



Sustainability Policy

Policy Owner: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

ISSR Reference: N/A

Reviewed: Trinity 2025

Approved: Full governing body Trinity 2025

Next Review: Trinity 2026

Version control information

Reason for Amendment	Role	Date	Main Changes
New policy	Chief Operating Officer	Trinity 2025	New group wide policy

Contents

1. Introduction and aims.....	2
2. Legislation and definitions	2
3. Role and responsibilities	4
4. St Dunstan’s Education Group’s sustainability commitments	8
5. Governance and monitoring.....	8
6. Links with other policies	9
Appendix A: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan template	10
Appendix B: Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Group	12

1. Introduction and aims

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parent/carers, visitors and contractors and third-party providers and reaffirms St Dunstan’s Education Group’s commitment to environmental sustainability.

St Dunstan’s Education Group (the Group) aims to:

- Maximise positive impact on the environment through education and operations strategies
- Minimise negative environmental impact arising from our activities
- Embed individual efforts and school action plans into a cohesive Group-wide strategy.

The Group recognises and celebrates the significant amount of work already being undertaken by passionate individuals across the schools, but it is only by harnessing and aligning these initiatives that we can achieve transformative impact. Group-level coordination and top-level leadership are essential to drive meaningful change in this area.

2. Legislation and definitions

2.1 Legislation

This policy is informed by advice from the Group’s sustainability certification provider, Planet Mark and the following legislation and guidance:

- The Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended 2019): sets legally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050

- The Education Act 2002: requires schools to promote the wellbeing of pupils, including environmental wellbeing
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990: establishes a framework for managing waste and controlling emissions
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: requires employers to ensure the health and safety of employees and others, which extends to providing a clean and safe environment
- Sustainability and climate change, strategy for the education and children’s service systems: government guidance for schools.

2.2 Definitions

Biodiversity	The variety of all living things, animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms, and the ecosystems they form. Biodiversity supports ecosystem services like clean air, water, pollination and climate regulation.
Carbon footprint	The total greenhouse gas emissions resulting from an individual, organisation, or activity.
Climate change	Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, primarily caused by human activities like burning fossil fuels. These changes disrupt natural systems leading to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecosystem imbalances.
Environmental impact	The effect of activities or decisions on the natural environment.
Net zero	A state in which greenhouse gases emitted are balanced by those removed from the atmosphere. Net zero is important because it addresses the root cause of climate change, which is greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO ₂ .
Planet Mark	A sustainability certification provider that assists organisations in measuring and reducing carbon emissions, enhancing social value, and progressing toward net zero targets. Planet Mark’s certification demonstrates an organisation’s commitment to sustainability and continuous improvement.
Sustainability	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.
Sustainability and Climate Action Plan	A structured document that outlines commitments, actions, responsibilities, and timelines for reducing the environmental impact and contributing to climate resilience. The main themes of the action plans are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and co-curriculum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change anxiety and climate activism • Energy & carbon • Waste & recycling • Water • Transport & travel • Biodiversity • Community & engagement
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3. Role and responsibilities

Sustainability is a shared responsibility across all levels of leadership, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and third-party providers.

3.1 St Dunstan’s Education Group

The governing body has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Sustainability Policy but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring an approved Sustainability Policy is in place and reviewed annually
- Monitoring the application of this policy including termly consideration of associated KPIs
- Ensuring that sustainability is embedded in the Group’s core purpose, values and strategy.

3.2 The Chief Executive Officer of St Dunstan’s Education Group

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for:

- Creating and shaping the Sustainability Policy and having strategic oversight of its implementation
- Ensuring adequate resource and support is in place to deliver on the Group’s sustainability commitments
- Championing sustainability as part of the Group’s core purpose and values.

3.3 The Heads of the schools

The Heads of the schools are responsible for:

- Providing school-level leadership for sustainability
- Overseeing the work of the School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator and their Climate Action Plan

- Ensuring that their staff are aware of this Sustainability Policy and understand their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan
- Ensuring that the CPL programme covers sustainability, for example climate literacy courses
- Monitoring performance and KPIs related to their school's action plan and providing annual updates to the governing body.

