



The STAR MAT Sustainability Statement December 2024

Background and rationale

There is currently no statutory requirement to have a Sustainability Policy. However, the STAR MAT has looked to create this Strategy document in consultation with our schools and Student Leadership Teams such as we are clear about how we can make changes for better sustainable practices across our Trust. Our Sustainability Strategy will help us co-ordinate school level actions as we move towards preparing Climate Action Plans, as well as helping us to commit to making positive changes from today. These initiatives may also have other more immediate benefits, such as saving money and improving staff wellbeing.

The DfE aims for all schools to have a Climate Action Plan in place by 2025, which should cover the 4 following areas:

- Decarbonisation – taking actions to reduce carbon emissions, e.g. becoming more energy efficient
- Adaptation and resilience – e.g. taking actions to reduce the risk of flooding and overheating
- Biodiversity – e.g. by engaging with the National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards
- Climate education and green careers – making sure the education we provide gives knowledge-rich and comprehensive teaching about climate change, and that teaching staff and lecturers feel supported to offer this

Changing to a more sustainable infrastructure can take time and in particular, some change may be beyond our capacity or budget right now, but the rationale in creating this policy is to identify what steps we can take at the moment, and what steps we want to plan for in the future.

Aims and values

Our core Trust values are:

- Ensure that our children achieve the best possible outcomes
- Develop the whole child; personally, culturally and spiritually
- Be inclusive; have a particular commitment to our most vulnerable children
- Teach our children to live well together and to make wise choices
- Ensure that our children are safe from harm
- Work to ensure that our schools are enjoyable places for children to learn

Furthermore, our curriculum statement of intent states:

The curriculum in all STARMAT schools is designed to help children and young people become well-rounded individuals who have had opportunities to develop themselves, their ability to interact with others and contribute positively to society, and the knowledge and skills that will equip them for life.

With regard sustainability, we can interpret these aims and value statements as:

- We aim to enable every pupil to take positive action to help make our schools sustainable and caring communities
- In this way, our sustainable approaches aim to prepare pupils for a lifetime of sustainable choices
- We will seek opportunities in our Trust processes, procedures and choices to make positive environmental changes

Roles and responsibilities

| Role | Responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Headteacher and senior leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure staff CPD plans cover sustainability, e.g. including climate change and sustainability in science teachers' CPD, and providing sustainable usage training for all staff • Review subject policies with an eye to sustainability and quality outdoor education • Work with premises, school business staff and the Estates Team to look at where to invest money to reduce carbon emissions, and improve sustainability and resilience • Develop and deliver a school climate action plan by 2025 • Ensure accountability and responsibility with regard Climate Action Planning is maintained • Communicate the sustainability policy to the school community |
| Sustainability lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive carbon literacy training and co-ordinate delivery of this training to all staff (if needed) • Identify appropriate areas of the school grounds to use as an environmental classroom • Encourage whole-school participation in environmental awareness days • Lead a whole-school sustainably audit to identify current and future opportunities for change |
| Curriculum/subject leads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a sustainability audit for their subject, identifying opportunities to teach about the natural world, sustainable practices and the circular economy • Identify ways to reduce usage and waste when teaching their subjects, e.g. reducing printing • Incorporate outdoor education and sustainability into their curriculum area • Apply the new primary science model curriculum with an emphasis on nature (primary); deliver assemblies and PSE curriculum work on green careers and skills • Deliver assemblies and PSE curriculum work on green careers and skills (secondary) |
| School business teams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out sustainable procurement practices by considering usage, waste and supply chains as part of the assessment and validation criteria used when purchasing goods and services • Identify funding opportunities for sustainable development and lead bids for that funding, e.g. smart meters, low-carbon boiler replacement • Communicate waste reduction practices in school to encourage sustainable and cost-effective behaviour, e.g. limiting printing, and turning off lights |
| Site and Estates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the school site clean and safe for effective outdoor learning • Maintain verges around the school sports pitches as wild grassland areas to encourage biodiversity • Make sure all lights, taps, and unnecessary appliances are switched off at the end of each day • Conduct energy and water usage audits at the end of every term |
| Governors/trustees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and implement strategies for the trust to reduce waste by sharing resources between schools • Review the sustainability of a school's practices and procedures when considering adding that school to the trust • Communicate trust-wide values of environmentalism, sustainability and respect for the natural world • Maintain oversight and accountability of Climate Action Plans • Each LGB should consider how they will lead on Climate Action Planning and Sustainability, possibly through a lead/link governor |

