

# Sophia HIGH SCHOOL

**ESD-GCED Curriculum Policy**

**2025 - 2026**

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

Ownership & Consultation	
Document sponsors (role)	CEO / Director of Education/Director of EYFS
Document authors (name)	Melissa McBride CEO Vanessa Temple Rosanna Sparks Youssef Elhana (from 2025)

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# EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION POLICY

## **1.0 Policy Applicability**

This policy applies to all children, parents, teachers and Senior Leaders of Sophia High School (SHS). This policy also applies to all employees of Sophia Technologies as we regard this as one learning community.

## **2.0 Context**

By acknowledging the interconnected nature of economic growth, societal demands, the limitations of the natural environment, and the need for and democratic international governance, we use agreed ways to work as a global community to combat the effects of overpopulation, that are in harmony with the earth and its resources to bring equality to all, mindful of our stewardship of the planet for our own and future generations.

UNESCO has developed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a system where we use education to develop strategic competencies that bring about cognitive, socio-economic and behavioural growth and change in students, communities and society. This supports transformative learning outcomes which in turn promote economic, societal and environmental awareness and engagement for all stakeholders.

The Global Schools Program is one of the flagship educational programs of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Global Schools, in partnership with UNESCO, the SDG Academy and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens launched Mission 4.7, a high-level taskforce and educational working group to bring SDG 4.7 to Ministries of Education, governments, and schools.

By educating future generations we can impact the way they think and feel about themselves, their communities, their planet and the future. Setting SDGs alone is not enough for significant change, there needs to be a structure of education that can be taught consistently around the world which identifies key content, changes to be made, and develops the skills to allow students to make necessary changes in their lives and communities.

## **4.0 Vision**

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESD and GCED) runs through all we do. Access to the SDGs for all stakeholders, at an appropriate level, is important as we identify our community members as leaders of the future.

The SDG's do not stand alone, they are all connected, but SDG 4.7 is the focus of Education for Sustainable Development, which is our guiding principle for this policy.

The aim of SDG 4.7 is to “ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION POLICY development" by 2030.

*Transformative Competencies: Johanna Helin, 2021.*

#### 4.1 Objectives

- To develop within the SHS community an awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their historical context and timeline.
- To build a community founded on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) which allows stakeholders to develop the necessary competencies to inform life decisions.
- To be an advocate for ESD and GCED, and an active member of the UNSDSN Global Schools Program.
- To use appropriate pedagogical approaches to bring the SDGs to life for all stakeholders.
- To use SMART goals to ensure we are making ESD and GCED measurable within our community and sharing our successes on the wider ESD platform to inspire change.
- To gain and maintain BCorp Status meeting all requirements to operate as an ethical and sustainable school and business.

#### 5.0 The UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed and signed by all 193 world governments. There are 17 goals, broken down into 169 targets, to be used as a practical tool allowing governments, institutions, local communities, civil society organisations, and businesses to work together towards a common set of clear targets. They are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The SDGs are interconnected and recognize that action (or inaction) in one area will affect outcomes in others. Any development must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Actions must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.



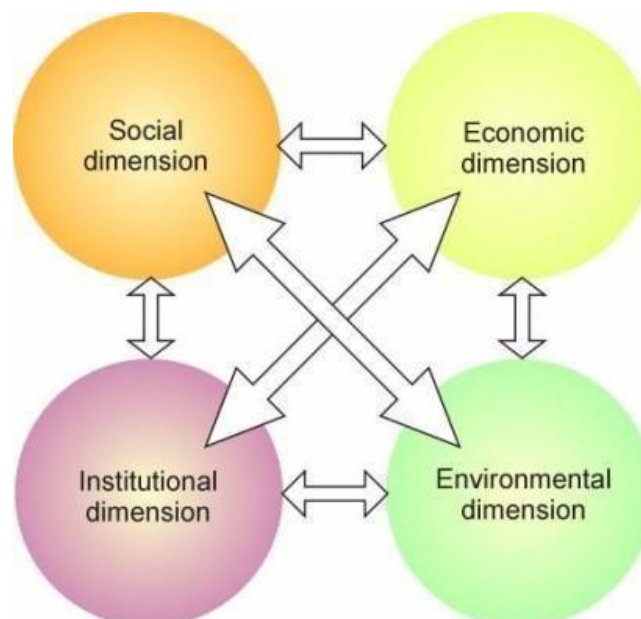
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The SDGs are a globally recognized framework, also known as Agenda 2030, and are a valuable teaching resource, offering ways to connect students to a range of real-world issues. Many of these goals can be aligned with curriculum goals from any national curriculum, and can be recorded and reported on according to the specified framework.

