

GUIDANCE NOTES: Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester) Round 2

We hope you're reading this information as you'd like to make a positive difference to your school's community by applying to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Eco Grants for Schools programme. We invite you to share your project ideas on how your school and its pupils aim to make a positive impact on their friends, families, and neighbouring community through sustainability initiatives.

This document is intended to support you in completing your application. Please read this guidance carefully before working on your application, it will help you to prepare your answers in advance.

Applications open at Noon on the 3rd November 2025. The deadline to submit is Noon on Friday 19th December 2025 or when we have received 50 eligible applications to the fund.

Schools that have previously submitted an unsuccessful application to Eco Grants are welcome to reapply. If reapplying, schools must ensure that their proposed project aligns with the criteria for Round 2. For example, nature and biodiversity projects will not be funded in this round.

Schools that have already received funding through the programme are not eligible to apply again.

You will be sent an automatic email acknowledgement of your submitted application.

If you run into any issues during the application process, please email:

greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Introduction

Eco Grants for Schools in Greater Manchester (Round 2) has been set up to allow schools to develop climate action interventions in the school environment and wider community that deliver on the purpose and themes of the Eco Grants for Schools program in at least the following three categories:

- Waste Reduction and Circular Economy – Fashion, Textiles and Plastics
- Education on Sustainable Lifestyles through Key Life Skills
- Sustainable Food and Tackling Food Waste

What we will not fund:

- **Nature and biodiversity projects will NOT be funded in round 2.** Schools interested in these should apply to the next round of the [Green Spaces Fund](#).
- **Recycling projects will NOT be funded in round 2.** Schools interested in this should apply to the next round of the [Renew Community Fund](#).

Key objectives

To kickstart small acts of positive climate action and sustainable behaviour change within the education sector in Greater Manchester that deliver on the purpose and themes of the Eco Grants for Schools scheme. For example:

1. Waste minimisation projects that go beyond recycling.
 2. Enriching the school curriculum with tangible actions in their school community.
 3. Providing young people with developmental green skills and inspiration to do more to tackle the climate crisis.
- Providing wider social benefits that tackle inequalities including health and wellbeing, building confidence, increasing skills, neighbourhood improvements and community cohesion and engagement.
 - Projects must be able to demonstrate and provide evidence of:
 - a reduction in waste / carbon
 - an increase in climate positive behaviour

Your application will require contact information for two project officers from the school.

Funding available

The GMCA manage the Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester). Grants of up to £2,000 are available for any Local Education Authority School or Academy Trust in Greater Manchester (i.e. one of the following areas: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan).

We expect to support projects that will be completed within 12 months of receiving funding. Interventions must take place over multiple sessions in the school year (one-off events will not be funded), deliver long-lasting change and generate wider social benefits for the community.

What we can fund AND what we can't fund

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED	WHAT CAN'T BE FUNDED
Materials and resources. This refers to items needed specifically for the project. For example, if your project tackles food waste, items like scales for weighing food waste, containers for sorting waste, and charts for tracking progress in reducing waste would be covered but general office supplies would not.	Capital costs or core staff costs that are not project specific. This includes expenses like building renovations or salaries for permanent staff.
Equipment hire or purchase fees. This refers to costs for renting or buying equipment needed for the project. For example, hiring or buying tools for a community vegetable garden would be covered but buying a new computer for general office use would not.	Activities or applications that promote political or religious beliefs. Projects that aim to advance specific political agendas or religious doctrines are not eligible. For instance, a campaign to support a political candidate or that promote a particular religion would not be funded.
Training suppliers/specialist facilitators delivering activities. This includes costs for hiring experts to deliver specific project-related training or activities. For example, hiring a specialist to conduct a workshop on upcycling would be covered, but general staff training not related to the project would not.	Projects that have already started or are a continuation of an existing project. Funding is not available for projects that are already underway or simply extending an existing initiative. For example, if a community clean-up project has already begun, additional funding to continue the same project would not be provided.

