



Green Shoots
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



STRATEGY

2021 - 2026

INTRODUCTION



The impact of COVID-19 on our community, and on the world around us, has made clear the need for ideas and actions that are sustainable and holistic in nature. More than that, it has shown that schools are so much more than simply ‘businesses’ that churn out young adults after a 12-year journey, they are institutions that reflect and influence the life of the community they serve. In addition to formal learning, they are places where families come together and children seek solace and advice as they grow. Schools have a moral as well as a material duty to the families who put their faith in a chosen institution.

At Green Shoots we recognize the value of ‘school’ in the broader sense and are fully focused on delivering a long-term, high-quality education as well as a fulfilling childhood experience for the students who pass through our gates. It is our mission to help guide the growth of ethical, global citizens who will leave our school with the life-long values and educational tools they need to reach success (whatever that means for each unique child).

This strategic plan offers an overview of our plans for growth in the first half of our second decade. It builds upon progress made during our first decade, during which we prioritised the quality of teaching and learning and achieved the following milestones:

- **Recognition by three accrediting agencies**, one which focuses on curriculum delivery and two of which demand exacting standards across the school in areas from staffing to safeguarding, governance to corporate management.
- **Above global average IGCSE results**. Since graduating our first IGSE cohort in 2016, our graduates have earned higher-than-average grades in their school-leaver exams, as shown in our published annual reports.
- **Balanced focus on academic and pastoral success**, with which we support students of all ages and with a wide range of unique individual needs.

With the core elements of successful education in place, and with a track record of success showing that what we have built works, this new plan focuses on expansion. We will target facilities growth, expansion of our programme, and the continued growth of our pastoral and other support systems. These are detailed in the following pages.

Like all plans, this strategy is a living document which provides a framework for growth while ensuring enough flexibility to allow us to respond to changing circumstances. This flexibility is detailed in Action Plans that accompany the Strategy and are used by leadership to flesh out the goals shared with parents here.





A 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION

In the century since universal, state-financed education became common, much has changed in the world. Sadly, the way that many schools teach has not.

Green Shoots is committed to offering a 21st Century education that prepares children for the life they will live, not the one their parents and grandparents lived. In this strategic plan, we outline the ways our school will continue the work we started a decade ago to support your children as they move through their school years and into a world we cannot yet imagine.

OLD SCHOOL <i>20th Century Learning</i>	GREEN SHOOTS <i>21st Century Learning</i>
CENTRALISED Top-down decision making designed to ensure all schools are the same and all graduates have passed through the same learning process	DECENTRALISED School leaders are free to tailor their education to the needs of their community (while being monitored by external bodies to ensure that overall standards are met)
ACADEMIC Focus only on academic performance,, leaving children who do not conform to ‘the academic norm’ feeling under confident and unskilled	HOLISTIC Focus on the development of the whole child, supporting welfare and personal growth as well as academic advancement

DATA DRIVEN Guided purely by algorithmic decision making focused around standards and averages with no space for individualism	PURPOSE DRIVEN Driven by purpose and values that emphasise the individual needs of each child and ways they can contribute to the welfare of our world and each other as they grow
STANDARDISED CURRICULUM Prescriptive curriculum through which everybody receives the same information to be remembered, regardless of personal interest or ability	EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM Creative, flexible concept-based curriculum that encourages children to actively ‘experience’ learning not passively absorb information
CONTENT OVER SKILLS Rote learning of facts designed to prepare children for standardised subject-based tests. Limited space for questioning or creative thinking	SKILLS OVER CONTENT Teaching of skills, critical thinking, and learning strategies which can be used to manipulate the information that Old School systems still prioritise
PREPARING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION Short term focus on entry into the next stage of schooling or into university, with no longer-term preparation for life	PREPARING FOR LIFE Developing life skills and values that reach beyond access to formal education and into the realm of adulthood
TEACHER-LED Instructional, top-down classroom where children work individually in front-facing rows and the teacher is a giver of knowledge	STUDENT-LED Collaborative, discursive classroom where teamwork is paramount, children work together and the teacher acts as a mentor and guide to student-led learning
PAPER-BASED Books, exams, and research are conducted on paper, with emphasis placed on ‘traditional’ skills like spelling and grammar	ONLINE Learning incorporates online research and awareness of ways information is shared and may be biased or distorted
SHORT-TERM LEARNING GOALS Focus on exams and progression through formal schooling one year at a time	SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM GOALS Setting long-term goals that prepare each child for success in life

STRATEGIC INTENTIONS



As we complete our tenth year of teaching and learning in central Vietnam and enter our second decade of operation, Green Shoots remains committed to educational excellence within a framework of strong pastoral care and values-led learning. To achieve our goals we will target sustainable development in four key areas, which can be viewed as an ‘inverted stool’, where the first three goals are grounded in, and supported by, the forth:

LEARN (Education) - Effective learning is the beating heart of our school

THRIVE (Wellbeing) - Students, staff and parents are happy and safe when at school

UNITE (Community) - Our community is united and reaching out into the wider world

BRACE (Infrastructure) - Strong support systems ensure long-term sustainability

Our systematic approach to growth, through which equal attention is given to all of these areas, is a powerful and sustainable route to future success. It incorporates all key standards identified as important by our accrediting bodies.

This strategy builds upon progress made during our first ten years and identifies priorities for future growth in the four interlocking areas. It is a working document that may be adapted and amended as the needs of our community change, but what will never change is our commitment to the long-term betterment of our school for your children.



