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International Standard



HONG KONG GREEN SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARD

(Pilot Version)

**Designed in Alignment with the
UNESCO Green School Quality Standard
For the Net Zero School Project**

Developer: UNESCO Hong Kong Association
Publisher: Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development

2026 June

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Publisher: Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development



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The Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development

The Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development (HiESD) is an interdisciplinary research-based and innovative application institute. Since 2003, it has dedicated substantial effort to promote the United Nations Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by carrying out forward-looking research, setting standards, and promoting quality education. HiESD is the partner-expert and service provider of the UNIDO (IRD Ref. No. 12958), the partner-expert of the UNDESA (registration number: 26908), and a member of the UN Sustainable Development Solution Network (UNSDSN). HiESD is a member institution of the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations, the founding organization and secretariat of UHKA, the host of UN75 Dialogues, and the co-organiser of the thematic side event at the China Pavilion of the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29).



The Greening Education Partnership

The Greening Education Partnership is an independent and inclusive community of practice on the role of education in tackling climate change. It is led by national governments, intergovernmental organizations, youth, civil society organizations, and private sector, among others. The Secretariat is hosted by UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris.

FOREWORD

In 2022, UNESCO conducted a global survey with young people, inviting them to share their experiences and aspirations around climate change education at school. Out of nearly 17,500 respondents, 70% stated that they couldn't explain climate change, could only explain its broad principles, or knew nothing about it.

In response to youth demands, the UN Transforming Education Summit was held at the United Nations Headquarters in September 2022. Heads of state and government participating in the Summit focused on cross-cutting priorities for transforming education. The UN Secretary-General issued a "Vision Statement on Transforming Education" and launched the "Greening Education Partnership" (GEP). This initiative aims to support countries in addressing the climate crisis through a global, whole-system approach, leveraging the key role of education.

The Greening Education Partnership (GEP) project is coordinated by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. In 2024, GEP published the "Green School Quality Standard", aimed at greening schools for climate action and sustainability. The Standard integrates sustainability principles and climate action across four core areas: 1) School Governance, 2) Facilities and Operations, 3) Teaching and Learning, and 4) Community Engagement. It establishes a common global language to ensure that every learner is well prepared for climate challenges, working collectively toward the global target of greening at least 50% of schools in all countries by 2030.

In 2022, the UNESCO Hong Kong Association (UHKA) and the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development (HiESD) took the lead in launching the "Net Zero School Project" with funding support from the Sustainable Development Fund of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). This project emphasises climate change as the entry point, prompting schools to reflect on how to become climate-ready. Schools serve not only as safe and resilient learning spaces but also as innovation hubs where learners and local communities can acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to address the impacts of climate change by adopting sustainable practices.

The project cultivates global citizenship, encourages community action, and integrates education for sustainable development into the curriculum, creating a culture of sustainability and nurturing learners and communities – the agents of transformation – to become future green and sustainable talents. The project includes teacher and student training, curriculum integration, establishing carbon accounts, independent auditing, promoting STEM project-based learning, and community engagement.



Prof. Karen Cheung

President, UNESCO Hong Kong
Association

Director, Hong Kong Institute of
Education for Sustainable Development

FOREWORD

Following the release of the Green School Quality Standard by GEP in 2024, we integrated the Standard into the training for the "Net Zero School Project" in the 2025–26 school year. Through aligning with the Standard, submitting applications for approval, participating in international seminars and working group meetings, and undergoing assessment by UNESCO in April 2026, we became a GEP member institution and were recognised as an accreditation organisation.

The "Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard", published through this assessment, is grounded in our experience and progress in promoting the "Net Zero School Project" in Hong Kong, making it more closely aligned and adapted to the local context. Schools in Hong Kong that pass the assessment will not only be pioneers and demonstration schools of net-zero carbon education in Hong Kong but will also be listed on the GEP dashboard of recognised green schools worldwide. Let us respond to the UNESCO Greening Education Partnership initiative, working together to cultivate green and sustainable talents for a sustainable future.



Prof. Karen Cheung

President, UNESCO Hong Kong Association
Director, Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development





HONG KONG GREEN SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARD

(PILOT VERSION)
2026 JUNE

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND OF THE NET ZERO SCHOOL PROJECT

1.1 Phase 1: Fostering Transformative Changes in Response to UNESCO's "Education 2030" and the "Future of Education" Initiatives

In September 2015, all member states of the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) covering the economy, society, and environment. These goals have become an internationally recognised development blueprint and the overall direction of global collaboration.

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialised agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated goal, Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The roadmap specified that "Transforming the Learning Environment" is a key priority action area, which highlighted the importance of constructing a learning institution that aligns with sustainable development principles, especially climate actions.

To put this agenda into action, in 2021, UNESCO launched the "Futures of Education" initiative, proposing an educational transformation toward a just, equitable, and sustainable future. This requires:

- Innovating teaching and learning models
- Emphasizing ecological, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary learning
- Supporting students in both acquiring and producing knowledge
- Developing critical thinking and knowledge application skills
- Encouraging research and innovation among teachers, students, academic institutions, and civil society organizations to collectively reimagine future education



As net zero and climate actions are not only global frameworks but also government priorities, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) released Hong Kong's "Climate Action Plan 2050" in 2021. This ambitious target has received enthusiastic responses from the education sector. Under this background, the UNESCO Hong Kong Association has received funding from the Sustainable Development Fund of the HKSARG to organise the "Towards Net Zero School Project" in the 2022-23 academic year to embed sustainability into the very fabric of education, empowering students, teachers, and communities to become active participants in the transition to a carbon-neutral future. 10 schools completed their greenhouse gas emission baseline accounting and received verification statements, reports, and recommendations for future net zero actions and policies tailored to the characteristics and progress of each school.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND OF THE NET ZERO SCHOOL PROJECT

1.1 Phase 1: Fostering Transformative Changes in Response to UNESCO's "Education 2030" and the "Future of Education" Initiatives

The project emphasised the integration of Net Zero and STEAM education, helping schools identify opportunities to launch innovative, experiential initiatives. It also promoted a whole-school approach, which included training for school management teams, teachers, and students; recommendations for improving school facilities; and encouragement for students to adopt a low-carbon lifestyle and influence their families' behaviour as well.

