

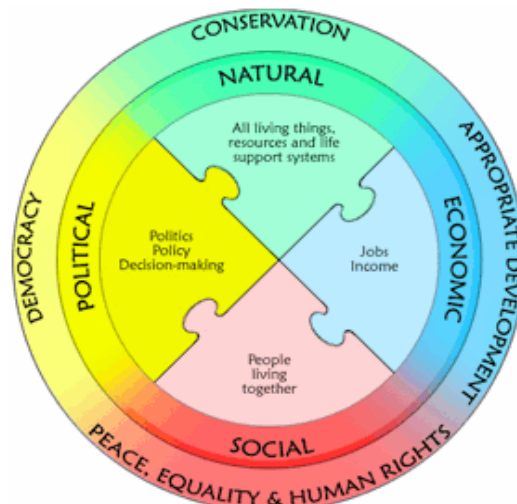
# Sustainable Schools Initiative

## What is Sustainability?

“Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development - and turn it into a reality for all the world’s people.”

Kofi Annan, Secretary general of the United Nations, March 2001

**Sustainable** means that something is viable and can be continued in the long term in ways that do not harm people but benefit them equally.



UNESCO's model of the interlocking dimensions of sustainability.- UNESCO, teaching and learning for a Sustainable Future, 2002 [www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/)

## Sustainable Development

- Is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come
- Sustainability considers all 4 dimensions –political, social, economic and natural systems. It's about the interrelationship between the human and the natural systems.

**A sustainable future** would be one where the quality of life is not degraded or the natural systems that support communities.

Eg. People

- Care for each other and value social justice and peace
- Protect natural systems and use resources wisely
- Value appropriate development and satisfying livelihoods for all
- Make decisions through fair and democratic means.

Decisions made impact on all systems. Ideally this lens of sustainability should be used in all decisions – about the school playground to issues relating to the national economy or the global environment.

## Sustainability is an issue for schools.....

“If all education is for the future then the future needs to be a more explicit concern at all levels of education.” (UNESCO)

Environmental Education for sustainability empowers learners to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future.

## What is a sustainable school?

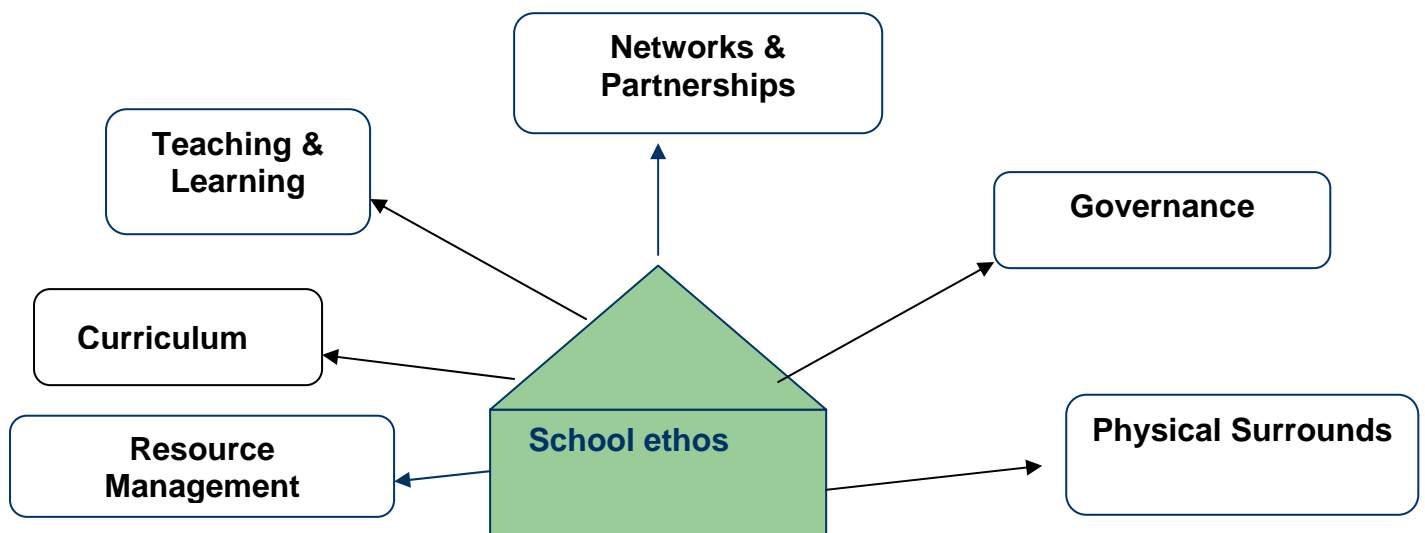
"One that provides educational opportunities in its daily operation to create a total learning environment committed to contributing to a more sustainable future." NT Sustainable Schools Strategic Plan 2004

## The vision ...

"All NT schools working with their communities participating in learning for sustainability and demonstrating sustainable values, practices and behaviours." NT Sustainable Schools Strategic Plan 2004

## What might this whole school approach look like?

The whole school approach means practising what we preach. Environmental Education for Sustainability is more than just a curriculum issue, it involves all aspects of the school. The school is a focal point of good practice in environmental and sustainability education with students, parents, teachers and the community interacting and learning together.



The *Sustainable Schools* Initiative is a coordinated, holistic, action -based approach to environmental education for sustainability with measurable social, economic and educational outcomes. The incorporation and involvement of the school's local community is a critical element.

### Sustainable Schools is an **opportunity for schools to**

- Increase student engagement and improve student learning
- Incorporate sustainability into the curriculum
- Improve the school environment
- Inspire people to take actions in their everyday lives to live more sustainably