There are 5 Ps that guide us on a sustainable and resilient path for global development. The SDGs developed from exploration of these dimensions.



The SDGs spread across four dimensions which all interconnect and influence each other. By recognising the importance of the four dimensions, we can identify a holistic vision of what a good society should be and work towards achieving this society and sustaining it for all.



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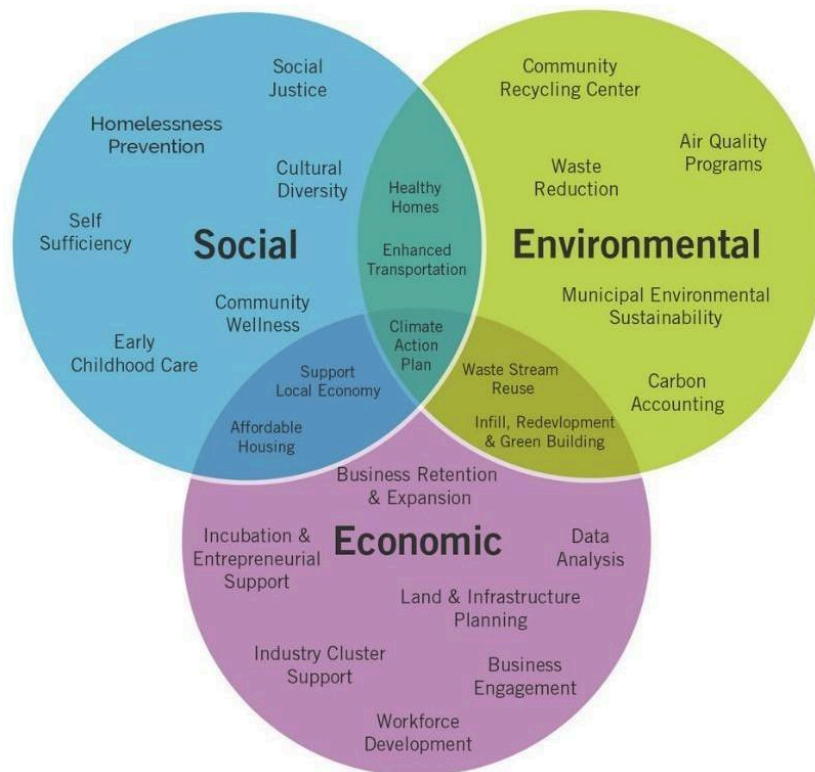
For SHS, the SDGs align with thematic units of learning within the National Curriculum of England, the Statutory Framework of the EYFS, and the Project Based Learning, which develops children aged 5-11 into informed, globally competent, and future-ready learners.

### 5.1 Education for Sustainable Development

“ESD gives learners of all ages the knowledge, skills, values and agency to address interconnected global challenges including climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources, and inequality. It empowers learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet. ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education. It enhances the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.”

UNESCO 2022

ESD acts across three domains and within these we can identify the new competencies which must be developed in order to work towards a common vision for sustainability.



SHS has made a commitment to ESD. It is included in its policies, professional development for all staff, workshops for parents and children, identified in planning documents for teachers, thematic units of learning for children, community projects for all stakeholders. In 2023 it achieved BCorp status, and it is our mission to retain this status moving forward.