A8 中環縱橫 信報 50 www.hkej.com 2023年10月17日 星期二



師生共參與，建立綠色校園

以10間學校作為先導，計劃透過校長、師生共同參與互動，全力推動學校硬件、軟件雙管齊下，令學校成為零碳校園的師生實踐基地，為響應香港2050年前碳中和的目標培養綠色人才。

- 學校方面，學校可參考碳審計報告中的碳排放基準線、以及改進措施建議，規劃校園碳中和政策，推動設施及運作方面的綠色轉變。
- 學生方面，可持續發展學生大使完成低碳生活、碳審計工作坊，並在校園開展相關活動。同時透過參與低碳生活承諾、完成三次季度性低碳生活問卷，認識生活中的碳排放源，了解自身碳排放分佈，鼓勵將低碳生活帶入家庭日常生活習慣。
- 教師方面，計劃為學校管理人員提供可持續發展、碳中和政策培訓，鼓勵可持續發展融入學校管理與課程。

十校完成碳審計報告 成為邁向碳中和學校典範 全面推動碳中和融入STEAM教學 培養未來綠色人才

2023年10月14日，香港聯合國教科文組織協會「邁向碳中和學校嘉許計劃」（計劃）Towards Net-Zero School Project 成果分享及頒獎儀式（儀式）於香港可持續發展教育學院（學院）「零碳展室」舉辦。計劃由可持續發展基金資助，10間香港中小學在完成一系培訓以及數據收集後，建立校園碳帳簿，完成首份碳審計報告，獲頒嘉許狀，為學校逐步優化、減排，開展邁向碳中和學校及開展創新教學提供清晰方向及實踐建議。

碳中和融入STEAM教學，未來教育創新突破

香港聯合國教科文組織協會會長張沁教授致歡迎辭。張教授感謝各參與計劃學校的大力支持，在校長、師生的共同努力下令計劃在校園碳審計層面以及人才培養層面的教學價值、目標得以逐項落實，響應聯合國教科文組織推進的「教育的未來」倡議，培養面向未來的可持續綠色人才。繼本次計劃的成果，協會將繼續開展零碳校園創新設計大賽、未來教育創新教學實驗室等項目，支援教師進一步指導學生從問題出發進行項目制研習及數據分析研習，為培養有執行力、創造力、溝通力和有擔當的未來人才開展新突破。

數據量化，訂立有效減排目標

根據碳審計報告的數據顯示，參與學校2021年碳排放總量區間為108.04至889.80噸二氧化碳當量，其中來自外購電力的排放均超過80%。報告以學校面積、師生人數為基數，分析學校碳排放比例，為香港校園碳中和提供實貴參考數據。同時，計劃亦分析近200名學生的生活碳排放趨勢，清晰反映計劃期內學生低碳生活轉變的趨勢和成果，例如：參與膠樽回收的學生從65%增長至77%。

零碳展室體驗及研學

儀式於學院「零碳展室」進行，展室透過全方位智能碳排放監測設施，實時顯示燈光、電子螢幕、空調、甚至是閉路電視（CCTV）的耗電所產生的碳排放。參與活動的嘉賓、教師親眼見證低減數據的實時跳動，深刻體會到自己的一舉一動所帶來的環境影響。展室作為碳中和實踐案例，鼓勵學校運用校園碳中和場景融合STEAM教學，讓學生能夠在校園日常及生活中實踐低碳生活。

香港聯合國教科文組織協會亦將以本次計劃為開端，繼續推行「邁向碳中和學校」項目，期望未來鼓勵更多學校建立校園碳帳簿，開展更多項目製學習、數據分析學習，以培養具備系統思維能力、策劃能力、慎思明辨能力、綜合解決問題能力等八大可持續發展關鍵能力的綠色人才。

本次參與計劃的十間學校（排名不分先後）包括：中華基金中學、屯門天主教中學、台山商會中學、拔萃女書院、香港教育工作者聯會黃楚標學校、馬鞍山聖若瑟小學、培僑書院、聖母無玷聖心書院、聖保羅書院和廠商會蔡章閣中學。計劃使用香港可持續發展教育學院出版的《碳素養與低減生活》。

《碳素養與低減生活》

（碳素養與低減生活雙語教材）

Figure: Newspaper coverage of the "Towards Net Zero School Project"

The first phase of the project demonstrated the importance of building Net Zero Demonstration Schools to set leadership in the green transformation of the education sector. And led to the initiation of the "2024-25" Net Zero School Project.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND OF THE NET ZERO SCHOOL PROJECT

1.1 Phase 1: Fostering Transformative Changes in Response to UNESCO's "Education 2030" and the "Future of Education" Initiatives

In the 2024-25 academic year, the project broadened its objectives. Overall, the project:

- Provide tailored training programs for primary and secondary schools (covering students, teachers, and administrators)
- Assist schools in integrating sustainability and net zero into both school management and teaching curriculum
- Help schools to transform towards net zero from both hardware (i.e., Reducing campus operational carbon emissions) and software (i.e., Cultivating students' awareness and habits of low-carbon lifestyle)
- Encourage schools to integrate carbon auditing and net zero with STEAM experiential learning projects
- Establish pioneering "Net Zero Demonstration Schools" in Hong Kong
- Host a certification ceremony, sharing sessions, and panel discussions to showcase the school's commitment to and achievement in sustainable development to global, national, and local audiences.
- Promote the exchange of net zero transformation experiences among schools
- Provide comprehensive learning resources through the digital learning platform – SDGCAMPUS

1.2 Phase 2: Aligning with UNESCO's Green School Quality Standard

The global climate crisis demands immediate and systemic action across all sectors of society. Schools, as centres of learning and community engagement, play a pivotal role in shaping future generations who will inherit the responsibility of environmental stewardship.

