability objectives of the school. The second section outlines the sustainability actions to be undertaken by the school to achieve the objectives.

## This guide

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the [SEMP Template](#). It provides you with information on using the SEMP Template and conducting your sustainability planning. The SEMP Template is a Word document can be adapted to your local school priorities, branding and community.

For further information on whole school planning for sustainability, example SEMPs, case studies and other resources, and to join the Sustainable Schools NSW community, visit the Sustainable Schools NSW website at [www.sustainableschoolsnsw.org.au](http://www.sustainableschoolsnsw.org.au)

## SECTION 1

### Cover Page

- Insert the name of your school
- School logo (optional) (ensure the file is saved in an appropriate format eg jpeg and that the file is not too large, around 40kb is best – use photo editing program to reduce the photo size if necessary)
- Authors of the plan - while one person may take responsibility for writing this plan, there may be many people in the school community who contribute ideas and activities. It is important to acknowledge everyone involved.
- Contact details for the school

### About <school>

#### Principal's statement

This is an opportunity for the Principal to provide an introductory statement about the plan, activities or how it fits into the context of the school.

#### School Vision/Mission statement

Most schools have a vision or mission statement. This SEMP and the actions in it would ideally be compatible with the school's main vision. Visit the Sustainable Schools NSW website for guidelines on [developing a vision statement](#).

#### Management and planning priorities

Schools have specific management and curriculum priorities they seek to address, often described in the school plan.

Linking your SEMP to the strategies or actions in these plans helps to support both school, curriculum and environmental objectives. For example: 'increasing literacy levels in students' or 'increasing student engagement through student centred projects' or 'extending the educational potential of their school, by developing an outdoor learning space – a school planning and environmental target'.

#### School profile and background

Describe your school's history and current priorities. Provide an overview of the school's history, identify what is important to the school community and some of the more general issues that the school is dealing with. This will provide background for environmental education activities.

#### About the local environment and community

Your school is part of the local and regional environment. The broader school community may focus on particular issues such as salinity, local biodiversity, development issues, and water. Build a picture of the local area to help contextualise the school's and community's vision and environmental goals. Understanding who is in the local community can assist the school to plan activities that are locally relevant and supported. The school, the students, their parents, local residents, government, business and industry are all parts of the local school community. They can provide ideas and resources, and the school can often assist the community to implement important local activities.

## Environmental education achievements

For many schools, environmental education activities large and small have been ongoing for a number of years. These might include:

- Teaching environmental education
- Implementing programs such as paper recycling and grounds improvements
- Undertaking audits
- Supporting student-led environmental initiatives.

Recording and reflecting on achievements can assist in planning the school's next steps. Communicating and celebrating achievements so far will also inform the community about your school's progress and allow the school to reflect on, and feel positive and motivated about its activities.

## This plan fits into the whole school planning through the following:

An effective SEMP is integrated into other strategic, planning and operational aspects of the school. It may be one or more of the following:

- The school's strategic management plan
- Part of the school annual plan
- Reported on in the school annual report
- Integrated with relevant school policies
- Integrated with school administration and management procedures
- Integrated with curriculum programs
- Information provided in the school prospectus or on the school website
- Consultation with Student Representative Council
- Consultation with Parents and Citizens or Friends organisations
- Links to regional education and local government planning
- Links to extra-curricular activities for students.

## Environmental team

Many schools give the school teams a name, so why not the school's team of environmental leaders? If the team doesn't have a specific identifiable name, delete the Name heading. What is important is that the environment team represents the full breadth of the school community. For example: teachers, parents, administration staff, grounds staff, school principal, students, community groups, council staff, local media etc.

## About this plan

### Environmental vision

As well as a school vision or mission statement, it is useful to have a shared environmental vision as it will help prioritise and focus your school's activities. The many individuals that make up your school community will have a personal environmental vision for themselves, their own local environment and possibly for their school and the global environment. Bringing these together forms the basis for a collective vision, some as simple as "Our school will promote environmental responsibility and action in students". Visit the the Sustainable Schools NSW website for help in developing a vision statement and [case studies](#).

### Focus area goals

#### Curriculum:

The SEMP should support curriculum goals for the school and integrate sustainability concepts into school programs, lessons and student activities. Consider how environmental education might fit into existing curriculum goals or write new goals that support environmental learning. For example: "There is a greater understanding and awareness of environmental education opportunities in the curriculum" or "Environmental education is embedded in the scope and sequence of literacy programs" or "Sustainability skills development from K-6 is sequenced to match student development".

#### Resource management:

Describing the resource management goals enables a school to set realistic targets to reduce use through environmental management and learning activities. For example: "the school community has a greater understanding of how resources are used in the school" or "Resource use within the school is reduced by 10%" or "To lessen our impact on the environment by focusing on water and energy use".

#### Grounds management:

School grounds are sites for learning, biodiversity, playing and many other activities. It is often a challenge to identify a goal with so many diverse uses. However a defined, achievable and measurable school grounds goal can provide clear direction for grounds planning and improvements. For example: "Increase biodiversity and associated learning within the school grounds" or "Create outdoor learning spaces that will support teaching and learning" or "Gain an understanding of the opportunities for learning in the school grounds."

### **Whole school planning:**

The SEMP is a plan that can support the overall strategic planning processes of the school. By cross-referencing whole school goals in the SEMP, the school will develop a strong rationale for projects and activities, and in turn this may help prioritise the actions described in the SEMP or the School Plan. For example: "Sustainable High School will be reviewing all Stage 4 and 5 programs in 2011 with the aim of increasing authentic problem solving using environmental issues and the school as the real life context". Visit the Sustainable Schools NSW website for help in [whole school planning](#).

### **School community participation:**

The SEMP will help focus and extend the relationship and shared projects that a school has with its community. These

should be contextualised within the environmental and educational aims of the school. Having a shared or common understanding of environmental goals will help the school and the wider community in their individual and shared efforts. Some work may need to be undertaken between the school and the community in order to fully explore, understand and articulate these goals. Some current actions include 'Clean-up Australia Day' and 'Tidy Towns'.

### **Celebrating progress:**

Outline the types of activities the school will conduct in order to celebrate the success of your actions in relation to environmental and sustainability education. For example: reporting in Annual School Report, community newsletters or local paper, functions (thank you morning tea etc).

## **SECTION 2**

Section 2 is designed to be appendices to the Plan.

### **Appendix A: Actions**

An action describes the specific activity that will be undertaken within your school. You can add whatever you need to here, just copy and paste the table.

A strategic approach to resolving the issue may require action in more than one focus area such as curriculum, whole school planning and perhaps grounds. The school is therefore asked to consider strategies and actions for each issue across the five focus areas of Curriculum, School Resources, School Grounds Management, Whole School Planning and School Community Participation.

### **Appendix B: Community and environment network**

Which organisations are actively involved in your school activities? They may be long term supporters or be involved in a specific program. List the organisation and the type of assistance provided. This is a way of ensuring that contact information about school networks is not lost over time and with the movement of staff in and out of the school.

### **Appendix C: Evaluating School Achievements**

How will your school plan, track and evaluate its achievements? An evaluation plan identifies the progress made towards the goals that you set out to achieve. The goals should be identified within each focus area, and list the actions taken and what was achieved.