

Climate Action Plan (Years 1-13)

This is a Climate Action Plan Template that has been created so that it can be easily adapted to any school setting. It is intended to provide a succinct, whole-school plan for decarbonisation, nature recovery, climate education, and resilience.

School	
Baseline Year	
Plan Period	2026-2030 (adapt)

Vision and Commitments

- Become a climate-resilient, low-carbon school that reduces emissions, improves biodiversity on the site, and equips pupils (Years 1–13) with the knowledge, skills, and agency to act.
- Use a “whole-school” approach: governance, operations, curriculum, community, and partnerships.
- Deliver improvements in manageable phases, prioritising high-impact actions first and aligning timelines with available funding.

Scope (what this plan covers)

- **Estate and Operations (where applicable):** classrooms, specialist blocks, halls, libraries, ICT, kitchens, catering, laundries, sports centres including swimming pools, grounds and vehicles.
- **Resources:** energy, water, waste, procurement and contracts, food and cleaning products.
- **People and Learning:** curriculum and enrichment (Years 1–13), staff CPD, pupil leadership, trips and travel.
- **Governance and Finance:** capital investment decisions, investment policies, reporting, and assurance.

Leadership, Governance and Participation

- Appoint a Sustainability Lead with protected time and clear responsibilities.
- Create a Sustainability Steering Group (Head, Business Manager or Bursar, Estates, Catering, Sports Manager, DSL and Wellbeing, Governors, pupil representatives across year groups, and a parent or community member.
- Pupil Voice and Agency: Eco-Council with representatives from KS1/2, KS3, KS4 and Sixth Form; termly campaigns and co-design projects.
- Publish a one-page summary for stakeholders and keep an internal action register for delivery.

Baseline Targets and Reporting

Baseline (first 0–3 months)

- Gather 12 months of data: electricity, heating fuel, water, waste, catering volumes, and school fleet mileage. The SECR regime under which larger schools (meeting two or more of these criteria: turnover (or gross income) of £36 million or more; balance sheet assets of £18 million or more; 250 employees or more) will already be reporting on this and this data can be used for the baseline.
- Ensure metering includes high-load areas (kitchen, ICT suites, sports centre).
- Complete a simple site walk-through audit to identify quick wins and maintenance issues (heating schedules, lighting, controls, leaks).
- Record current curriculum provision and pupil engagement activities (clubs, outdoor learning, trips).

Targets (adapt after baseline)

- **Operational Carbon:** reduce by 15–25% within 3 years; 50% within 10 years; aim for net zero operational emissions by 2050 or earlier where feasible.
- **Biodiversity:** map habitats and deliver at least 3 measurable habitat improvements per year.
- **Education:** complete at least one climate or nature learning sequence per year; Sixth Form should offer pathways into green skills for future careers.

KPIs and Reporting Cadence

- Operational emissions (tCO₂e) and energy use (kWh) per pupil
- Electricity (kWh), heating fuel (kWh), and % renewable energy (on-site + purchased)
- Water use (m³) per pupil and leak events resolved
- Waste (kg) per pupil; recycling rate; food waste (kg) per pupil
- Travel: school fleet mileage; % active or public transport commuting (sampled)
- Biodiversity: habitats mapped; area improved; pupil participation
- Education: staff CPD completed; curriculum coverage; pupil-led projects
- Internal dashboard: termly; external summary: annually (website and Governor report).

Key Action Areas (what we will do)

Energy and Buildings

- **Quick Wins (0–12 months):** LED upgrades; optimise heating schedules; reduce setpoints where appropriate; shut-down protocols for holidays; device power management. Swimming pools (if applicable): review timings, water and air temperature setpoints and covers; ensure ventilation and dehumidification schedules match use; avoid heating when unused for several days.
- **Medium term (6–36 months):** insulation and draught-proofing; optimise boiler controls; install sub-metering; commission a heat decarbonisation feasibility study.

- **Long term (1–7 years):** low-carbon heat (heat pumps where suitable), solar PV (and storage where viable), and planned replacement of end-of-life plant.

Travel, Commuting, and Trips

- Promote active travel (walking and cycling), safe storage and behaviour campaigns; encourage and reward (?) car-sharing where cycling or public transport is not feasible.
- Fleet: plan to replace minibuses and vans with electric alternatives as vehicles reach end-of-life; install or access charging.
- Trips: factor sustainability into destination and itinerary choice; prefer rail or coach over flights where practical; build carbon and nature learning into trip objectives.

Food and Catering

- Increase plant-rich options and seasonal and local sourcing; reduce high-impact items where feasible.
- Measure and cut food waste through portioning, reuse (where safe), and separate food-waste collections and composting.
- Procurement: include sustainability clauses on packaging, sourcing and waste handling.