In 2024, UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership published the Green School Quality Standard (The Standard).

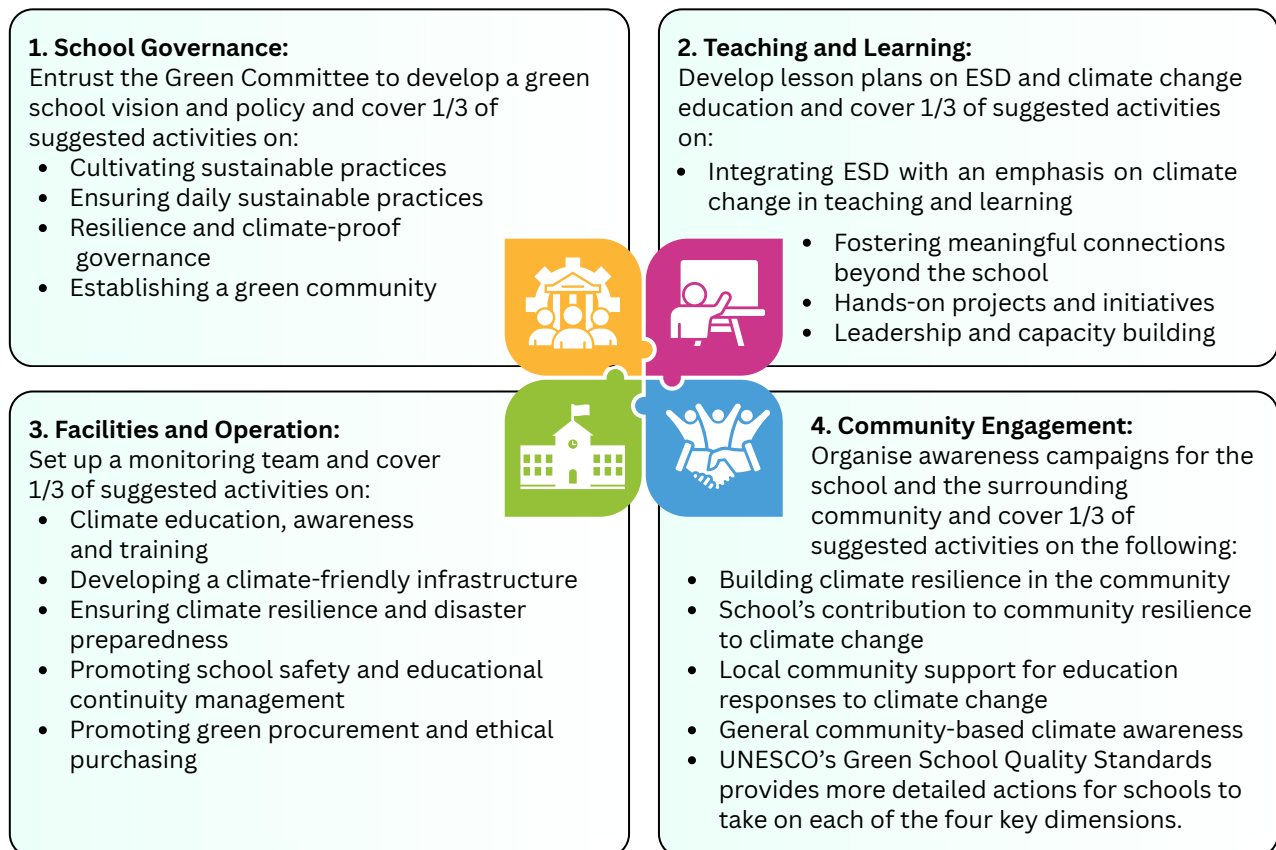
The Green School Quality Standard is a comprehensive framework designed to help harmonise the criteria of school accreditation schemes, ranging from school certification and labels, awards, and school-based initiatives to projects demonstrating a commitment through the lens of a WIA to ESD, which integrates sustainability principles and climate action into the day-to-day running and decision-making of the school, the teaching and learning taking place in and out of the classrooms, and the school's interactions with the community.



1. PROJECT BACKGROUND OF THE NET ZERO SCHOOL PROJECT

1.2 Phase 2: Aligning with UNESCO's Green School Quality Standard

The standard emphasises that a "green school" must address sustainability across four key dimensions:



1.3 Phase 3: Officially recognised as the accreditation organisation of the Greening Education Partnership, a global initiative under the guiding framework of UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development

In April 2026, the UNESCO Hong Kong Association and the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development were officially recognised as the accreditation organisations of the Greening Education Partnership, a global initiative under the guiding framework of UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND OF THE NET ZERO SCHOOL PROJECT

1.3 Phase 3: Officially recognised as the accreditation organisation of the Greening Education Partnership, a global initiative under the guiding framework of UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development

This marks another milestone for the Net Zero School Project in Hong Kong. The news was officially announced on June 5, 2026, World Environment Day. The Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard (Pilot Version) was published on the same occasion and will be implemented starting from the 2026/27 academic year intake of the Net Zero School Project.

