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Manual 1

# WHOLE-SCHOOL EARTH ACTION PLAN

Creating Sustainable Schools

## Getting Started

**WHERE ARE YOU GOING?**



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To the best of our knowledge, this document does not contain previously published or written material by another person, except where a reference is made.

WORD/PHRASE	DEFINITION
<b>whole-school earth action plan</b>	A whole school approach for sustainability. This is a practical sustainability action plan that is offered free and can be accessed from <a href="http://www.earthactionplan.com">www.earthactionplan.com</a> This plan is a tool to assist schools to implement a sustainability action plan.
<b>sustainability</b>	“Development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” Brundtland Commission Report (1987-Our Common Future)
<b>Stakeholders</b>	School stakeholders are people who have an interest/connection in the school’s affairs. This usually includes students, teachers, Principal, school staff at all levels and the wider school community such as families and community members.

## OVERVIEW

Before your school launches itself into the **Whole-School Earth Action Plan**, the following question must first be resolved:

### “What stage of change is your school at right now?”

This question is meant to help reveal the stage of change that the school is currently at, with regards to sustainable behaviours being enacted at the school. It is essential to identify the school’s stage of change in-order to achieve forward progress.

This manual provides Prochaska and DiClemente's (1983) Stages of Change Model as a reference. The model describes five stages that people go through on their way to change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance

## STEP 1: WHO WILL DETERMINE THE STAGE OF CHANGE?

The question, “What stage of change is your school at right now?” is found within **Work-Template 1** from **MANUAL 2: Whole School Sustainability Assessment Report**. This template is also **Available at:** <https://earthactionplan.com/action-plan> >Click on the ‘Template Workbook’ button

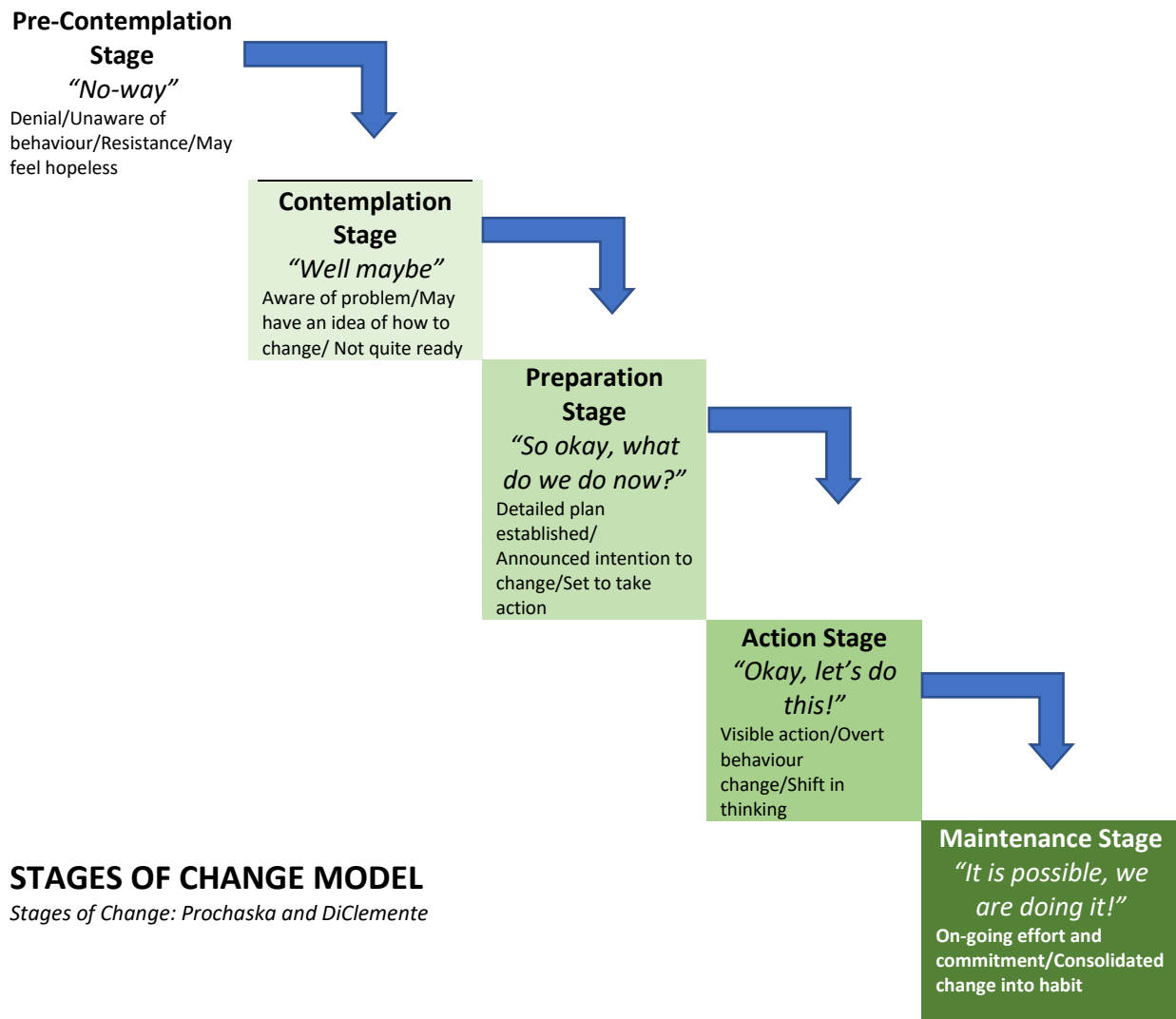
If the School already has a sustainability committee (either run by school staff or parents) then this team is likely to determine the stage of change that the school is at. The team may need to consult with different school stake-holders in-order to complete Work-Template 1.

