

# London entrepreneur urges schools to 'Walk It as They Talk It' to Deliver Sustainability That the Next-Gen Want to See

A recent study showed that 75% of Gen Z pupils consider sustainability when making purchase decisions. Another study by the University of Bath revealed that climate anxiety affects young people, who view their future as frightening.



**London, United Kingdom Dec 12, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com))** - Schools have a responsibility to prepare children for the world they will inherit and reflect the values important to students, which is why they need to ensure that their actions echo these beliefs.

Many schools are aiming to embrace sustainability, but with the cost of living crisis, making a change is challenging to say the least. Meanwhile, students' concerns surrounding the climate emergency are growing, and delivering sustainability has become critical. In this article, I will discuss the dilemma of cost versus Climate for schools, explore how schools can make changes without negatively impacting their budget, and go over the most efficient energy-saving tips and accessible eco-awareness ideas.

The dilemma of cost versus Climate for schools

Just over 65% of headteachers in the UK are working towards making schools more sustainable, according to a [Pearson report](#) from June 2022. Meanwhile, the costs of running a school are expected to [increase by 20%](#) before 2024. Schools are expected to strive for eco-awareness and green thinking

whilst also coping with spiraling energy and equipment costs. Some schools are forced to [consider shorter weeks](#), and others can't even afford textbooks, let alone save the planet.

Integrating sustainability doesn't have to impact costs negatively. In fact, being energy efficient has the wonderful effect of reducing consumption and therefore shaving a chunk off of schools' monthly budgets. By working with an organisation called [Using Less Stuff](#), Woldingham School in Surrey was able to reduce their annual energy bill by £35,000 and cut heating costs by 15%, which significantly reduced their carbon footprint.

[ULS](#) also worked with [Queen Anne's School](#) in Caversham to install energy-efficient lighting: "We laid out an eco-agenda for areas such as lighting, heating, and waste", said Ed Hellings, Bursar at the school. As a result, they ended up installing over a hundred 400W solar panels to reduce their energy bill.

Green learning agendas are also a powerful engine for sustainability in schools. According to [recent research](#), if just 16 percent of high school students received climate change education, we would be able to produce just about 19 gigatons less carbon dioxide before 2050. In addition, education can be a way of developing strong connections to the fight against climate change in students, which kindles far-reaching empowerment and a real impact on children's carbon footprints. In fact, the [British Department of Education](#) (DfE) is looking to be a sustainability leader by 2030.

How can schools make changes without negatively impacting their budget

There's a myriad of approaches when it comes to sustainability at school. Still, I would say that the most efficient route is embedding eco-friendliness in the most accessible ways and making small changes that will, in turn, affect the bigger picture. Here are a few easy ways to start making a change today in your school:

- Reduce food waste – nearly 1/3 of the carbon footprint originates from food waste.
- Reduce the ordering of goods and consumables – check the stock room and do a clear-out before purchasing more
- Repurpose school furniture through charities or creative art projects
- Reduce paper waste – and use recycled paper thinner paper and only print when necessary

Then, there are long-term changes that can be swiftly encapsulated into a school's day-to-day functioning in more ways than one, such as:

- Encouraging students and staff to travel to school by public transport
- Reducing the volume of waste per student every year
- Educating about local habitats and species
- Implementing systems to monitor and analyse energy efficiency

There are some excellent resources and programs to turn to for guidance on these changes:

- The [Eco-Schools programme](#)
- Sustainability and Environmental Education
- The Sustainable Schools Alliance membership programme
- The Green Schools Project
- Good Practice in Sustainable Development Education (SDE)

Approaching energy consumption sustainably is an efficient approach to keeping costs in check, and there is a spectrum of ways in which schools can use and spend less. For example, making sure they're on the best tariffs, with renewable energy providers, or switching to low-energy LED bulbs, which can cut 80% of energy consumption on lighting.

Adding aerators to taps, implementing eco-friendliness in catering by sourcing seasonal produce from local suppliers, reducing food waste to a minimum, and involving pupils in the composting process are all powerful tools. Some simple things like removing all single-use plastic and adding clearly signposted recycling bins throughout the school are also effective ways of making schools more sustainable.

Schools can also consider putting in place meat-free Mondays, allotting a patch of school grounds for growing fruit, vegetables, and herbs, and encouraging pupils to keep a food waste diary. Beach, park, forest clean-up field trips, and uniform or book swap fairs are potent and pleasant mediums for sustainability.

Implementing a more eco-aware mindset inside and outside the classroom can be done through many easy ideas, with the immediate effect of helping schools face the daunting spikes in energy prices and the long-term one of stepping into a more sustainable future. Schools shouldn't be discouraged by the scope of the challenge ahead.

I hope this article has shed some light on the small but powerful changes schools can implement - simple shifts that raise awareness, cut costs, and reduce carbon emissions. Yet, at the same time, instilling pupils with enthusiasm for sustainability that they will bring home to their families. Cost vs Climate means incorporating climate change education in schools, which allows young people to adapt to the harsh impacts of climate change. Leveraging the power of education is potentially more powerful in tackling climate change than just investments in green energy. Rather than feeling helpless in the face of worrying climate change headlines, their school can be the place where young people get actively involved in being part of the change they want to see.

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