School will be assessed against the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard (Pilot Version)”, focusing on governance, facilities, teaching and learning, and community. This standard is aligned with the global standard for green schools. Therefore, schools that successfully satisfy the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard (Pilot Version)” through the assessment arranged by the UNESCO Hong Kong Association could obtain the Green School badge issued by the Greening Education Partnership.

1.4 A Call to Action for Schools in Hong Kong and Worldwide

The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time—and education must lead the solution. Internationally, the Net Zero School Project is guided by UNESCO's Education 2030 Initiatives and the Green School Quality Standards. Locally, in 2026, the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region published the Values Education Curriculum Framework, in which Education for Sustainable Development has been officially included as one of the essential value education elements.

The Net Zero School Project offers a replicable, scalable model for schools to become beacons of sustainability.

We invite educators worldwide to join this movement and reimagine education for a sustainable future.

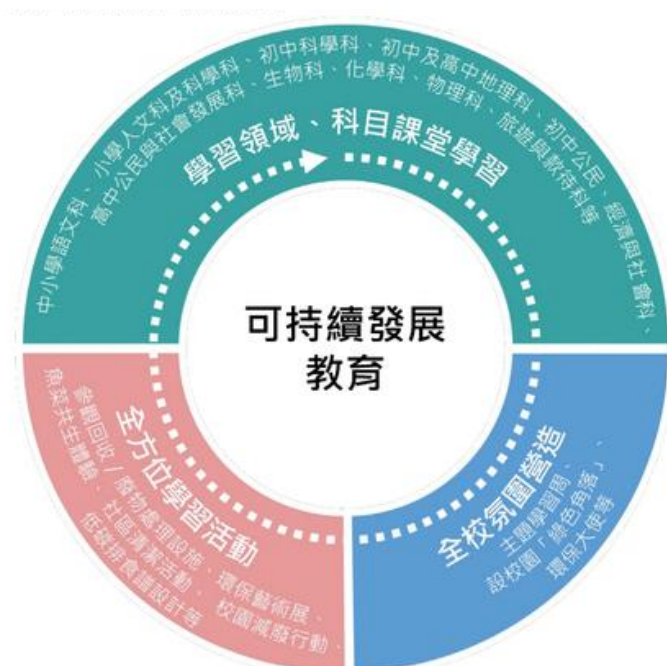
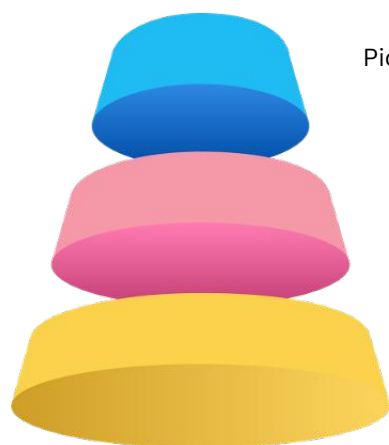


圖 11 各跨課程範疇涵蓋不同科目和學習經歷
(以可持續發展教育為例)

Figure: Education for Sustainable Development Listed in the Value Education Curriculum Framework, Education Bureau of the HKSAR, 2026

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME

2.1 Levels of Recognition



Net Zero Demonstration School

Pioneering schools that serve as exemplars, meeting high standards of performance and actively sharing experiences with other schools.
(Reviewed and awarded by the expert panel)

Net Zero Participant School

Schools that have committed to the net zero journey and meet the foundational requirements across all four dimensions. (Meeting at least ½ of the criteria in the Net Zero Participant School category)

Hong Kong GEP Programme Member School

Joining the Hong Kong GEP Programme member school demonstrates a school's commitment to promoting ESD and working towards net zero.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria by Dimension

The following tables outline the specific criteria schools must meet at each recognition level, in alignment with the Green School Quality Standard, ensuring coherence with the GEP framework as well as local conditions.



2.2.1 School Governance

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
1	Essential Action: Green Committee & Vision/Policy	Establishes a Green Committee with representation from school management, teachers, and students. Develops a basic Green School vision or policy.	Vision/policy is formally approved by the School Management Committee. Carbon reduction targets are ambitious and aligned with Hong Kong's climate goals (achieve net zero by 2050).
2	Low Resource Consumption Culture	Initiates awareness campaigns to promote resource conservation.	Demonstrates a sustained culture of resource conservation, including visible promotion of such a culture in staff rooms, classrooms, canteens and other school facilities.
3	Energy Conservation Policy	Has a basic energy conservation policy in place.	Policy is regularly reviewed and updated. Energy reduction targets are consistently met or exceeded.
4	Professional Learning Commitment	At least one staff member participates in ESD-related professional development annually.	School leadership actively promotes and resources ongoing professional learning for all staff.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.1 School Governance