It would be beneficial to assess the stage of change of the school at the beginning and end of each school year.

The following 'Stages of Change Model' (Prochaska and DiClemente's 1983) was developed to understand the stage of behaviour change experienced by an individual. This model, however, can be utilized to reveal at what stage an entire school is at where positive sustainable behaviour is the goal.

Within a whole school system, there will be many people at various stages of sustainable behaviour change. The best way to identify the stage of change for a whole school is to assess how much sustainable action has occurred. Completing [Work-Template 1](#) from **MANUAL 2: Whole School Sustainability Assessment Report**, will help to identify this.

Determining the stage of change of the major decision makers at the school will also play an important role in assessing the school's stage of change.



## 1. Pre-Contemplation Stage

Sometimes called the “ignorance is bliss” stage. A school that is at this stage has no sustainability actions being undertaken. It may be the case that the school is unaware of the issue and therefore no planning or implementation has occurred. It’s also likely that there could be resistance among the majority of the school stakeholders to implement sustainability initiatives. It may be possible that some of the school stakeholders attempted to implement sustainability initiatives in the past and they were unsuccessful. Their reasoning may be, “it did not work before, so it won’t work this time.” Such stakeholders see this change as impossible, unrealistic and likely to fail if attempted again. Let’s hope your school is not at this stage but if it is, do not despair!

*“Change is never easy, but always possible.”-Barrack Obama*

It may mean spending more time to raise awareness of the positive environmental impact that a sustainable school can achieve.

## 2. Contemplation Stage

At this stage, most school stakeholders have identified that sustainable development is an issue worth addressing and that schools can play a pivotal role in educating for sustainability. It’s likely that many stakeholders will be unsure as to how to start a school sustainability action plan. Some stakeholders may also feel that they are not quite ready to start. The Earth Action Plan can play an important role in getting school stakeholders past this contemplation stage.

## 3. Preparation

Schools at this stage will have implemented some sustainability initiatives or are in the planning phase. Initiatives that have been implemented may or may not have been successful. Schools may notice that there has not been a real shift in fostering sustainable behaviours and that some resistance may still occur. It’s likely there is not a comprehensive sustainability action plan in place and old unsustainable behaviours tend to return, even though the majority of school stakeholders do not want this to occur. The Earth Action Plan can help stakeholders to develop a comprehensive sustainability action plan.

## 4. Action Stage

At this stage, the school has put a sustainability action plan into practice. Stakeholders are consciously choosing new behaviours. They experience challenges to the actions being undertaken and they develop new skills as a consequent of the behaviour change. Most school stakeholders will be enthusiastic and motivated about the new actions. \*

## 5. Maintenance Stage

School stakeholders have been engaged in the new behaviour for some time now and are committed to ensuring the sustainability behaviour continues. \*

\* According to Prochaska and DiClemente, an individual in the Action Stage, would have changed their behavior at least one day and no more than 180 days. A person in the Maintenance Stage would have been engaged in the new behaviour for 6 months or longer. These timeframes don't really apply when we are talking about multiple people within a school. In our experience, the guideline we use is if the majority of school stakeholders have been engaged in the new behaviour for 6 months or longer, then the school is in the maintenance stage. This is not exact science here and determining the school's stage of change is only a tool to help the school to move forward.

## STEP 2: KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING



“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don't much care where—” said Alice.

“Then it doesn't matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

“—so long as I get SOMEWHERE,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you're sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.” -Lewis Carrol, *Alice in Wonderland*

To paraphrase this conversation between Alice and the Cheshire Cat: *How can you pick a road to somewhere when you don't know where you are going? How do you get to “there” when you don't know or don't care where “there” is?*  
<http://philosiblog.com/2011/07/13/if-you-dont-know-where-youre-going/>

When it comes to initiating a successful school sustainability plan, you need to know what are the long-term sustainability goals for the school.

To write a Goal & Purpose Statement, see

[Work-Template 10](#) from **MANUAL 5: School Annual Earth Action Plan**. Also **Available at:**  
<https://earthactionplan.com/action-plan> >Click on the ‘Template Workbook’ button

## LINKS

<http://socialworkpodcast.blogspot.com.au/2009/10/prochaska-and-diclementes-stages-of.html>

<http://philosiblog.com/2011/07/13/if-you-dont-know-where-youre-going/>

<https://earthactionplan.com/action-plan>