

Sustainability Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Please note that a record of the changes made to the original issue of this document can be found at Schedule 1 after any Appendices to the Policy/Procedure.

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1. Background and context

Purpose and goals

At Cumbria Education Trust (CET), our core purpose is to provide education for public benefit, enabling all children and young people to thrive and achieve. We recognise, however, that our responsibilities extend beyond the classroom and into the communities we serve and the environment we share. Education should equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, and values to flourish in a rapidly changing world – and climate change is among the most significant challenges of our time.

From 2025, the Department for Education (DfE) requires all schools to develop and maintain a climate action plan. This policy sets out CET's approach to sustainability, aligning with national expectations while also reflecting our values of respect, responsibility, and resilience. Our ambition is to embed sustainability as a lived reality across our schools, reducing our environmental footprint, preparing our pupils for green careers, and contributing positively to local and global challenges.

National context

The DfE's expectations are clear: schools should produce a holistic climate action plan addressing four interrelated domains. CET fully embraces this:

- **Decarbonisation**, for example calculating and taking actions to reduce carbon emissions, such as becoming more energy efficient.
- **Adaptation and resilience**, such as taking actions to reduce the risk of flooding and overheating.
- **Improving the environment and biodiversity**, for example engaging with the [National Education Nature Park](#).
- **Climate education and green careers**, such as ensuring the education you provide gives knowledge-rich and comprehensive teaching about climate change, and that your teaching staff and lecturers feel supported to offer this.

2. Implementation of this policy

To meet our plans around sustainability, we are developing a trust wide strategy around sustainability. We will identify leads in each school and also create a collaborative group across the trust led by the Director of Strategy to shape this work.

In the first year of this policy, our work will focus on decarbonisation and we have set the goal of reducing our energy usage, which will also help achieve a financial saving. The initial focus of this work will be on low-cost changes to reducing our energy consumption. We will also scope other areas for future years across our work, including how we procure goods and services.

We have also asked each individual school to create a set of objectives and key results (OKRs) focusing on sustainability and we have shared good practice across our schools on this. These OKRs will form the basis of the sustainability action plan and schools will publish these online and also report them to their Local Advisory Boards and review them over the year.

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3. Monitoring of this policy

To monitor the effectiveness of our work in relation to sustainability, we are developing a set of performance indicators mapping to each of the four broad goals outlined above: decarbonisation; adaptation and resilience; improving the environment and biodiversity; and climate education and green careers. The table below is in an indicative list that will be scored and reviewed during the first year of this policy.

Goal	Indicative Indicators
Foundations	• Percentage of schools with climate action plans • Percentage of schools with a nominated Sustainability Lead • Percentage of schools with a pupil-led Sustainability group
Decarbonisation	• Scope 1 – direct emissions • Scope 2 – indirect emissions from purchased energy • Scope 3 – indirect emissions from other sources • Percentage of school menu choices that include red meat
Adaptation and resilience	• Percentage of schools that have been surveyed for resilience and adaptation needs • Estimated cost to meet adaptations identified
Improving the environment and biodiversity	• Estimated percentage of our school estates unmanaged for biodiversity • Days volunteered focusing on improving the environment and biodiversity on the school site or more broadly • Funds raised for conservation charities
Climate education and green careers	• Pupils' understanding of climate change compared to benchmarks in DfE surveys • Review of curriculum materials for inclusion of green careers

4. Review of this policy

This policy will be subject to annual review by the Director of Strategy & Operations, with oversight from the Trust Board. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the policy remains aligned with national expectations, reflects emerging good practice, and responds to the evolving needs of CET schools and communities.

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SCHEDULE 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL – RECORD OF CHANGES

Version Number:	Publication Date:	Nature of, and Reason for, Change(s)
001	September 2025	Original.

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