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
5	Professional Development Opportunities	Provides basic training for staff on sustainability topics.	Develops and shares professional development resources with other schools.
6	Cross-Curricular Projects	Organises at least one cross-curricular project related to sustainability annually.	Sustainability is systematically embedded across the curriculum with documented cross-curricular integration. At least three cross-curricular projects related to sustainability are conducted annually.
7	Green Committee Established	A Green Committee exists with defined roles.	The committee drives the school-wide sustainability strategy and reports annually to school leadership.
8	Staff Coordinator Appointed	A staff member is designated as the sustainability coordinator.	A staff member recognised by the management is designated as the sustainability coordinator.
9	Sustainable Learning Environments	Identifies opportunities to create more sustainable learning spaces.	Learning environments are systematically designed and maintained to model sustainability principles.
10	Learner-Led Initiatives & Campaigns	Supports at least one student-led sustainability initiative annually.	Student-led initiatives are integral to school operations and influence school policy.
11	Effective Communication Networks	Establishes basic communication channels for sustainability updates.	School serves as a communication hub, sharing best practices with external stakeholders and other schools.
12	Surveys & Interviews Conducted	Conducts an annual survey of stakeholder attitudes towards sustainability.	Implements participatory approaches involving students, staff, and parents in decision-making.
13	Collaboration with Other Schools	Participates in at least one inter-school sustainability event or activity.	Leads or hosts inter-school collaboration initiatives and exchanges experiences with other schools.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.2 Facilities and Operations

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
1	Essential Action: Monitoring Team	Establishes a monitoring team to oversee facilities and operations.	The monitoring team includes student representatives and integrates findings into school planning.
2	Carbon Audit Conducted	Completes a basic carbon audit covering scope 1 and 2 emissions.	A carbon audit is conducted annually with student involvement. Demonstrated year-on-year emission reductions.
3	Educational & Advocacy Campaigns	Initiates at least one awareness campaign on energy or waste reduction.	Campaigns are sustained and integrated into school culture with demonstrated impact.
4	Waste Management Policy	Has a basic waste management policy covering recycling.	Policy is comprehensive, regularly reviewed, and achieves measurable waste diversion rates.
5	Sustainable Transportation Practices	Encourages sustainable commuting (e.g., walking, cycling, public transport) and explores the feasibility of EV charging infrastructure.	Has infrastructure to support sustainable transportation (e.g., bike racks, EV charging stations) and tracks participation.
6	Install Secure Bike Racks/Shelters	Provides basic bicycle parking.	Promotes active commuting through infrastructure and programming.
7	Training on Waste Management	Provides basic training to staff and students on waste segregation.	Waste management training is integrated into curriculum and staff development.
8	Energy Audit Conducted	Conducts a basic energy audit.	An energy audit is conducted regularly with student involvement and leads to measurable efficiency gains.
9	Energy-Saving Habits Promoted	Promotes energy-saving behaviours through signage and announcements.	Energy-saving behaviours are embedded in school culture with documented behavioural change.
10	Replace Traditional Light Bulbs	Replaces inefficient lighting in at least one area.	Uses high-efficiency lighting with smart controls.
11	Install Renewable Energy Systems	Explores feasibility of renewable energy installation.	Renewable energy contributes measurably to school energy needs and serves as a learning resource.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.2 Facilities and Operations

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
12	Water Audit Conducted	Conducts a basic water audit.	A water audit is conducted regularly with student involvement and leads to measurable water savings.
13	Replace Inefficient Water Outlets	Replaces inefficient fixtures in at least one area.	Uses water-efficient fixtures with monitoring systems.
14	Waste Audit Conducted	Conducts a basic waste audit.	A waste audit is conducted regularly with student involvement and leads to measurable waste reduction.
15	Waste Reduction at Source	Implements basic waste reduction measures (e.g., reusable bottles, reduced packaging).	Achieves measurable reduction in waste generation through systemic approaches.
16	Waste Bins Properly Labelled	Recycling and general waste bins are clearly labelled with visual guides (e.g., pictures of accepted items) in at least the canteen and corridors.	Labels are bilingual (Eng/Chi) with colour coding. The audit confirms a correct usage rate of >80%. The student eco-team maintains signage.
17	Replace Old & Inefficient Appliances	Replaces at least one inefficient appliance.	Procurement prioritises energy-efficient appliances with the highest ratings.
18	Environmental Audit Conducted	Conducts a basic environmental audit.	An environmental audit is conducted regularly with student involvement and drives continuous improvement.
19	Set Up Green Roofs/Vertical Gardens	Explores opportunities for green roofs or vertical gardens.	Green infrastructure is integrated into school design and serves as a learning resource.
20	Promote Native Plant Landscaping	Plants are native species in at least one area.	School grounds feature diverse native plantings that support local biodiversity.
21	Establish Seed-Saving Programmes	Initiates a basic seed-saving or seed bank project.	Seed-saving, the curriculum and community engagement.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.2 Facilities and Operations

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
22	School Gardens / Soil Patches for Crops	Maintains at least one small garden bed, planter box, or hydroponic unit (given limited HK outdoor space).	Integrates garden produce into canteen or student activities. The garden is used for formal lessons (e.g., science, STEAM).
23	Optimize Natural Lighting	Assesses opportunities to improve natural lighting.	School designs or retrofits prioritise natural lighting to reduce energy use.
24	Conduct regular inspections	The school conducts inspections for facility inefficiency / leakages annually.	The school conducts inspections for facility inefficiency / leakages on a more frequent basis, e.g., bi-annually.
25	Encourage Student Research	Provides opportunities for student research on facilities and operations.	Student-led research projects drive innovation in facilities and operations.
26	Establish Student-Led Committee	Student representatives participate in facilities and operations discussions.	The student committee has a formal advisory role in facilities and operations decisions.
27	Swap Fair / Upcycling Seminars / Repair Workshops	Organises at least one item swap fair (e.g., uniforms, lly.	Hosts at least two different types of events annually (e.g., repair workshop + swap fair). Events are student-led.
28	Composting System	Operates a simple compost bin or food waste digester (e.g., for fruit peels from the canteen).	The composting system processes a significant portion of school food waste. Data on waste diverted is tracked and reported.
29	E-waste Management Programme	Collects used batteries, printer cartridges, or small electronics for proper recycling via government/partner schemes.	Regular E-waste collection events are held at the school as a part of STEAM education initiatives.
30	Rainwater Harvesting	At least one rain barrel or collection container used for plant watering.	The system is integrated into the water audit savings calculation. Used as a teaching tool for water conservation.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.2 Facilities and Operations

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
31	Green Purchasing Policy (Ethical Procurement)	School expresses preference for recycled paper, energy-efficient appliances, and eco-friendly cleaning products.	Formal green procurement guidelines are adopted by school management. Students are involved in researching alternatives.
32	Enhance the Insulation	The school has implemented insulation measures in one of the major school facilities (e.g hall, indoor gym)	The school has implemented insulation measures in classrooms and major school facilities.
33	Aim for green building certification	The school has a formal plan to apply for a green building certification	The school has already applied for a green building certification



2.2.3 Teaching and Learning

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
1	Essential Action: Develop Lesson Plans	Develops at least one lesson plan addressing climate change or sustainability.	Comprehensive, integrated lesson plans addressing climate change are developed for at least three subjects.
2	Teaching Addresses Climate Change	Climate change is addressed in at least one subject area. (Has been implemented)	Climate change education is systematically embedded across the curriculum.
3	Research Projects & Investigations	Students participate in at least one sustainability research project.	Student research projects are presented publicly or to the whole school and may influence school or community practices.
4	Local & Global Case Studies	Uses case studies to illustrate sustainability challenges.	Students engage with local and global partners to address case study challenges.
5	Integrate Local Traditional Knowledge	Introduces students to local traditional knowledge related to sustainability.	School actively preserves and promotes local traditional knowledge. (for example, intangible culture heritage and monuments / heritage)

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.3 Teaching and Learning

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
6	Regular Evaluation Sessions	Conducts basic evaluation of sustainability learning outcomes.	Implements participatory evaluation involving students in assessing learning.
7	Integrate ESD into the curriculum.	ESD is included in at least one subject area.	ESD is systematically embedded across all relevant curriculum areas.
8	Organize debates or discussions	The school has joined debate competitions or discussion events to share students' views on sustainability topics.	The school has organised debate competitions or discussion events to exchange views on sustainability topics with other schools.
9	Conduct value reflection exercises	Facilitates at least one value reflection session focused on sustainability.	Students across at least 3 year groups have conducted in-depth value reflection exercises.
10	Ethics & Moral Responsibility Discussions	Facilitates at least one discussion on ethics and climate responsibility.	Students engage in sustained exploration of ethical dimensions of climate change.
11	Invite Guest Speakers	Invites at least one guest speaker on sustainability annually.	The guest speaker programme is structured and connected to the curriculum.
12	Foster Continuous Learning Culture	Encourages ongoing learning about sustainability.	Continuous learning is embedded in professional development and student activities.
13	Engage parents	At least one initiative on sustainability has been hosted for the parents or with the Parent Teacher Association.	At least three initiatives on sustainability have been hosted for the parents or with the Parent Teacher Association.
14	Organize Environmental Conferences/Symposia	Participates in external environmental events or conferences.	Hosts conferences or symposia that attract external participants and showcase student work.
15	Engage Learners in Community-Based Projects	Students participate in at least one community-based sustainability project.	Projects demonstrate measurable community impact and student leadership.
16	Initiate Sustainability Projects	Initiates at least one sustainability project annually.	Projects are student-led and demonstrate innovation and impact.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.3 Teaching and Learning

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
17	Create Outdoor Classrooms	Identifies opportunities for outdoor learning.	Multiple outdoor learning spaces are integrated into teaching and learning.
18	Collaborate with Elders	Invites elders to share knowledge with students.	Elders are recognised as valued knowledge holders and partners.
19	Encourage Advocacy for Climate Action	Supports student advocacy on climate issues.	Student advocacy efforts influence school, community, or policy decisions.
20	Film / Documentary Screenings	Screens at least one climate-related documentary (e.g., short video) followed by class discussion.	Screenings are followed by student-led action projects. Film list is curated annually by students.
21	Sustainable Food Choices Awareness	Promotes Meatless Monday, low-carbon lunch, or food waste reduction campaigns.	Canteen partners to offer sustainable menu options. Students audit food waste before/after campaign.
22	Personal Commitments / Pledges	Students and staff make individual pledges (e.g., "I will bring a reusable bottle").	Pledges are tracked (e.g., class pledge board). A follow-up survey shows behaviour change.
23	Upcycling / Repurposing Projects	Organises at least one upcycling workshop (e.g., making pencil holders from cartons).	Upcycled products are sold at school events or donated to the community. The project is documented as a case study.
24	Green Building Design Project	Students design a green feature for their own school (e.g., a shading device or green wall) as a STEAM task.	Best student designs are presented to school management. Feasible ideas are prototyped or implemented.
25	Learner Climate Champion Programme	Identifies at least one climate leader in the school who actively participates in internal and external trainings.	Structured champion programme with regular meetings, projects, and mentoring of younger students.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.4 Community Engagement

