



What is Sustainability?

The definition of “sustainability” is the study of how natural systems function, remain diverse and produce everything it needs for the ecology to remain in balance. There are countless examples throughout human history where a civilisation has damaged its own environment and seriously affected its own survival. Sustainability takes into account how we might live in harmony with the natural world around us, protecting it from damage and destruction.

In our urban centres, we consume more power than those who live in rural settings. That's not to say that sustainable living should only focus on people who live in urban centres though, there are improvements to be made everywhere - it is estimated that we use about 40% more resources every year than we can put back and that needs to change. Sustainability and sustainable development focuses on balancing that fine line between competing needs - our need to move forward technologically and economically, and the needs to protect the environments in which we and others live. Sustainability is not just about the environment, it's also about our health as a society in ensuring that no people or areas of life suffer as a result of environmental legislation, and it's also about examining the longer term effects of the actions humanity takes and asking questions about how it may be improved.

The Three Pillars of Sustainability

In 2005, the World Summit on Social Development identified three core areas that contribute to the philosophy and social science of sustainable development.

Economic Development

This is the issue that proves the most problematic as most people disagree on political ideology what is and is not economically sound, and how it will affect businesses and by extension, jobs and employability. The supply and demand market is consumerist in nature and modern life requires a lot of resources every single day; for the sake of the environment, getting what we consume under control is the paramount issue. Economic development is about giving people what they want without compromising quality of life, especially in the developing world, and reducing the financial burden and “red tape” of doing the right thing.

Social Development

There are many facets to this pillar. Most importantly is awareness of and legislation protection of the health of people from pollution and other harmful activities of business and other organisations. It is also about maintaining access to basic resources without compromising the quality of life. The final element is education - encouraging people to participate in environmental sustainability and teaching them about the effects of environmental protection as well as warning of the dangers if we cannot achieve our goals.

Environmental Protection

We all know what we need to do to protect the environment, whether that is recycling, reducing our power consumption by switching electronic devices off rather than using standby, by walking short journeys instead of taking the bus. Businesses are regulated to prevent pollution and to keep their own carbon emissions low. There are incentives to installing renewable power sources in our homes and businesses. Environmental protection is the third pillar and to many, the primary concern of the future of humanity. It defines how we should study and protect ecosystems, air quality, integrity and sustainability of our resources and focusing on the elements that place stress on the environment. It also concerns how technology will drive our greener future; the EPA recognized that developing technology and biotechnology is key to this sustainability, and protecting the environment of the future from potential damage that technological advances could potentially bring.

What are the Primary Goals of Sustainability?

The sustainable development professional network thinks, acts and works globally. In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development met to discuss and develop a set of goals to work towards; they grew out of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that claimed success in reducing global poverty while acknowledging there was still much more to do. The SDG eventually came up with a list of 17 items which included amongst other things:

- The end of poverty and hunger
- Better standards of education and healthcare - particularly as it pertains to water quality and better sanitation
- To achieve gender equality
- Sustainable economic growth while promoting jobs and stronger economies
- All of the above and more while tackling the effects of climate change, pollution and other environmental factors that can harm and do harm people's health, livelihoods and lives.
- Sustainability to include health of the land, air and sea

Finally, it acknowledged the concept of nature having certain rights - that people have stewardship of the world and the importance of putting people at the forefront of solving the above global issues through management of the environment and of consumption (for example, reducing packaging and discouraging food waste as well as promoting the use of recyclable materials).

Date:

Our Project

In this table you can locate the aspects that you would like to improve about our school in order to increase the level of sustainability.

ECONOMIC	
SOCIAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL	