SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Owner:	Chief Operating Officer (CEO)
ISSR Reference:	Part 8 – Quality of Leadership in and Management of Schools
Date of review:	Summer 2026
Approved by:	Group Board
Date of next review	Summer 2027

Version Control Information

Reason for Amendment	Role	Date	Main Changes
Tier 1 policy formatted into SDEG house style and running order	Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Group Board – Summer 2026	Streamlined format, monitoring wording and policy links aligned to house style

1. Aims

St Dunstan's Education Group is committed to environmental sustainability and recognises its responsibility to minimise environmental impact, educate future generations and contribute positively to the communities it serves.

This policy establishes the Group's sustainability commitments, governance arrangements and accountability framework for delivering continuous environmental improvement across all schools, nurseries and professional services functions. It provides a strategic framework through which sustainability is embedded into decision-making, operations, educational provision and future development across the Group.

This policy applies across St Dunstan's Education Group to:

- all schools and nurseries
- professional services departments
- governors
- staff
- pupils
- parents and carers
- volunteers
- visitors
- contractors and third-party providers acting on behalf of the Group

All individuals and organisations operating within the Group are expected to support the principles and commitments contained within this policy.

The Group believes that sustainability should be embedded within every aspect of organisational life. Through its educational provision, estate, operations, procurement decisions and community engagement activities, the Group seeks to become an organisation which:

- demonstrates environmental leadership
- reduces its environmental impact over time
- promotes environmental literacy and responsible citizenship
- supports the transition towards a lower-carbon future
- creates positive environmental outcomes for current and future generations

The Group recognises that meaningful progress requires collective responsibility, strong governance, continuous improvement and the active involvement of pupils, staff and stakeholders across the organisation.

2. Legislation and Regulatory Framework

The Group will comply with applicable environmental legislation, regulatory requirements and relevant guidance relating to sustainability, environmental protection and climate action. This includes the Climate Change Act 2008, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Health and Safety

at Work etc. Act 1974, Education Act 2002 and relevant government sustainability and climate change guidance, as amended or replaced from time to time.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Sustainability is a shared responsibility. The following arrangements establish clear strategic accountability while allowing operational responsibilities to be assigned through action plans, job descriptions, procedures and terms of reference.

3.1 Group Board of Governors

- Approves this policy.
- Ensures that appropriate governance arrangements are in place.
- Receives assurance regarding implementation and effectiveness.
- Reviews progress against strategic sustainability objectives and associated performance indicators.
- Ensures that sustainability is embedded in the Group's core purpose, values and strategy.

3.2 Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer is the Executive Sponsor, Policy Owner and Reviewing Officer and is accountable for:

- leading implementation of the Group's sustainability strategy
- maintaining and reviewing this policy annually
- ensuring appropriate systems, resources and governance arrangements are in place
- overseeing sustainability-related practices across professional services
- chairing the Operational Sustainability Governance Group
- ensuring environmental and sustainability principles are integrated into the estates masterplan and future developments
- receiving assurance regarding delivery and performance across the Group
- reporting progress and assurance to the Group Board

3.3 Heads of School

- Provide school-level leadership for sustainability.
- Oversee the work of the School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator.
- Develop, maintain and monitor a school Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- Ensure staff understand this policy and their role in delivery.
- Promote staff and pupil participation in sustainability initiatives.
- Ensure the continuing professional learning programme supports relevant sustainability learning, including climate literacy where appropriate.
- Monitor school-level performance and provide progress updates through the agreed governance arrangements.

3.4 School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinators

- Work with the Head to develop and monitor the school Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- Promote sustainability awareness across curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Lead or coordinate relevant activities and events.
- Support members of the school community to understand and fulfil their role in delivery.

3.5 Executive and Professional Services Leaders

Executive and professional services leaders are responsible for embedding sustainability within their areas of responsibility and supporting delivery of the Group's commitments. This includes, as relevant, finance and investment, procurement, estates and commercial activity, people practices, digital services, community engagement, communications, catering, cleaning and other contracted services.

3.6 Staff, Pupils, Parents and Carers, and Third-Party Providers

- Staff are expected to understand this policy, review their professional practices, support pupil-led initiatives, and embed environmental themes in teaching, learning and co-curricular activity where relevant.
- Pupils are encouraged to consider their environmental impact and participate actively in sustainability education and initiatives.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce environmental learning and responsibility at home.
- Third-party providers must comply with relevant environmental legislation, contractual requirements and the Group's sustainability objectives, and are expected to operate responsibly in areas including sourcing, energy use and waste management.

4. Sustainability management system

4.1 Policy commitments

4.1.1 Environmental Leadership

- Embed sustainability considerations into strategic planning and decision-making.
- Raise awareness among staff and pupils of environmental impact, activities and performance, while promoting individual good practice.
- Embed sustainability and climate awareness into curricula and actively promote environmental literacy, critical thinking and leadership through co-curricular and pupil-led initiatives.
- Encourage innovation and continuous improvement in environmental performance.

4.1.2 Environmental Performance

The Group will seek to:

- Strive towards continual improvement in reducing adverse environmental impact arising from educational and commercial operations.
- Develop a Net Zero strategy, with measurable milestones and annual progress reporting.
- Improve energy efficiency and responsible use of water and other resources.
- Apply the principles of good waste management, reducing waste and increasing recycling.
- Prevent pollution and reduce its impact, including the effect of poor air quality across the estate.
- Protect and enhance the estate to prevent habitat and biodiversity loss and, where possible, expand green spaces that support urban biodiversity, wildlife, health and wellbeing.
- Minimise the environmental impact of travel, including by promoting public transport, cycling and walking.
- Manage construction, refurbishment and post-completion occupancy to reduce environmental impact while enhancing staff and pupil wellbeing.

4.1.3 Responsible Procurement and Investment

The Group will seek to ensure that sustainability considerations form part of procurement, investment and capital planning decisions wherever reasonably practicable. This includes consideration of:

- supplier sustainability credentials
- ethical and responsible sourcing
- whole-life environmental impact
- sustainable construction and refurbishment practices
- the sustainability credentials of investment portfolios

4.1.4 Community Engagement and Collaboration

The Group will work collaboratively with pupils, parents and carers, staff, local communities, councils, schools, businesses and partner organisations to share knowledge, support environmental initiatives and contribute to wider sustainability objectives and collective impact.

4.2 Delivery framework

Delivery of this policy will be supported through:

- school Sustainability and Climate Action Plans
- an Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan
- sustainability-related performance indicators and reporting
- the Operational Sustainability Governance Group and other appropriate forums
- staff, pupil and community engagement
- external assurance and certification programmes where appropriate

- supporting standards, procedures and guidance where required

School plans will be developed and monitored locally, with progress reported through the Head and the School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator. The Estates and Operations plan will be developed and monitored through the Operational Sustainability Governance Group, with progress reported through the Chief Operating Officer.

4.3 Assurance and reporting arrangements

Monitoring and assurance arrangements will include:

- performance indicators and metrics in areas such as energy consumption, recycling, staff engagement and curriculum integration
- termly updates through the appropriate executive governance arrangements
- annual assurance and progress reporting to the Group Board
- external validation, certification or audit where appropriate
- an annual sustainability report summarising Group and school commitments, progress against key targets and significant achievements

The Chief Operating Officer will review the effectiveness of this policy annually and recommend amendments where required.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Operating Officer or sooner where required due to:

- legislative change;
- regulatory change;
- inspection findings;
- organisational change.

An annual sustainability report will summarise Group and school commitments, progress against key targets and significant achievements.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Group Board of Governors.

6. Links with other policies

- Group Health and Safety Policy
- Group Finance Policy
- School Curriculum Policies
- School Sustainability and Climate Action Plans
- Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan
- Operational Sustainability Governance Framework

Appendix A: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Template

Commitment

Briefly describe the school's commitment to sustainability and climate action, aligning it with the Group Sustainability Policy (three to four sentences).

Key objectives

Possible themes include:

- curriculum and co-curriculum
- climate change anxiety and climate activism
- energy and carbon
- waste and recycling
- water
- transport and travel
- biodiversity
- community and engagement

Set a minimum of four and a maximum of six SMART objectives.

Objective	What exactly will you do?	How will completion be evidenced?	Is it realistically achievable?	Why is it important?	Completion date

Action Plan

Action or initiative	Responsible	Timeline	Resources required	How progress will be tracked

Appendix B: Operational Sustainability Governance Framework

This appendix sets out the remit and responsibilities of the cross-Group forum supporting operational delivery of the Group Sustainability Policy.

1. Purpose and Governance

The Operational Sustainability Governance Group is established under the delegated authority of the St Dunstan's Executive Team and is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. It leads sustainability and climate action initiatives for professional services, develops and monitors the Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, and supports the embedding of responsibility across the Group's operations.

The Group's action plan, recommendations and progress reports will be considered through the St Dunstan's Executive Team and reported to the Group Board as appropriate.

2. Membership

The Group is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and will normally meet once each term. Membership may be adjusted by the Chair to reflect organisational structures and priorities.

Core representation will normally include:

Chief Operating Officer
Director of Estates
School Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinators
Director of Digital Services
Director of People
Director of Admissions, Communications and Marketing
School Operations Leads
An Estates Representative from each school
A Finance Representative
A Catering Representative.

3. Terms of Reference

The Operational Sustainability Governance Group will:

- Develop and oversee implementation of the Estates and Operations Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- Identify, prioritise and deliver projects aligned with the Group Sustainability Policy.
- Consider themes including energy and carbon, waste and recycling, water, transport and travel, biodiversity, community and engagement, and relevant curricular or co-curricular links.
- Promote sustainable behaviours among building users.
- Consider how procurement evaluates suppliers and products on value for money and sustainability credentials.

- Review how environmental and sustainability principles are integrated into the estates masterplan, upgrades and developments.
- Consider how sustainability is incorporated into staff onboarding, professional development, appraisal and wellbeing programmes.
- Coordinate annual external certification or assurance activity where appropriate.
- Monitor progress against agreed environmental targets.
- Encourage staff and pupil voice and leadership.
- Support clear communication to stakeholders.
- Report termly updates and outcomes through agreed governance arrangements.

4. Review

The Chief Operating Officer will review the remit, membership and effectiveness of the Group annually, alongside the review of this policy and relevant action plans.