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
1	Essential Action: Student-Led Awareness Campaign or Community Projects	Initiates at least one student-led awareness campaign or community project focused on sustainability.	Students lead multiple awareness campaigns or community projects and mentor other schools in community engagement.
2	Family Engagement Initiatives	Communicates with families about sustainability initiatives.	Families are active partners in school sustainability efforts.
3	External Partnerships	Establishes at least one partnership with an external environmental organisation or business.	Partnerships are strategic, sustained, and serve as models for collaboration.
4	Public Sharing & Showcase Events	Participates in public events to share school sustainability achievements.	School serves as a showcase site, hosting visits from other schools and stakeholders.
5	Mentoring Other Schools	Shares experiences with other schools informally.	Actively mentors multiple schools and contributes to capacity-building in the broader education community.
6	Create Informational Materials (e.g., brochures, posters)	Students create bilingual (Eng/Chi) posters or digital materials about climate action for school or community.	Materials are distributed to nearby residents, parents, or local shops. Community feedback is collected.
7	Collaboration with Local Authorities (e.g., District Office, EPD)	Invites an officer from EPD or District Office to speak or participates in a government campaign.	The school is recognised as a community partner by the local authority. Jointly organises a district-level event.
8	Outdoor Classrooms (in community context)	Uses a nearby park, rooftop, or public open space for at least one lesson per term.	School has a dedicated outdoor learning space (even if shared with the community). Lessons are timetabled regularly.
9	Participatory Research / Citizen Science	Participates in one citizen science project (e.g., butterfly count, air quality monitoring with HK Observatory).	Students design their own citizen science project. Data is shared with a relevant authority or published.

2. DETAILS OF THE RECOGNITION SCHEME



2.2.4 Community Engagement

No.	Criteria	Net Zero Participant School	Net Zero Demonstration School
10	Alumni Involvement Programme	Invites alumni working in environmental fields to speak at career talks.	Alumni mentor current students on green projects. The alumni network supports the school's net zero goals.
11	Competitions / Challenges (Community-level)	School participates in an inter-school green competition (e.g., an energy-saving award).	School co-organises a community or inter-school challenge. Winning solutions are implemented.
12	Annual / Regular Community Engagement Events	Organises at least one community-facing event per year (e.g., Green Day, recycling drive open to the public).	Events are held ≥ 2 times per year. Attendance and community impact are documented and growing.
13	Establish Community Gardens	Establishes a small community garden or growing area.	A community garden serves as a model for sustainable food production and community engagement.
14	Partnerships with Civil Society Organisations	Establishes at least one partnership with a civil society organisation.	Partnerships are strategic and provide meaningful learning opportunities.
15	Encourage Volunteer Programmes	Provides opportunities for student volunteering.	Students regularly participate in volunteer programmes with documented impact.
16	Organize Capacity-Building Workshops	Organises at least one capacity-building workshop for students or staff.	Capacity-building programmes are sustained and reach multiple stakeholder groups.
17	Establish Small-Scale School Farms	Initiates a small-scale farming or food-growing project.	The school farm serves as a demonstration site and engages the wider community.
18	Foster Cultural Exchanges	Participates in cultural exchange activities with indigenous or local communities.	Cultural exchanges are reciprocal and contribute to mutual learning.
19	Organise Community Clean-Up Campaigns	Participates in or organises a community clean-up.	School leads community-wide clean-up initiatives with measurable impact.

3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Certification Path (1): Through Participation in the “Net Zero School Project”

The Net Zero School Project, organised by the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development, offers comprehensive activities that assist schools in meeting the standards of a “Net Zero Demonstration School”.

Stage	Description
1. Training	The project provides training for students and teachers at the school, including: • Climate change science and trends • Climate actions at the global and local levels • Greenhouse gas emission calculation in accordance with the “Guidelines to Account for and Report on Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals for Buildings (Commercial, Residential or Institutional Purposes) in Hong Kong” • Methods and recommendations to reduce carbon emissions on community, school, and individual levels Specific training for teachers and school management, including: • Sustainable development and low-carbon school management, and how to integrate “climate action” into classroom teaching and STEAM education • School’s ESG practice and strategy, including why schools need to conduct ESG reporting and how to use those reports to communicate with stakeholders.
2. On-site and online Guidance	1. One session of onsite mentorship is provided. An expert team will visit the school to provide guidance to the working group. The team will lead students to identify emission sources and reduction opportunities in the school. This will help schools to improve carbon accounting spreadsheets and resolve challenges, as well as provide practical suggestions in the aspects of “School Governance”, “Teaching and Learning”, and “Community Engagement” in each school’s unique context. 2. An online mentorship session will also be arranged before carbon verification to ensure document completeness.
3. Finalise Data and Carbon Audit Submission	Schools submit a greenhouse gas emissions report with all relevant supporting materials, including payment bills for electricity, gas, and water; green measures taken by the school; photos of student-led green campaigns; etc. The greenhouse gas emissions report must follow the methodology prescribed by the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department or an equivalent recognised standard.
4. Green School Evidence Submission	Schools submit reports demonstrating their alignment with each criterion in the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard.
5. Evidence Review	A panel of experts convened by the UNESCO Hong Kong Association, including a registered carbon auditor, reviews the materials submitted by the school.

3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Certification Path (1): Through Participation in the “Net Zero School Project”

The Net Zero School Project organised by the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development offers comprehensive activities that assist schools to meet the standards of “Net Zero Demonstration School”.

Stage	Description
6. Recognition Determination	The panel determines the recognition level based on the evidence and site visit findings. Two certification results are determined at this stage: 1. Carbon verification conducted with reference to the “Guidelines to Account for and Report on Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals for Buildings (Commercial, Residential or Institutional Purposes) in Hong Kong 2010 Edition”; 2. Assessment against the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard. By participating in the activities and training of the Net Zero School Project, the school is likely to meet the majority of the criteria. The expert panel makes the final decision on whether to certify the school as a Net Zero Demonstration School. The school receives a plaque showing its certification level and the Green School Badge of the Greening Education Partnership. Schools are notified of the outcome with feedback for further improvement.
7. Annual Certification Ceremony	Successful schools are recognised at an annual certification ceremony, where they receive certificates, public recognition, and opportunities to share their achievements with local, national, and global audiences.
8. Inclusion on the Greening Education Partnership Website	Schools certified as Net Zero Demonstration Schools through the UNESCO Hong Kong Association will be included in the global network and index of the Greening Education Partnership, contributing towards the target to “green at least 50% of schools in every country by 2030”.