Publication or engagement materials. This includes costs for creating materials to promote or engage the community in the project. For example, printing flyers for a community event would be covered, but creating promotional materials for a business would not.	Projects which financially benefit an individual/s. Projects that provide direct financial gain to individuals are not eligible. For example, a project that pays individuals for their participation would not be funded.
Transport costs if activities are delivered off-site. This includes costs for transporting participants to and from project activities held at different locations. For example, renting a bus to take students for a hands-on workshop on reuse and waste management would be covered.	Business as usual activities. Routine operational activities that are part of the school's regular functions are not eligible. For example, daily office operations or updating a school's website.
	Projects that are requesting replacement equipment. Funding is not available for replacing existing equipment. For example, buying a new printer to replace an old one would not be covered.
	Projects which duplicate services that are already the responsibility of a Local Authority. Projects that replicate services already provided by local authorities are not eligible. For instance, setting up a waste collection service in an area where the local council already provides this service would not be funded.

Meeting the criteria

Applications are welcome from any Local Education Authority School or Academy Trust in Greater Manchester. Only one application may be submitted per school.

Successful applicants will have identified how their projects meet one of the following priority areas:

- **Waste Reduction and Circular Economy – Fashion, Textiles and Plastics**

Fashion & Textiles

We welcome projects that:

- Develop sewing, mending, and upcycling skills, for example through uniform repair clubs, “fix-it” workshops, or creative upcycling activities.
- Enable sharing and second-hand initiatives, such as uniform or clothing swap events, permanent swap shops, second-hand uniform sales, or clothing donation drives.
- Raise awareness about the environmental impact of fast fashion and promote sustainable choices through campaigns or educational activities.
- Implement practical repair and reuse projects using waste textiles, enabling pupils to extend the life of clothing and textiles.

Plastic Waste

We welcome projects that:

- Tackle single-use plastics and plastic waste in school, at home, and when out and about, by exploring and introducing practical solutions that reduce, replace, or reuse plastic items.
- Promote circular thinking by supporting projects that extend the life of plastics through reuse and resource sharing, creatively transform plastic waste into useful items, and inspire pupils to recognise plastic as a valuable material rather than simply waste.

- **Education on Sustainable Lifestyles through Key Life Skills**

We welcome projects that:

- Enable pupils to develop practical, real-world skills essential for sustainable living, for example, sewing, mending, cooking, creative problem-solving, teamwork, and project management.
 - Connect sustainability themes to curriculum areas (e.g., Design & Technology, Food Tech, PSHE) and green careers, demonstrating relevance beyond school.
 - Deliver behaviour change and leadership opportunities, for example, peer-to-peer education, eco-leadership roles, and campaigns that empower pupils to influence their families and communities towards more sustainable lifestyles.
- **Sustainable Food and Tackling Food Waste**

Food growing is not eligible as a standalone focus but may be included if clearly embedded within the priorities below.

We welcome projects that:

- Help to reduce food waste by developing practical approaches to using leftovers, planning meals, and storing food effectively - at school, at home, and in the wider community.
- Promote healthy, seasonal, and local eating, including exploring food miles and the environmental impact of food choices. Encourage understanding of sustainable diets.
- Provide opportunities to learn and practise cooking skills, for example through clubs, workshops, or activities using surplus or seasonal ingredients to build confidence and skills.
- Reduce food waste in school kitchens through better planning, portioning, and use of surplus, while promoting healthy, sustainable choices such as seasonal menus, local sourcing, and low-carbon options.
- Make use of produce from local sources or school gardens. Projects may include food growing only where it is clearly linked to the above priorities.

Additionally, projects should demonstrate wider outcomes such as:

- Health and wellbeing
- Increasing skills
- Building confidence
- Community cohesion and engagement
- Neighbourhood improvements

To be eligible for support, your school needs to agree to the following criteria:

- To talk to us at regular intervals and provide two formal updates about your project activity.
- Share project news and images with us for reporting purposes.
- Work with us to share your story and inspire others to take climate action.

Additional criteria:

We will not fund applications in the following circumstances:

- Applications that are not submitted on the official online application form.
- Applications that exceed the maximum character limit for each question.
- Applications that request funding/part funding to cover capital costs or core staff costs that are not project specific.
- Projects which duplicate services that are already the responsibility of a Local Authority.
- Projects that have already started or are a continuation of an existing project.
- Projects which financially benefit an individual/s.
- Projects that promote political or religious beliefs.
- Projects that will be used to pay for activities occurring before we confirm funding.
- Applications that are outside of the Greater Manchester Area (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside. Trafford and Wigan).
- Incomplete applications.

Data reporting and evaluation

At the halfway point, we'll request an interim report to check on progress.

Additionally, all projects must submit a final evaluation report detailing outcomes compared to fund objectives, successes, and lessons learned.

You will be asked to record during the lifetime of your project:

1. **Environmental impacts** – We will ask you to record the environmental impact/s your project has made. For example:
 - The total number of items reused/upcycled/repared, the amount of waste prevented/reduced, and changes in behaviour.
 - The number of educational events/workshops/activities/assemblies held.
 - The number of pupils/adults (including the wider community) engaged by the project and the frequency of engagement.
 - Provision of an enriched curriculum to young people to do more to tackle the climate crisis which promotes green sector skills.
2. **Wider Social benefits** - We will ask you to record the wider social benefits your project has made. For example:
 - Building confidence and increasing skills.
 - Improvements in health and wellbeing.
 - Neighbourhood improvements.
 - Community engagement.
3. **How will the project be sustained beyond funding time-period.**

If you're not 100% sure at this stage, don't worry, we will help you to develop these if your project is successful. All the above information will be collected and collated by GMCA and reported on at the end of the project.

The application process

Your project can only be considered using the information you provide in your application form. Please include all relevant information and calculations that will help us evaluate your project. We will not contact you if you do not provide all the required information.

The application form is on Microsoft Forms. We recommend preparing your answers in a Word document before copying them into the online form. You will not be able to modify your application after submission.

Please provide clear evidence to show how you will deliver your project. Include concise and relevant detail in your application. You must keep within the character limit for each question.

The following sections outline the questions you will be asked and offer guidance on how to answer each one.

SECTION 2 – Your school details

1. Please tell us the name of your school.
2. Please provide us with your school's address including postcode.
3. Please tick the box to indicate which type of education establishment you are. (Special Educational Need Establishment, Nursery, Primary School, Secondary School, Further Education College, Pupil Referral Unit). If you feel none of the choices apply it may mean that your school isn't eligible to receive this funding. Please direct any specific questions you may have on this to: greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk
4. Please tick the box to indicate the Local Authority area/district your school is in (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan). If you feel none of the choices apply it may mean that your school isn't eligible to receive this funding. Please direct any specific questions you may have on this to: greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk
5. Please tick the box to indicate who your school is managed under. (Local Education Authority control or an Academy Trust) If you feel none of the choices apply it may mean that your school isn't eligible to receive this funding. Please direct any specific questions you may have on this to: greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk
6. Please tell us how many pupils are enrolled at your schools.
7. Please tell us the percentage of children at your school who are eligible for free school meals.

8. Please tell us if your school has previously received grant funding from your Local Authority or any other national schemes relating to climate action, the environment or initiatives to reduce consumption and minimise waste? Please tick all that apply.
9. Please provide us with a URL (web link) for your school's website (if available), otherwise leave this question blank. If your application is successful, we will link through to this on our website.
10. To be eligible for support, your school needs to agree to the following criteria:
 - To talk to us at regular intervals and provide two formal updates about your project activity.
 - Share project news and images with us for reporting purposes.
 - Work with us to share your story and inspire others to take climate action.

Please tick the box to confirm you agree to the above criteria.

SECTION 3 – Your details

11-13. Please provide details of the main contact responsible for running your project, we advise that these are the contact details of the individual responsible for completing the application. (First and last name, email address and contact telephone number.)

14-16. Please provide details for a secondary contact responsible for running your project. (First and last name, email address and contact telephone number.)

We will use these contact details should we have any follow-up questions on your application and to let you know the outcome of your application after the deadline has been reached.

SECTION 4 – About your project

The success of your project will be considered using the information you provide in this section. Please include all relevant information and calculations that will help us evaluate your project. You need to provide clear evidence to show how you will deliver your project. Include concise and relevant detail in your application. You must keep within the character limit for each section where specified. Please refer to the

guidance notes before starting your application. Once you have submitted your response you will not be able to amend.