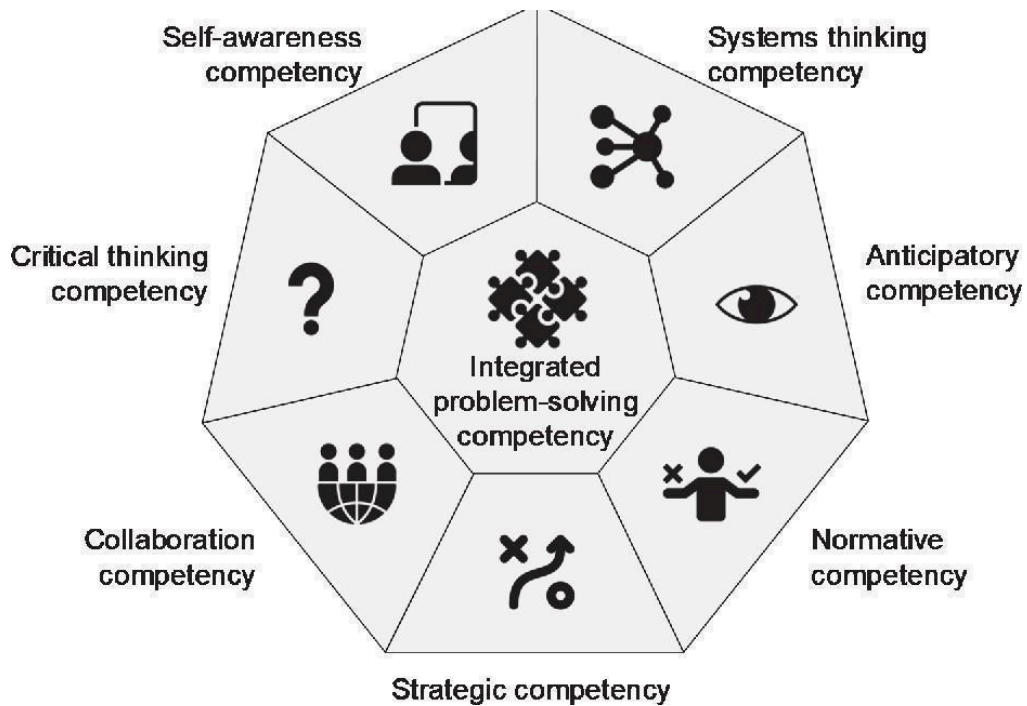
### The ESD Competencies

The ESD Competencies are:

- **Systems competency** - thinking about how systems interact with each other
- **Anticipatory competency** - anticipating the future by understanding and evaluating current information
- **Normative competency** - reflecting on themselves, their values and norms
- **Strategic competency** - being able to think strategically and develop strategies for action

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- **Collaboration competency** - collaborate with others and develop engagement strategies
- **Critical Thinking competency** - the ability to question the norms associated with daily life practices and develop actions for the future
- **Self awareness competency** - reflecting on self, actions, beliefs, values in the context of ESD
- **Integrative problem solving competency** - connecting information and developing strategies to inform daily life in the context of ESD



By using thematic units of learning in our Project Based Learning lessons, we can develop these competencies in our children, strengthening and deepening their understanding as they progress through the year levels and the discussions, challenges and projects grow in complexity and commitment.

We expect Lesson Plans to indicate which competencies are being developed, not only in the PBL lesson, but all lessons and in the work that we send home to be completed independently.

ESD follows us through our life and helps us make informed decisions about ethical life choices, and we start this journey with our youngest learners. As SHS pupils join can join us from Nursery (3 years old), we engage them in activities where they can think about their lives and the choices they make on a very basic level, and as they progress through the school and their Critical Thinking competency develops, this self-reflection extends outwards into their family, community and society. As all the competencies are interconnected, the ways of thinking about things, of responding to things, and the life choices we make are all informed by our experiences and our reactions to those experiences.



### 6.1 Pedagogy

Understanding how we learn, and the purpose behind why we learn is central to ESD. Engaging the learner in activities that lead to higher-level thinking and outcomes is our focus. We use the findings of the Delors Commission (1996) which names the four Pillars of Education, to inform our choices of the thematic units of learning as well as external partnerships.



