

GUIDANCE NOTES: Eco Grants for Schools (Greater Manchester) Round 3

We're pleased you're interested in making a positive difference in your school and local community through sustainability.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Eco Grants for Schools programme offers grants of up to £2,000 to support practical projects that take action on climate change.

Applications open week commencing 15th June 2026. The deadline to submit is Noon on Friday 31st July 2026. The fund may close early if a high number of applications are received. We encourage schools to apply as soon as possible.

This guidance will help you prepare your application. Please read it carefully before you apply.

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

greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Funding Overview

- Grants of up to £2,000 are available
- Open to Local Authority schools and Academy Trusts in Greater Manchester (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan)
- Schools may apply again, including those that have previously received funding. Any resubmission must meet the criteria for Round 3. However, priority will be given to new applicants who have not previously received Eco Grants funding.
- Only one application can be submitted per school
- Projects should be delivered within 12 months of receiving funding
- Projects must create lasting environmental and social benefits
- One-off events will not be funded
- Projects should take place within Greater Manchester

Key Objectives

- Reducing waste and carbon emissions through practical action
- Moving beyond basic recycling to focus on reducing and reusing
- Building skills, knowledge and confidence in sustainability and climate action
- Encouraging long-term behaviour change among pupils, staff and the wider community
- Delivering measurable environmental impact

Projects should also aim to benefit the wider school community, including staff, families and where possible involve local partners.

Wider Benefits and Outcomes

As well as reducing waste, projects should aim to deliver wider benefits for pupils, schools and communities, such as:

- Building skills and confidence
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Strengthening community engagement

Round 3 Focus

This round focuses on waste reduction, circular economy, and sustainable everyday behaviours.

Projects should:

- Reduce waste
- Support reuse, repair and longer use of materials
- Help people adopt more sustainable everyday habits

We are especially interested in projects that address key priority areas such as:

- Reducing food waste and improving how food is used
- Reducing plastics and single-use items
- Tackling fashion and textile waste through repair, reuse and behaviour change

These are priority areas, but we welcome a wide range of projects that support the overall aims of the programme.

Projects focused mainly on nature and biodiversity will not be funded in this round. These are supported through the [Green Spaces Fund](#). Projects focused on recycling alone, without reducing or reusing, will not be funded.

Project Focus – What We’re Looking For

We’re looking for practical projects that help schools take action to reduce waste and live more sustainably. These should go beyond raising awareness and focus on doing, testing and changing behaviours in practice.

Projects should involve the whole school community including pupils, staff, families and local organisations and create lasting change.

Strong projects will:

- Reduce waste and prevent materials from being thrown away
- Promote repair, reuse and sharing, rather than buying new
- Help people make better everyday choices in what they buy, use and throw away
- Include practical, hands-on activities
- Link to the school curriculum and real-life learning (e.g. Design & Technology, Food, PSHE)
- Help pupils develop practical life skills and awareness of green careers
- Lead to long-term behaviour change
- Show clear outcomes (e.g. waste reduced, items reused, behaviours changed)

Types of Projects We’re Keen to Support

We welcome a wide range of ideas. The examples below are to help guide you and highlight the types of practical, pupil-led projects we’re keen to support. You do not need to fit exactly into one of these.

Repair, reuse and sharing

- Repair or “fix-it” workshops (e.g. clothes, electronics, everyday items)
- School “library of things” or equipment sharing systems
- Uniform swaps, second-hand sales and donation schemes
- Reuse of furniture, IT or classroom resources

- Projects that teach pupils how to look after, repair and extend the life of everyday items

Reducing everyday waste

- Projects to reduce plastics, paper, packaging and other materials
- Low-waste or paper-light classrooms
- Reuse and refill approaches (e.g. water, food, school supplies)
- Waste audits and school-wide waste reduction plans
- Campaigns to reduce single-use items and change everyday habits (e.g. pupil-led campaigns or challenges)
- Projects that explore alternatives to single-use plastics and common school items (e.g. bottles, lunch items, stationery, packaging)

Fashion and textiles

- Sewing, mending and upcycling workshops
- Clothing repair and reuse projects (e.g. second-hand options, redistribution, adapting existing items)
- Circular approaches to school uniforms (e.g. swaps, school-led systems)
- Campaigns to reduce textile waste and fast fashion habits (e.g. pupil-led campaigns)
- Projects that reduce over-consumption and encourage people to buy less and use clothing for longer
- Opportunities for pupils to design, create or adapt clothing and textiles as part of learning and skills development