Water (efficiency + reuse)

- **Quick Wins:** fix leaks; install low-flow taps and dual-flush; optimise hot-water settings and insulation.
- **Opportunities:** assess rainwater harvesting and greywater for toilet flushing and/or irrigation (with appropriate hygiene and backflow protection).
- **Grounds:** challenge irrigation practice – move to drought-resilient planting, smarter timers, mulching and ‘right plant, right place’.

Waste, Procurement, Cleaning Products and Pupil Consumption

- Improve waste segregation with clear signage and consistent bin systems; reduce single-use items; increase reuse and repair.
- Cleaning products: adopt a purchasing policy that prioritises low-toxicity, concentrated products, refill systems and minimal packaging.
- Procurement (school): include lifecycle and sustainability criteria (durability, repairability, recycled content, take-back schemes).
- Procurement (pupils & staff): build awareness of purchasing habits (e.g., delivery impacts, packaging, fast fashion) and encourage sustainable choices.

Biodiversity and Grounds (nature recovery)

- Map your site habitats and set a baseline; plan and monitor improvements annually.
- Increase biodiversity: native planting, wildflower areas, reduced mowing, ponds and bug hotels, hedgerows and outdoor learning spaces.

- Adaptation: add shade, permeable surfaces and drainage to manage heat and heavy rainfall; align with site risk assessments.

Curriculum, Enrichment and Green Careers (Years 1–13)

- Embed climate and nature learning across subjects and year groups using age-appropriate, solutions focused approaches.
- **Years 1–6:** local nature connection, simple energy and waste actions, outdoor learning routines.
- **Years 7–9:** systems thinking, data collection (energy, waste, biodiversity audits), pupil-led improvements.
- **Years 10–11:** GCSE links to climate science, geography, design technology, business and citizenship; project-based learning.
- **Years 12–13:** leadership roles, sustainability projects with local partners, and pathways into green skills and careers; consider external challenges and courses rooted in the UN SDGs.

Capital Projects, Finance, and Investment Policy

- Capital decisions: apply “refurbish-first” thinking and use whole-life carbon assessments where possible; new build can lock in high embodied carbon compared with re-use or refurbishment.
- Budgeting: not all actions are free. Prioritise low and negative-cost measures first and phase capital projects based on funding availability.
- Ring-fence a portion of verified energy savings to fund sustainable capital projects; align timelines to budgets and explore fundraising and grants.
- Investment policy (Governors): ensure reserves and investments reflect the school’s sustainability ambitions through using responsible and ESG (Environmental, Social, & Governance – a management and analysis framework to understand and measure how sustainably an organisation is operating) criteria where appropriate.

6. Delivery Plan (milestones)

- **0–3 months:** appoint lead; create steering group; gather baseline data; quick wins; publish summary.
- **3–12 months:** sub-metering; implement priority efficiency measures; start Nature Park mapping; curriculum sequences embedded; establish action register.
- **12–36 months:** deliver fabric works and priority plant replacements; begin renewables and EV charging where viable; expand biodiversity projects.
- **36 months+:** low-carbon heat transition planning and delivery; deepen community partnerships; continuous improvement and reporting.

Key Resources (for staff)

[Sustainability Support for Education \(DfE commissioned\)](#)

[UNESCO Greening Education Partnership](#)

[UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development](#)

[National Education Nature Park](#)

[FIDA](#) (SDG challenges and teacher toolbox)

[AI's Water Problem | World Economic Forum](#) (considers the interesting dilemma emerging around the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT and the huge energy and water use that this incurs).

Appendix: Action Register (template)

Action	Owner	Start	End	Cost Band	Carbon Impact	Co-Benefits	Status Notes
Optimise heating schedules and holiday shutdown				£	High	Cost savings; comfort	
Pool temperature/timings review (if applicable)				£	Med-High	Cost savings; air quality	
Install sub-meters (kitchen, ICT, sports centre/pool)				££	Med	Better targeting of savings	
Map site habitats (Nature Park) and publish biodiversity baseline				£	Low-Med	Wellbeing; learning; nature recovery	
Cleaning products procurement policy (refill/concentrates)				£	Low-Med	Health; indoor air quality	
Sustainable trips checklist (destinations, transport, itinerary)				£	Med	Learning; equity; safety	
Rainwater/greywater feasibility for toilet flushing/irrigation				£££	Med	Resilience; cost	
Whole-life carbon checklist for capital projects				£	High	Better decisions; compliance	Avoiding embodied carbon