The PBL, National Curriculum and EYFS all have expectations for children to develop not only academically, but also physically and socio-emotionally. Opportunities for students to learn holistically, to embrace how they feel in their body and their emotions, and how they connect with others, is embedded in the curricula. The knowledge, skills and values discussed and developed in an effective ESD program directly correlate with expectations for socio-emotional learning:

- Managing emotions
- Empathy
- Problem solving
- Making responsible decisions
- Maintaining healthy relationships

We know that the emotional and cognitive centres in the brain are closely intertwined, and so we investigate thematic units that engage the children in multi-sensory experiences both during the online lesson and during home learning activities. By extending the learning into the home and beyond, inquiry and place-based learning allows our pupils to experience, reflect, think and act.

During online lessons we engage our pupils using active learning techniques. Using storytelling and simulated scenarios, we encourage identifying the issues at hand and thinking about solutions. Class discussions engage pupils, develop vocabulary and comprehension, allow social speaking techniques to be developed, and build confidence. Analysing the issues, the pupils work together to form solutions and offer actions that will have a positive impact within their communities.

As we have truly global classrooms, it can be a challenge to make the issues discussed localised and impactful, as each child may come from a different country or continent. By understanding child development, and how each child shifts their focus from egocentric to exocentric as they grow, we chose the focus of the thematic units to be appropriate and meaningful to that particular class and age of child. Although our lessons are subject-based, the questions that we ask the children, and their investigations, responses and actions, are interdisciplinary.



## 6.2 Learning Outcomes

How do we measure learning outcomes and attributes? Like all areas of the curriculum, this starts with planning. All SHS curriculum plan templates have space for the ESD Competency to be included, so that we can start to recognise how our pupils best engage with, and develop, a range of competencies. Evidence can be recorded in the Digital Notebook in the forms of paper-evidenced work, videos, photographs, presentations etc. that are added from home. As all SHS online lessons are recorded, evidence shown in the online lesson is recorded also for the teacher to reflect on and record as seen in the ongoing observation record on Athena.

Work sent home also gives the children the opportunity to work towards these competencies. In Early Years these are tasks and Challenges, and in Primary these develop into independent projects.

In the older years, the SHS Leader tasked with monitoring ESD and including it into learning will lead a termly session to engage the older pupils in discussion, reflection, action planning and setting SMART goals to bring change to their community. Work related to this will be shared online in the form of a digital presentation and a sharing session in Assembly (see Academic Calendar).

Sophia has implemented Project Based Learning, and this is the ideal platform for students to engage with, and develop their ESD Competencies through cross-curricular work throughout the course of the year. There are further Enrichment opportunities offered on Fridays to strengthen and deepen their learning and understanding in creative and meaningful ways. This includes clubs, projects, charity work and micro-qualifications.

## 6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

**The Child:** Each pupil is aware of the SDGs across all areas of the school. Our Project Based Learning allows for each child to learn about the SDGs in a meaningful way as they progress through the school. ESD and GCED are embedded in each Digital Notebook, and there is an annual survey to capture their GCED journey over the course of the year.

**The Teacher:** Sophia teachers receive explicit training in ESD at the beginning of the school year and are aware of the strategies and activities they can use to engage the children in ESD throughout the year. It is documented in Lesson Plans and recorded on Athena, discussed in our parent meetings and discussed in Parent Meetings. (See Induction Schedule, planning documents etc.).

**The Parent:** Parents are offered workshops each term on ESD to engage them further in their child's learning and encourage families to work together making ethical decisions, forming strategies for change, and taking actions. They support our fund-raising efforts supporting Project Zero and other activities linked to change-making.

**The Leader:** Each school leader has included into their Job Description social and environmental performance responsibilities. These are reviewed and updated each year along with school policies to ensure they are acknowledged, understood and meaningful. These can range from BCorp support, monitoring volunteer hours or to ESD training for pupils, staff, families and outside partners. (See Job Descriptions).

**The School:** SHS is dedicated to bringing ESD to all pupils through leaders who are specialists in the SDGs, have received Global Schools Advocate status, and work with all stakeholders to bring ESD to life. SHS is also committed to maintaining BCorp status. We are The Planet's Favourite School!