3.4 School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinators

The School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinators are responsible for:

- Working alongside the Head of their school to develop and monitor a school Sustainability and Climate Action Plan that promotes sustainability awareness across curricular and co-curricular activities
- Leading co-curricular activities and events related to sustainability and climate action
- Ensuring that all school members understand their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

3.5 Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is responsible for:

- Developing a procurement framework that evaluates suppliers and products not just on value for money but also their sustainability credentials
- Ensuring that investment portfolios consider sustainability credentials
- Embedding sustainability into financial planning, including identifying funding for decarbonisation initiatives
- Ensuring that their staff are aware of this Sustainability Policy and understand their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

3.6 Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for:

- Developing an Estates and Operations' Sustainability and Climate Action Plan for the Group
- Chairing the Estates and Operations' Sustainability and Climate Action Working Group
- Overseeing implementation of sustainability-related practices across the professional services departments
- Overseeing the Group's estates masterplan, ensuring that environmental and sustainability principles are integrated into all aspects of future upgrades and developments
- Monitoring performance and KPIs related to the Estates and Operations' Sustainability and Climate Action Plan and providing annual updates to the governing body
- Ensuring that their staff are aware of this Sustainability Policy and understand their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

3.7 The Director of Estates & Commercial Activities

The Director of Estates & Commercial Activities is responsible for:

- Leading on the estates aspect of the Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan including energy and water management, sustainable transport planning, waste reduction and biodiversity improvements
- Monitoring KPIs related to the action plan and submitting termly reports to the executive team
- Coordinating the Planet Mark certification exercise for the individual schools
- Managing estates-related projects to ensure they are always underpinned by strong environmental and sustainability principles
- Overseeing the catering and cleaning contracts to ensure third-party providers' sustainability credentials align with the Group's own sustainability objectives, with a focus on ethical sourcing, waste reduction and environmental responsibility
- Ensuring that their staff are aware of this Sustainability Policy and understand their role in delivering the Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

3.8 Director of People

The Director of People is responsible for:

- Leading on the staff-related aspects of the Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, including integrating sustainability into onboarding, professional development programmes, appraisal and wellbeing programmes
- Monitoring KPIs related to the action plan and submitting termly reports to the executive team
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this Sustainability Policy and understand their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

3.9 Director of Development

The Director of Development is responsible for:

- Supporting schools with the community engagement-related aspects of their Sustainability and Climate Action Plans
- Working collaboratively with the local community, including the council, local schools and businesses, to identify opportunities improve the local environment and collaborate on sustainability initiatives.

3.10 Director of Admissions, Communications and Marketing

The Director of Admissions, Marketing and Communication is responsible for:

- Leading on the communications-related aspects of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plans to raise awareness of the Group's sustainability objectives
- Facilitating transparent communications to stakeholders regarding the Group's environmental performance
- Promoting the Group and individual school's sustainability achievements and initiatives to internal and external stakeholders
- Ensuring that the Group's communications reflect its sustainability objectives.

3.11 All staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Understanding this Sustainability Policy and their role in delivering the Sustainability and Climate Action Plans
- Reviewing their own professional and personal practices to make positive changes wherever appropriate
- Supporting pupil-led initiatives and embedding environmental themes in teaching and learning and co-curricular activities.

3.12 All pupils

All pupils are responsible for:

- Demonstrating their concern for their environmental impact through their decisions and behaviours
- Actively participating in sustainability education and initiatives (e.g. Eco Committees, campaigns, green co-curricular activities).

3.13 Parents / carers

All parents / carers are asked to:

- Encourage and reinforce environmental learning and responsibility at home.

3.14 Third-party providers

Third-party providers are responsible for:

- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation

- Complying with the Group’s sustainability objectives as set out in this policy and any service level agreements
- Operating in environmentally responsible ways, including sustainable sourcing, energy use, and waste management.

4. St Dunstan’s Education Group’s sustainability commitments

The Group’s sustainability commitments are to:

- Comply with, and where appropriate exceed, UK environmental legislation and guidelines
- Raise the awareness of staff and pupils of their schools’ environmental impact, activities and performance as well as promoting individual good practice
- Embed sustainability and climate awareness into all curriculums and actively promote environmental literacy, critical thinking and leadership through co-curricular and pupil-led initiatives
- Strive towards continual improvement in reducing the adverse environmental impact caused through the provision of our education and other commercial operations
- Develop a Net Zero strategy, committing to science-based targets in line with national and international climate goals with measurable milestones and annual progress reporting
- Promote sound environmental practices across all schools, including efficient and responsible use of resources, particularly energy and water and applying the principles of good waste management
- Prevent pollution and encourage the reduction of pollution to mitigate the impact of poor air quality across the estate
- Protect and enhance the estate to prevent habitat and biodiversity loss and where possible expand green spaces to purposefully support urban biodiversity and wildlife as well as health and wellbeing
- Minimise the impact of travel on the environment, for example by promoting the use of public transport, cycling and walking
- Ensure the responsible procurement of goods and services, giving preference to products and services that cause less harm to the environment
- Manage construction, refurbishment and post-completion occupancy of buildings to ensure a reduction in environmental impact whilst enhancing the wellbeing of staff and pupils
- Collaborate with external organisation to promote knowledge sharing, community engagement and to accelerate achievement of local sustainability commitments and to have collective impact.

