

How to Build a School Team

Green Allowance motivates kids to save energy at home with an “allowance” for the savings they generate on their home electric bills. And because many kids are also motivated by competition, Green Allowance offers another tactic for getting kids involved: kids can join their school team to compete against other schools in a quest to see which school’s students can save the most energy at home.

Students can join their school team on their own at the Green Allowance website; the option is available to all users whose electric utility is a Green Allowance partner. Schools don’t have to do a thing. But when schools get involved in helping organize and support their school team, schools offer students:

- A safe, fun, educational online environment
- An opportunity to effectively tackle real-world problems
- Opportunities for cooperative and service learning
- Opportunities for students to develop leadership skills
- Natural connections to the curriculum

Green Allowance school teams offer an easy, fun, free way to implement some of today’s most current thinking about what helps get students truly engaged in learning. Starting and managing a team is easy. Below are three simple steps to get your school involved:

1. Introduce Green Allowance.

- **Classroom tools are available to help you.** Green Allowance has created an original, interactive classroom activity to help you introduce concepts around energy and the environment. You can use all or part of this activity, or other strategies, to introduce these concepts.
- **Let students explore the Green Allowance site.** Only registered users can fully explore the Green Allowance site, so if you’d like your students to be able to explore the site, consider creating demo accounts so they can log on and look around. If your electric utility is a Green Allowance partner, the site will give you the option of entering your electric utility account number so it can track your energy-saving progress. You don’t need to add any account numbers for these demo accounts. Just create the number of usernames you need so each student has a unique log in. (For example, if you have 10 computers, then create 10 accounts, but if the students and their families decide to participate, make sure they set up their own accounts!)
- **Get parent permission.** After they’ve had time to explore the site and see how it works, students who want to sign up and start saving energy—and collect their Green Allowance—will have to get their parent’s permission. The program is voluntary; it’s up to each student and his or her family to decide if it’s right for them.

2. Sign Up and Save.

- **Register with Green Allowance.** As you register, the site will inform you if your electric utility is partnering with Green Allowance. If your utility is a partner, the site will ask for your utility account and meter numbers; students should ask their parents to help them enter this information. Remind students never to share their password with anyone in order to keep their accounts secure. If your utility is not a partner, see the box below titled “When Your Utility Isn’t a Partner” for tips about how to manage a school team without the built-in tools that come with partnered utilities.
- **Join Your School Team.** If your utility is a Green Allowance partner, you’ll see a “Join My School Team” button on the Leaderboard page once you’ve registered. Be sure that students who want to participate in your school team click this button, find their school, and join the team to ensure that everyone’s progress is being tracked at your school. (This button will not appear on the Leaderboard page if your utility is not a partner.) Students can join your team at any time, and there’s no limit to the number of students you can have on your school team.
- **Start Using Green Allowance!** Students can then explore the site to find energy-saving tasks and ideas, and the site estimates the impact of each task and periodically sends a Scorecard to the child and parent summarizing their results.

3. Compete to Win.

- **Check the Leaderboard.** If your electric utility is a Green Allowance partner, your individual progress and your school’s progress will be displayed on the Leaderboards. The Leaderboard sorts users by their average monthly energy savings and displays the top ten energy savers along with the individual user’s position if he or she isn’t in the top ten. School scores and position on the board are based on the average monthly savings per team member. So while having more students on your team will not necessarily improve your standing on the Leaderboard, it will increase your environmental impact. You’ll see that reflected in your total energy savings and total number of trees saved.
- **Tips for team success.** The tactics you choose to support your team are entirely up to you and the circumstances in your school. But it’s safe to say that the more effort you and your students put in, the better results you’ll get. The following are tips for creating a team that will take the lead:
 - **Nominate one or more students to help lead the effort.** Having leaders that are focused on getting results is likely to improve your standing on the board, and offers a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills.
 - **Communicate regularly.** Your team could meet once a month, or your team might consist of members of a group that already meets regularly, such as an environmental club or green team. Meeting will give you a chance to talk about what’s working, what’s not, exchange ideas, or take on other projects. If your meeting is difficult, think about other ways that everyone can stay up to date on your team’s progress and share ideas.
 - **Promote your progress.** Even though all the students in your school might not participate, you can still keep them up to date about what you’re doing. Using posters, articles in your school newspaper, classroom presentations, or other approaches, students who are taking on energy savings at home can talk about their efforts at school.

- **Consider setting a specific goal.** It might be a monetary goal, number of trees saved, or other measure, but setting goals is a time-tested tool for success.
- **Consider pooling your allowances for a common goal.** Many students may want to pocket their green allowance, and that's just fine. How each student's allowance is handled is between a student and his or her family. But some students may be open to the idea of pooling their allowances in order to make a donation, take on a project, make a purchase that will benefit everyone, or for some other purpose. It's another way of setting a goal that everyone can get excited about working toward. And, depending on how you use it, you could find a way to use your allowances to do even more good for the planet.
- **Notify the media of big accomplishments.** Local media are always looking for stories, and they just might be interested in hearing about the big energy savings your students are generating. Press releases are a great way to get the word out to local media, and getting the attention can motivate students to do even more.

When Your Utility Isn't a Green Allowance Partner

If your utility isn't a partner, you can still use the site to save energy, and Green Allowance gives you the tools to estimate your impact. The site won't be able to get your actual data from the utility, but you can still create a school team "offline" and use Green Allowance estimates to track your progress and see how you compare to the individuals and teams on the Leaderboard.

Once a month, Green Allowance will total your individual energy savings from what you've reported on the site, and will make your Scorecard available. When your team meets, just total each member's savings reported on their Scorecards to find your total savings, and calculate your average savings per student per month to see how you compare with the teams on the Leaderboard. The "Worksheet for Offline Teams" can help you organize your scores.

One of the best advantages to having your utility as a partner is that your scores are based on your actual energy savings, not on estimates. Green Allowance estimates reflect the savings you get from the projects you complete (like swapping CFLs for incandescent light bulbs), but they can't include savings from changing your habits (like turning off the lights when you leave a room). If you'd like to get the online functionality, contact your utility to tell them you want them to partner with Green Allowance.



Worksheet for Offline Teams*

When your team meets, ask each member to report the savings listed on each of their Scorecards. Total these to find your team's total savings of energy, money, and trees. Teams on the School Leaderboard are sorted by their average savings per student per month. To see how your team compares with the teams on Leaderboard, average your energy savings each month.

Keep track of your progress, month after month, and be sure to celebrate your successes!

Team Name:

Month:

Username	Energy Saved	Money Saved	Trees Saved

Total Savings			
Average Savings per Student			

* Use more sheets as your team grows!