#### 6.4 Procedures

The Term Calendars for Staff and Pupils shows the timeline for ESD events throughout the year. Additional activities, such as collaborative projects with external partners will be added as confirmed throughout the year.

#### 7.0 Global Citizenship (Council of International Schools)

Global citizenship is at the core of the work we do with the Council of International Schools (CIS). They have a specific research-based model of global citizenship and intercultural learning. This is visualised, implemented and recorded according to the four aspects of school life: Teaching and Learning; Assessment; Leadership and Staff Development; and Community Engagement.

*“CIS members have committed to actively develop global citizenship in education through...*

- **Ethics:** Research about, discussion of, and action related to issues of principle of personal, local, and global importance,
- **Diversity:** The understanding of and respect for the similarities and differences of a range of individuals and peoples,
- **Global Issues:** The understanding of multiple perspectives of local and global events and issues,
- **Communication:** The development of fluency in multiple languages, including mother tongues, used to communicate within and across cultures,
- **Service:** The development of the understandings, skills and dispositions to serve the local and global community through engagement in meaningful service learning,
- **Leadership:** The acquisition and refinement of the skills of leading and following within different cultural contexts, and
- **Sustainable Lifestyle:** A personal commitment to a lifestyle which supports local and global sustainability displayed through example and advocacy.”

Council of International Schools, 2022



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The ESD Policy that Sophia has embedded across all areas of school life allows for the Global Citizenship Competencies to be incorporated into the pupils daily practice and external projects and activities.

### 7.1 Definition

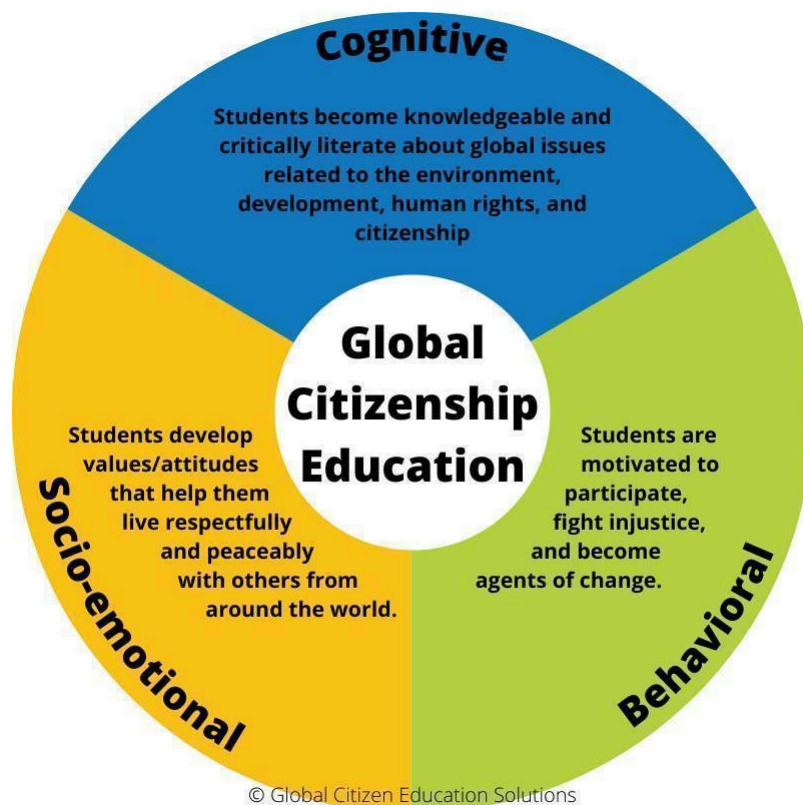
At SHS we define Global Citizenship as:

***Being connected and belonging to communities around the world that promote sustainable development, embrace social responsibility and act ethically for the benefit of all.***

It is embedded in SDG 4: Insuring Inclusive and Quality Education for All, and Promoting LifeLong Learning. We have a responsibility to promote global citizenship by teaching our students that they are members of personal, local, and larger global communities and to help them develop skills and competencies through thoughtful and integrative education, which can be used to contribute positively to those communities.