17. Please provide your project title as you would like it to be written. If your application is successful, this is how your project will be referred to on our website and in any publicity we use, so make it something memorable, short and catchy!
18. Please provide a short summary of your project. If your application is successful, this will be used on our website and for promotional purposes. Maximum character count: 450 (Approximately 75 words).
19. Please provide details of the intended start date of your project (dd/mm/yy). Please note, ideally, we are looking for projects which can start no later than March 2026 and be completed within 12 months.
20. Please select the category that your project focuses on. Please select one answer only (Waste Reduction and Circular Economy – Fashion, Textiles and Plastics, Education on Sustainable Lifestyles through Key Life Skills, Sustainable Food and Tackling Food Waste)
21. **Aim of your project** - Please tell us about what you hope your project will achieve and how your project aligns with the purpose and objectives of the Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester). **Tip!** Think about any positive change that will result from your project activities. Maximum character count: 2000 (Approximately 325 words).
22. Please tell us the amount of grant you are requesting (Please insert an amount up to £2,000).

SECTION 5 – Project activities and monitoring impact

23. **Project activities** - Please use this question to tell us what you plan to do. Think about what specific activities and interventions the project will deliver and the climate issues your project will address, how the project will be managed, who will be involved, the behaviour change you wish to achieve, how you will do it and in what timeframe. Maximum character count: 2000 (Approximately 325 words).
24. **Project benefits: Environmental impacts** - Please use this question to tell us what difference your project will make. E.g. changing behaviour to reduce

consumption and minimise waste, developing green skills, gaining knowledge to help people lead more sustainable lives, switching to sustainable food choices, reducing plastic waste, promoting refill, repair and reuse, Tell us how you will measure this impact e.g. amount of waste prevented, number of activities delivered, number and frequency of pupils engaged. (If you're not 100% sure at this stage, please tell us your ideas and we will help you to develop these if your project is successful.) Maximum character count: 2000 (Approximately 325 words).

25. Project benefits: Wider social benefits - Please use this question to tell us how your project will benefit others – e.g. what impact your project will have on pupils, school staff, the wider community and local businesses. **Tip!** You may find it useful to think about things like building confidence, increasing skills, improvements in health and wellbeing, neighbourhood improvements and community cohesion. Maximum character count: 2000 (Approximately 325 words).

26. Please use this question to tell us about the costs associated with your project, detailing how you will use the Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester) funding if your application is successful. Please be as accurate as possible and provide an itemised list. You should include all items such as:

- Costs for activities
- Hire fees or buying equipment
- Consultancy fees
- Travel and refreshments and other expenses
- Volunteer expenses
- Any other items needed to complete your project

SECTION 6 - The sustainability of your project

27. Please tell us how plan to sustain your project after our support has finished. Maximum character count: 2000 (Approximately 325 words).

This could include knowledge transfer where pupils pass on their knowledge to a new cohort of younger pupils, building a volunteer base or partnerships to help continue project activities, managing ongoing costs or resources, incorporating activities into school/community routines that will support long-term delivery. Whether you plan to expand or adapt the project in future.

SECTION 7 – Application submission: Declaration

Please note: Once you tick the box click the submit button your application will be complete and submitted to the GMCA. You will no longer be able to change your answers in your application.

28. By ticking the declaration box, you confirm that all the details supplied are accurate and correct and that you are authorised to submit this application on behalf of your organisation. This is a requirement in order to meet the eligibility criteria and your application will not be considered if you do not tick this box.

What happens next

The Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester) is run by the GMCA. After the deadline has closed, projects will be evaluated based on the eligibility criteria outlined in the guidance notes.

Eligible projects will be evaluated by a team of GMCA Officers. Each criterion is assigned a specific weighting to calculate a total score out of 100 for each application. Funding will be granted to the projects with the highest scores.

The criteria and corresponding weightings for the Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester) are detailed in the table below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Project aim - How does the project align with the Eco Grants for Schools' categories, purpose and objectives.	10%
Project activities (appeal and feasibility) - What specific activities and interventions will the project deliver, how does the project address specific climate issues, what behaviour change does the project hope to achieve, how will the project be managed, who will be involved and in what timeframe.	40%
Project benefits - What difference will the project make, how does the project benefit others – e.g. impact on pupils, staff, community and other organisations. How is the project measuring its environmental impact and wider social impact.	30%

Project sustainability - How does the project plan to continue its good work after the Eco Grants for Schools money has been used.	10%
% of Pupils on Free School Meals	5.0%
Deprivation Index Score	5.0%
Total	100%

If your application is successful, you will be asked to provide the following financial requirements:

- School / PTA bank account
- Contact details of Finance Manager

We look forward to receiving your application.