3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.2 Certification Path (2): Schools With Existing Carbon Audit Report

For schools with an existing carbon audit report, they may apply for assessment against the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard. The carbon audit report should comply with the principles of timeliness and completeness. If the school applies for assessment in 2026, the carbon audit report should be for the year 2025 or onwards.

Stage	Description
1. Review of Existing Carbon Audit Report	The applicant submits their existing carbon audit report for review. The report must be issued by a well-recognised and qualified institution.
2. Green School Evidence Submission	Schools submit reports demonstrating their alignment with each criterion in the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard.
3. Evidence Review	A panel of experts convened by the UNESCO Hong Kong Association, including a registered carbon auditor, reviews the materials submitted by the school.
4. Online or On-site Interview	Depending on the completeness of the evidence submitted and panel availability, an online or on-site interview will be arranged.
5. Recognition Determination	The panel determines the recognition level based on the evidence and interview findings. With reference to the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard, schools will be certified as follows: • Net Zero Participant School – if the school has satisfied at least half of the criteria in the Net Zero Participant School dimension, including the essential action. The school receives a silver-coloured plaque showing its certification level and the Green School Badge of the Greening Education Partnership. • Net Zero Demonstration School – the panel determines whether the school meets this certification level. The school receives a gold-coloured plaque showing its certification level and the Green School Badge of the Greening Education Partnership. Schools are notified of the outcome with feedback for further improvement. Schools are notified of the outcome with feedback for further improvement.
6. Annual Certification Ceremony	Successful schools are recognised at an annual certification ceremony, where they receive certificates, public recognition, and opportunities to share their achievements with local, national, and global audiences.
7. Inclusion on the Greening Education Partnership Website	Schools certified as Net Zero Demonstration Schools through the UNESCO Hong Kong Association will be included in the global network and index of the Greening Education Partnership, contributing towards the target to “green at least 50% of schools in every country by 2030”. Schools certified as Net Zero Participant Schools through the UNESCO Hong Kong Association will be reported to the Greening Education Partnership (GEP) for record. The decision whether to include the school in the global green school index will be made by the GEP.

3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.3 Certification Path (3): Assessment Against the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard Only

For schools that decide to begin their net zero efforts, they may apply for an assessment against the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard only. We encourage these schools to gradually work towards a higher level of certification and conduct a carbon audit in the future.

Stage	Description
1. Green School Evidence Submission	Schools submit reports demonstrating their alignment with each criterion in the Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard.
2. Evidence Review	A panel of experts convened by the UNESCO Hong Kong Association, including a registered carbon auditor, reviews the materials submitted by the school.
3 Online or On-site Interview	Depending on the completeness of the evidence submitted and panel availability, an online or on-site interview will be arranged.
4. Recognition Determination	The panel determines the recognition level based on the evidence and interview findings. The school receives a “Towards Net Zero School Assessment Certificate” which specifies the criteria they have met. Schools are notified of the outcome with feedback for further improvement.
5. Annual Certification Ceremony	Successful schools are recognised at an annual certification ceremony, where they receive certificates, public recognition, and opportunities to share their achievements with local, national, and global audiences.
6. Information of the school reported to the Greening Education Partnership for record	Information about the school, demonstrating ambition to begin working towards Net Zero School, will be reported to the Greening Education Partnership for record.



4. RECOGNITION RENEWAL AND PROGRESSION

- The report will provide recommendations to the participating schools and support schools in achieving their emission reduction targets.
- The scheme requires year-on-year renewal; the validity of the recognition is 1 year. School may apply for renewal every year, and the same assessment process will take place.
- Schools are encouraged to progress to higher recognition levels over time. The UNESCO Hong Kong Association provides ongoing support, training, and networking opportunities to facilitate continuous improvement.

5. REMARKS

- It should be noted that the UNESCO Hong Kong Association reserves its right to convene and update the panel of experts for the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard”. The list of experts will be published on the webpage of the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard”.
- The accreditation scheme is applicable to different types of schools, including kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities. The panel will assess the eligibility of the applicant in cases of exceptions.
- For multi-campus schools, or schools with both primary and secondary divisions, the application and assessment should be conducted separately.
- The UNESCO Hong Kong Association and the Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development reserve their rights to update the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard”. The latest version will be published on the webpage of the “Hong Kong Green School Quality Standard”. The applicants are responsible for checking and aligning themselves with the latest version.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

COP29	29th United Nations Climate Change Conference
EPD	Environmental Protection Department (Hong Kong)
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
GEP	Greening Education Partnership
HiESD	Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development
HKSARG	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government
IRD	Inland Revenue Department (Hong Kong)
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics
UHKA	UNESCO Hong Kong Association
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSDSN	United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
WIA to ESD	Whole-Institution Approach to Education for Sustainable Development

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HONG KONG GREEN SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARD

(PILOT VERSION)
2026 JUNE





香港可持續發展教育學院
Hong Kong Institute of Education
for Sustainable Development



香港聯合國教科文組織協會
Hong Kong Association
for UNESCO



HONG KONG GREEN SCHOOL QUALITY STANDARD

(Pilot Version)

**Designed in Alignment with the
UNESCO Green School Quality Standard
For the Net Zero School Project**

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