Sustainable food and reducing food waste

- Cooking activities that build skills and help reduce food waste (e.g. using leftovers, making the most of ingredients)
- Activities that build practical food management skills (e.g. storing food properly, planning meals, buying and using food wisely)
- Projects that encourage better food habits at school and at home (e.g. packed lunches, portion sizes, reducing waste at home)
- Ways to reduce food waste in school operations (e.g. lunchtime systems, kitchens, working with catering teams)

- Projects that involve pupils in shaping and improving the food offer in school (e.g. menus, options, working with catering teams)
- Activities that encourage pupils and families to make healthier and more sustainable food choices
- Food growing projects linked to learning and behaviour change (e.g. understanding where food comes from, seasonal eating, reducing waste)

Food growing should not be the main focus on its own. It must be clearly linked to reducing waste, improving food habits and building skills.

What Can Be Funded

- Materials and resources (items needed specifically for the project, e.g. tools, containers, tracking materials)
- Equipment hire or purchase fees (project-specific equipment, not general school equipment)
- Training and external suppliers (specialists delivering project activities or workshops)
- Engagement materials (e.g. posters or communications to support behaviour change)
- Transport costs (where activities are delivered off-site)

What We Won't Fund

- Capital costs or core staff costs that are not project specific (e.g. building works, permanent staff salaries)
- Business-as-usual school activities (e.g. day-to-day operations or general school improvements)
- Projects that duplicate services of a Local Authority (e.g. existing waste collection services)
- Projects which financially benefit an individual (e.g. direct payments to participants)
- Projects that promote political or religious beliefs
- Replacement equipment, unless clearly part of a wider project
- Nature or biodiversity as the main activity
- Recycling alone, without reducing or reusing
- One-off events with no lasting impact
- Applications that are incomplete or exceed the character limit

- Applications submitted outside the official online application process

Programme Expectations

If your project is successful, you will be expected to:

- Provide regular updates on progress, including a mid-point and final report
- Share project updates, images and outcomes for reporting and communications
- Support GMCA in sharing learning and good practice to inspire other schools

Monitoring and Evaluation

All projects must show how they will measure their impact and demonstrate measurable environmental impact and behaviour change.

This could include:

- Waste reduced or prevented
- Carbon emissions saved
- Materials reused or repaired
- Number of activities or workshops delivered
- Number of pupils and community members engaged
- Evidence of behaviour change
- Wider social benefit
- How the project will be sustained beyond the funding period

We will also ask for an interim report after six months and a final evaluation report at the end of the project.

What Happens Next

After the deadline has closed, 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.

- Project aim (10%)
- Project activities (appeal and feasibility) (40%)
- Environmental and social benefits (30%)
- Sustaining your project (10%)

- % of pupils on free school meals (5%)
- Deprivation Index score (5%)

If your project is successful, you will be asked for the following:

- A letter addressed to the GMCA confirming your bank account details
- To complete our New Supplier Form
- To sign a simple grant agreement

Completing the Application Form

Please include all relevant information and costings that will help us evaluate your project. We will not contact you if you do not provide all the required information.

The 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 edit your application after submission.

You must keep within the character limit for each question.

You will need to provide contact details for two members of staff responsible for delivering the project.

If you have any questions regarding the form, contact

greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Guidance for Specific Sections of the Application

Section 4 – About Your Project

- Provide your project title exactly as you'd like it displayed. If successful, it will be used on our website, so keep it short, memorable and catchy
- Provide details of the intended start date
- Aim of your project – Describe what your project will achieve and how it aligns with the Eco Grants for Schools programme

Section 5 – Project Activities and Monitoring Impact

- Project activities – Describe what you plan to do, including key activities, interventions, the behaviour changes you aim to achieve, and your timeline

- Environmental benefits – Explain the difference your project will make and how you will measure this
- Social benefits – Describe how your project will benefit pupils, staff and the wider community
- Costs – Provide an accurate, itemised breakdown of your project costs

Section 6 – Sustaining Your Project

Explain how the project will continue after funding, including embedding it in school routines, building ownership and maintaining engagement.

We look forward to receiving your application. Good Luck.