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LEARN



Academic learning, the process that takes place during the school day, is the beating heart of any school. Schools are judged - by parents, by other schools, by universities, and by companies that employ their graduates - on their ability to offer a quality education. Green Shoots' decade-long track record of success in this area, and our recognition by accrediting bodies CIS and COBIS, are evidence of the progress we have made to date. During this strategic planning period, our focus will be on further development, expansion, and improvement in the following areas:

CURRICULUM

- Consolidation of the Reggio, IPC, and Cambridge curricula already in use
- Expansion to a high school programme, either through Cambridge or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
- Ongoing horizontal and vertical curriculum mapping, to ensure synergies and ease transitions through the school

FACULTY

- Ongoing commitment to staff recruitment and retention, to support stable and high-quality access to learning for all students
- Increasing specialisation for academic and extracurricular learning
- Professional Development programmes and mentoring support for faculty new to our school

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

- Ongoing development of language and learning support programmes to meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency, special learning needs, and exceptional talents through the school

ASSESSMENT

- Introduction of external assessment systems beyond those already provided by Cambridge to measure quality learning throughout the school
- Increased focus on values and 'non-traditional' types of student success in recognition of our changing world and altered online/offline learning systems

PATHWAYS TO FURTHER EDUCATION

- Expand our counselling service to university entrance counselling
- Continue to develop and expand links with IB or other high schools around the world, and with Vietnamese and international universities





THRIVE



Learning is so much more than simply access to an academic education. Green Shoots sees equal value in learning to live a happy, healthy and meaningful life. Confidence, we believe, is key to progress and we aim to instill this in each and every child who passes through our doors. To help our students live well and grow with confidence, we will:

LIFE-LONG VALUES

- Continue to live our values each and every day, ensuring that students absorb these values from the adults around them
- Reassess how the school's values are prioritised and organised, in conjunction with our community

WELLBEING

- Enhance our pastoral services to offer ever-better wellbeing support to students, staff and families within our community
- Build connections with external service providers where we are not able to meet the wellbeing needs of a community member within the school

SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

- Ensure that children are safe from harm at all times when in school through safer recruitment, staff training, and community education
- Monitor and update, as required, our safeguarding policies and practices to remain in compliance with international best practice



UNITE



As the first international school in Hoi An and the second in central Vietnam, Green Shoots has long acted as a focal point for our community, bringing together families and uniting them around the common goal of educating our children. The strength and durability of this unity remains a core priority. During this planning period, we will:

PARTNERSHIPS

- Expand and consolidate partnerships within our local community (with charities, businesses, local government, etc)
- Further develop international partnerships with schools, charities, and other appropriate partners for growth
- Deepen partnerships with our parent community through events, parent liaison, and communication

COMMUNICATION

- Continue to improve communication systems to ensure clarity and timeliness of messaging as well as clear and open routes for community feedback
- Expand the range of languages through which we reach our community

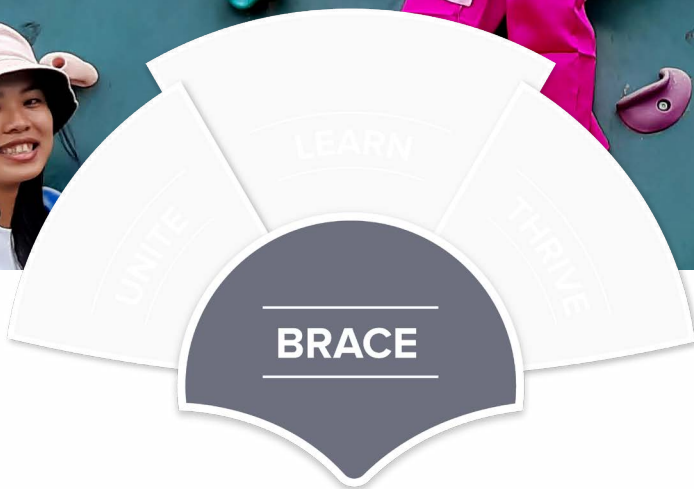
STAKEHOLDER VOICE

- Further expand opportunities for members of the Green Shoots community (students, staff and parents) to be heard, and for their collective voice to be incorporated into policy





BRACE



A ‘brace’ is something that supports growth: the foundations of a building or the roots of a tree. While Green Shoots’ primary focus remains on the educational journey of those enrolled with us, our shared experiences during COVID have taught us that we must pay increasing attention to the non-educational elements of our operation, so that these can support growth in other areas. During this planning period, we will:

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

- Ensure that all business decisions remain rooted in a strong commitment to transparent and ethical governance
- Expand the school’s Advisory Board, introducing new areas of expertise and stakeholder voice

OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES

- Continue to strengthen our ‘back office’ operations to ensure sustainable educational operations

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Consolidate existing IT policies and procedures to facilitate increased online learning and support students as they prepare for the 21st century workplace
- Continue to upgrade our IT infrastructure, policies and usage to ensure online safety and access to online learning opportunities

FACILITIES

- Develop and improve our capacity for more students, and for an expanded academic, sporting and artistic programme, to meet the long-term needs of our growing community

FINANCE

- Build contingency funds for use during future periods of stress and to support uninterrupted learning for our students
- Ensure continued strong financial and Human Resource oversight, as well as management of systems and processes

MARKETING

- Expand marketing to increase enrolments and grow our community
- Reach out to new communities using tailored materials and messages



OUR THANKS TO YOU ALL

Green Shoots would like to thank our community partners for your contribution to this plan, which has been developed over the course of the 2020/21 school year.

Specifically, we would like to thank:

- All **faculty members** who were interviewed by our director at the close of the 2019/20 school year and their feedback integrated into our planning process
- **Parents** who took part in our Community Feedback Survey in early 2021, and those who have contributed ideas and suggestions to school leadership either directly or via the Parent Network
- **Students** who contributed thoughts, ideas, and feedback to school leadership directly, via their teachers, or through the Student Council
- Our **accrediting agencies**, CIS and COBIS, which have provided feedback and guidance in areas of growth and development across the school





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