### 7.2 Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO)

UNESCO adds to ESD by introducing Global Citizenship Education (GCED). This aims to empower learners of all ages to become active, both personally, locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. The three areas are interconnected, and work together when integrated into the learning process.



Education for Sustainable Development covers all areas and aspects of Global Citizenship in its core document, where the values and competencies highlight a focus on these areas and a global perspective to humanity.

There is a termly Global Citizenship Assembly for all pupils where ideas, actions and outcomes related to Global Citizenship are shared and celebrated (see Term Calendar).

### **8.0 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

All teachers and leaders at Sophia receive training on ESD and GCED at the beginning of the year during Induction. They have access to additional training through workshops and professional goal setting throughout the year to inform their choices and enable change and growth to be made. ESD is embedded in the planning, recording and reporting process for all pupils. Additional activities are shared in Whole School Assemblies, and parents are encouraged to become involved through Parent Workshops and collaboration with external partners (See Term Calendar). Project Based Learning allows for ESD to be embedded in all areas of the school, cross-curricular, and through Enrichment opportunities.

#### **8.1 Within School**

Pupils are expected to present, either personally in their Digital Notebooks, or through project work shared in Assembly, their knowledge, understanding, reflection, actions and consequences of their ESD work as the year progresses.

Teachers and Leaders are expected to attend CPD related to ESD and GCED during Induction, and to further deepen their understanding by undertaking a task each year to support one area that they feel they can contribute to within their community. This may be volunteer hours, fundraising, or sharing activities with the children outside the online lessons in the form of clubs, societies or Student Council.

#### **8.2 Assessment and Record Keeping**

Planning documents reflect the expectation that ESD and GCED is incorporated, observed, assessed and recorded for all pupils. This is shown in the Planning Templates, formative assessment records on Athena, and also discussed with parents.

As a pupil is seen to show awareness of, and exhibit an understanding of the ESD competencies, this is recorded by the teacher and informs their work with that pupil to deepen that understanding through active learning tasks and challenges.

#### **8.3 Within the wider Sophia community**

SHS has achieved BCorp status and is continuing to work towards retaining that status moving forward.

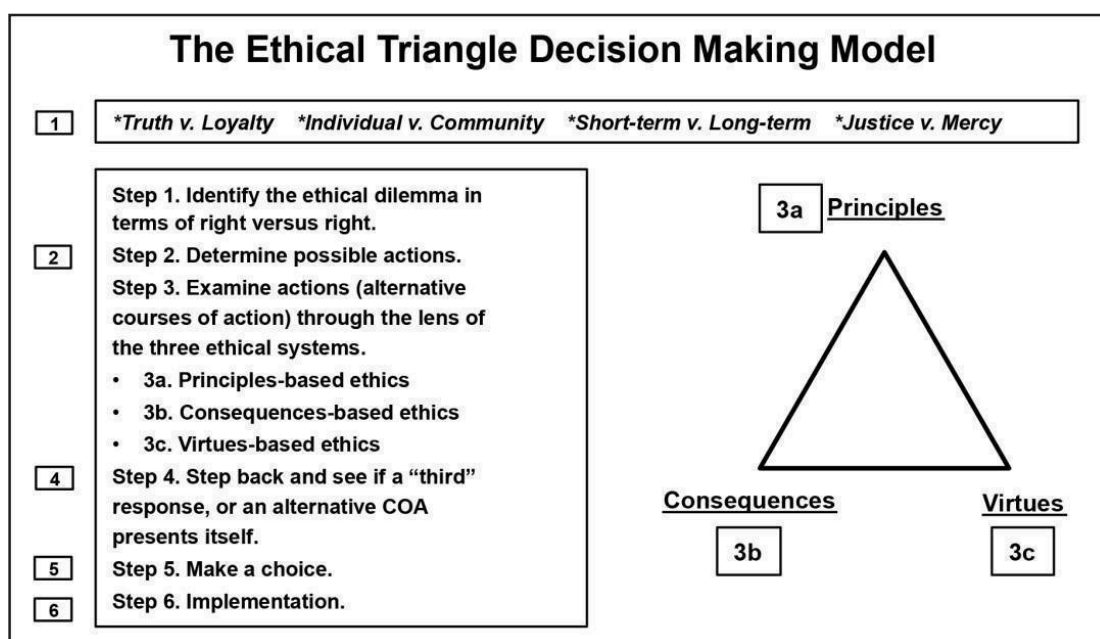
Their requirements state that we must have:

**Employee training that includes social or environmental issues material to the company or its mission:** This refers to the concept of materiality which is, according to the GRI (Global Reporting Initiative), “those topics that have a direct or indirect impact on an organisation’s ability to create, preserve or erode economic, environmental and social value for itself, its stakeholders and society at large.” They are topics that impact and are important to our stakeholders and our business.

SHS has produced a Materiality Assessment Matrix to indicate which areas of work are of the most significant IMPACT and IMPORTANCE. This matrix is shared with all staff during Induction at the beginning of the school year, and reviewed/edited each year according to needs. Minutes are kept along with the presentation, and an attendance record. This is housed on our Google Drive along with all other CPD presentation/workshop details.

Thematic units of learning are developed by the teachers to support the important/impactful areas

## SHS Impact/Importance Matrix



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The three domains, Principles, Consequences, and Virtues inform decision making based upon this model, “which allows us to:

- examine relationships where the need for good faith might not be sufficiently understood by employees or third parties.
- look to business activities where the pursuit of admirable ends might lead to wrongful means.
- gather information on business activities which has occasioned criticisms that the company has acted unfairly.
- Show a willingness to walk away from business opportunities that, while lawful, are not ethical.”

BCorp, 2022

SHS Leaders embed Ethics Risk training in their induction prior to the start of each school year. The template for Ethical Triangle Decision Making is available on Athena for all leaders and staff to use when faced with a decision that they feel may impact the ethical choices of the company or themselves. The belief that all SHS employees share, that supporting the SDGs through ESD and GCED is of the highest priority, gives a framework for all decisions to be made against.

All completed Ethical Triangle Decisions are stored on Athena.

### 9.0 Assessing Impact of ESD and GCED

Using a visual continuum to indicate where we feel we are, and then move towards success, is important for all stakeholders. This allows us to reflect on what we do/say/think/feel and then identify how to move forward, giving clear guidance of next steps to show what is needed to do so. A continuum can make the purpose of learning visible and empower pupils to lead their own learning. It may provide pupils with language to answer the question ‘how do you know how you are progressing?’, building confidence that they are making progress and can articulate their progress.

It is important to use these continuums regularly and record a plan of next steps and actions to mark a clear path of development. Pupils should be given the continuum at the beginning and end of every term to allow them to see success and feel successful, formulate next steps to guide their journey in the following term, and also share experiences and understandings with a wider group.

#### Pupil Continuum

Views global citizenship and intercultural learning from perspectives of tolerance, harmony, and commonality	Views global citizenship and intercultural learning from perspectives of what happens and what can be done when diverse identities intersect	Views global citizenship and intercultural learning from perspectives of global interconnection—among people, their ideas, and actions—and between people and the environment
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Teachers and Leaders should reflect on their continuum in reflective practice sessions to ensure all staff are working towards the same goal, share strategies that are successful (or not) and also make collaborative plans to develop within a specified timeframe.



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### Teacher Continuum

Use of strategies that reflect dominant cultural group/s, backgrounds, experiences, or perspectives of the institution	Use of strategies that reflect dominant cultural group/s, backgrounds, experiences, or perspectives of the institution, acknowledging the influence of diversity on teaching and learning	Use of strategies that accept or are responsive to the diversity of learners	Use of strategies that are focused on equitable support and outcomes for learners, responsive to their diversity
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At the program level, use the curriculum review cycle that gathers and analyses data about student learning to inform where the institution is on the continuum. We can then adopt changes with confidence, adapting and contextualising to our own setting and learners, and have a basis for answering the ‘how do you know?’ question regarding their progress in implementing ESD and DCED.