5. Governance and monitoring

5.1 Governance

Delivering on the Groups' sustainability commitments requires sustainability to be embedded throughout the strategic and operational functions of the Group and to ensure that there are channels for pupil voice, staff feedback, and community engagement, allowing stakeholders to contribute to shaping and improving sustainability practices across the schools.

As summarised in Section Three, the governing body holds overall responsibility for ensuring that progress is reviewed annually, alongside other educational, operational and financial performance indicators. The executive team is accountable for delivering the Group's sustainability commitments and reporting progress to governing body. This is achieved through:

- The individual schools' developing, implementing and monitoring Sustainability and Climate Action Plans. Progress is reported to the executive team via the Head of the school and the Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator
- A cross-Group Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Group, developing, implementing and monitoring an Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (Appendix A). Progress is reported to the executive team via the COO and the Director of Estates.

5.2 Monitoring

Monitoring of this Sustainability Policy will include:

- KPIs and metrics to be used to measure performance in areas such as energy consumption, recycling rates, staff engagement and curriculum integration, with relevant members of the executive team taking responsibility for the monitoring and reporting on these KPIs
- Termly updates to the executive team by the individual Sustainability and Climate Action Groups
- Annual updates to the governing body by the executive team
- Net Zero certification provider, Planet Mark, auditing the individual school's environmental performance annually
- Publishing an annual sustainability report that summarises the Group and individual school commitments, shares progress against key targets and celebrates individual achievements.

6. Links with other policies

This Sustainability Policy relates to the following policies:

- Curriculum Policy [school]
- Finance Policy [Group]
- Health & Safety Policy [Group]

Appendix A: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan template

Commitment					
Briefly describe the school's commitment to sustainability and climate action, aligning this with the Group-wide Sustainability Policy [3 – 4 sentences]					
Key objectives for 2025/26					
<p><i>Possible themes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and co-curriculum • Climate change anxiety and climate activism • Energy & carbon • Waste & recycling • Water • Transport & travel • Biodiversity • Community & engagement <p>Minimum four, maximum six SMART objectives</p>					
Objective	What exactly will you do?	How will we know when it's done?	Can this be realistically achieved?	Why is this important?	When will it be completed?
Action plan					
Action/initiatives	Responsible	Timeline	Resources required	How progress will be tracked	

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Appendix B: Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Group

Information regarding the working group's remit and responsibilities

September 2025, Version 1

Context

1. Purpose and governance

This working group has been established under the delegated authority of the St Dunstan's Executive Team (DET) and will be chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. The working group will lead sustainability and climate action initiatives for the professional services departments, developing and monitoring a Sustainability and Climate Action Plan for Estates and Operations, embedding responsibility into every area of the Group's operations.

The working group's action plan and discussions will be considered and approved by the St Dunstan's Executive Team and shared with the Governing Body as appropriate.

2. Membership

The group will be chaired by the COO. Meetings will be held once a term for the duration of 2025/26.

The membership is as follows:

Chief Operating Officer
Director of Estates & Commercial Activities
School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinators
Director of Digital Services
Director of People
Director of Admissions, Communications & Marketing
School Operations leads (e.g. Head of Building Operations)
Estates representative for each school (e.g. caretaker, groundsperson)
Finance representative (e.g. Head of Finance)
Catering representative (e.g. Director of Catering)

3. Terms of reference

- Develop and oversee the implementation of the Group's Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan
- Identify, prioritise, and deliver sustainability projects aligned with the Group's Sustainability Policy. This may include the following themes:
 - Curriculum and co-curriculum
 - Climate change anxiety and climate activism

- Energy & carbon
- Waste & recycling
- Water
- Transport & travel
- Biodiversity
- Community & engagement
- Consider how to promote sustainable behaviours amongst all building users
- Consider the Group's procurement framework to ensure that it evaluates suppliers and products not just on value for money but also their sustainability credentials
- Reviewing the Group's estates masterplan, considering how environmental and sustainability principles can be integrated into all aspects of future upgrades and developments
- Consider how sustainability can be best incorporated into staff onboarding, professional development, appraisal and wellbeing programmes
- Plan for the individual school's annual Planet Mark certification exercise
- Monitor progress against key environmental targets (e.g. carbon reduction, waste, travel)
- Encourage staff voice and leadership, for example through the welfare committees
- Consider how the Group can best communicate to stakeholders about its sustainability objectives, initiatives, progress and significant achievements
- Report termly updates and outcomes to the executive team.

4. Duration of group

The terms of reference and membership of this group will be reviewed in September 2026.