### Program Continuum

Activities are added to existing teaching and learning structures	Community is invited to contribute to teaching and learning	Collaboration with the community around real-world projects, built into the design of teaching and learning	Project collaborations with the community, supported by leadership and staff, and core to the design of teaching and learning	Sustained community partnerships, with periodic evaluation and redesign of activities, and structural changes that arise from local/global considerations and events
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### Sophia Continuum: Social Impact

Formal statement on the intended social and environmental impact of company philanthropy	Formal donations commitment (1% for the planet)	Match individual worker’s charitable donations	Stakeholder discussion to select charities who receive our donations	Screening practices for charitable donations or impact measurement mechanisms
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### Sophia Continuum: Purchasing

Written statement to purchase from local suppliers	Formal targets for the amount of local purchasing (70% to impact local suppliers)	Prepared lists of local suppliers	Policy for promotion of vendor diversity	Diversity of ownership tracked
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At the end of the school year, we engage all students in a Global Citizenship Education Survey, which gathers data pertaining to the perception of each child at the beginning and end of the school year as to their understanding and self-reflection as a Global Citizen. This data is shared with The Board and accrediting bodies, and the students for further self-reflection.

### 9.1 Monitoring

Pupils should be aware of the journey they are embarking on, and so by sharing the success criteria of ESD and GCED at the appropriate level for age and developmental stage, the children can take ownership of their learning and purposefully build upon their competencies. There should be a regular cycle of reflection, review and goal setting for all pupils.

By using observations for formative assessment, and also the continuum, we can track on Athena the progress of each child, and teacher. Evidence is collated from Lesson Plans, videos of online lessons, Digital Notebooks, and presentations within the group and Assembly.



Leaders attend termly strategic meetings where ESD and GCED are discussed and evidence shared of success within the school community. The continuum should be reflected upon and new SMART goals set for the team. At the end of the school year, a review should evidence progress of pupils, teachers and program and a report sent to The Board.

### **9.2 Reporting**

Development of ESD competencies, and self-reflection of each child regarding GCED is discussed with parents throughout the year.

Evidence of teachers' commitment to ESD and GCED is recorded within the Sophia Teacher Standards and also through the appraisal process. Their self-reflection is also recorded in appraisal meetings.

Job Descriptions for Leaders include specific ESD and GCED roles and responsibilities. These will be appraised annually, feedback given and opportunity for self-reflection given in the appraisal meeting.

### **10.0 Partnering with Parents**

SHS strives to work in partnership with parents on every level. We aim to be transparent in our dealings with parents; our policies are available on the website, we record all our online lessons for safeguarding purposes, and our teachers meet with their parents on a weekly basis. We aim to include our parents on our ESD and GCED journey by offering workshops each term to encourage their participation, inform them of our progress towards reaching competencies, and include them in our charitable work.

### **10.1 External Partners**

SHS has identified and agreed to have Project Zero <https://www.weareprojectzero.org/> as one of our supported charities. We are currently collaborating on a number of projects connected to ESD and GCED. The Heads of Houses work with the school community to identify organisations to support (See Charity and Community Policy).

### **11.0 Confidentiality**

All documentation regarding pupils, learning outcomes, curriculum implantation and the training of teachers will be recorded in online files kept in a secure location on Athena in accordance with GDPR. All confidential files may be available upon request after Management's approval.

### **12.0 Policy Monitoring and Evaluation**

Review, evaluation and amendments to be made to the policy document annually.

### **13.0 Sophia High School supporting policies**

- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers Including Acceptable Use Policy. August 2024
- Whistleblowing Policy (Making a Disclosure in the Public interest). August 2024
- Complaints Procedure. August 2024
- Additional Learning Needs Policy. August 2024
- Behaviour Policy. August 2024
- Anti-Bullying Policy. August 2024
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy. August 2024

**14.0 ESD Policy –Website links**

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802>

<https://www.cois.org/about-cis/global-citizenship>

[https://www.cois.org/about-cis/perspectives-blog?post\\_category\\_id=115](https://www.cois.org/about-cis/perspectives-blog?post_category_id=115)

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/>

<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620842>

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material>

<https://www.weareprojectzero.org/>