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- The Trust Board will maintain accountability for sustainability at Full Board and will have a link lead Trustee allocated for sustainability and Climate Action Planning

Students

- Help in the development and delivery of school-level Climate Action Plans
- Interact with (annual) Trust Climate Action Conferences
- Provide student voice to all sustainability activity

Curriculum

Our curriculum model should aspire for students who:

- Are passionate about the natural world
- Want to do their best to protect the natural world
- Can influence their wider communities

Our longer-term curriculum strategy should provide opportunities to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of nature, sustainability and climate change, and to translate this knowledge into positive action. As a Trust we have a clear commitment to embed climate change and sustainability throughout our curriculum.

Specific aspects where we can impact on sustainability across The STAR MAT

1. Catering

We commit to:

- Using locally-sourced food in school lunches wherever possible
- Procurement of organic food or purchase of food coming at least partially from organic sources
- Procurement of sustainably-produced or caught aquaculture and marine products
- Procurement of livestock products with high welfare standards
- Procurement of seasonal products
- Procurement in bulk or in packaging that has a high recycled content
- Use of reusable cutlery, crockery, glassware and tablecloths
- Use of environmentally friendly paper products
- Full waste collection of food stuffs with staff training
- Minimising of the use of hazardous chemicals and the use of environmentally friendly cleaning and dishwashing products
- Procurement of water and energy efficient kitchen appliances
- Promoting pupil understanding of food and where it comes from
- Participate in schemes to reduce high-carbon food in menus

2. Waste and recycling

For recycling, we commit to:

- Having clearly labelled bins throughout sites for recycling, food waste and general waste, and posters on how to use them
- Wherever possible, we will compost food waste from kitchens and cafeterias, and use this to support the growth of food and other plants on the school site

- We will teach pupils about the different types of bin they might have in their homes, and encourage them to continue good recycling habits when they're not at school

For waste, we commit to:

- Reducing paper waste by printing on both sides of paper wherever possible, having scrap-paper drawers and using emails as much as possible
- Staff being encouraged to consider what materials can be reused the following year, when clearing out their classrooms at the end of a term or year
- Encouraging pupils to bring reusable water bottles into school rather than using disposable single-use plastics
- Looking to procure waste processing which minimises or removes processing to landfill
- Ensuring availability of bins on school sites allow for appropriate waste management including recycling and food waste – for staff, students and catering teams

For purchasing, we commit to:

- Considering sustainability as part of the assessment and validation criteria for including suppliers on procurement frameworks, to support the sustainable purchasing of products and services
- Making available second-hand purchasing for uniforms, bags and school equipment

3. Water and energy

For energy:

Many steps to reduce energy and water use require investment in infrastructure. Not all the changes are possible right now, but we are committed to making them in the future. These include:

- Low-carbon boilers and heating systems
- Solar panels and battery systems
- Smart meter installation
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Increasing the share of electricity from renewable energy sources
- Purchase replacement lamps that have low energy usage
- Use lighting controls to further reduce energy consumption

At installation stage, ensure systems work as intended, in an energy efficient way

More immediately possible are behaviour change initiatives, to reduce energy consumption including:

- Delivering staff CPD to make staff more aware of energy usage
- Switching off lights and appliances when they're not in use
- Displaying information around sites to help pupils understand the importance of switching off appliances and saving energy
- Installing draft excluders to retain warm air and reduce energy consumption for heating
- Auditing the amount of energy used each term
- Looking at improvement in energy display certificate grading

For water such behaviour change initiatives, to reduce water consumption, include:

- Delivering staff CPD to make staff more aware of water usage
- Turning off taps when not in use
- Displaying posters reminding pupils of the importance of turning off taps and saving water

- Beginning the installation of sensors on toilet taps to make sure they aren't left on
- Auditing water usage every term

4. Transport and travel

Wherever possible, we will encourage and support sustainable transport use such as, walking to school and using shared transport to move around our communities. Other commitments include:

- To provide a cycle to work scheme for staff to help them travel to work more sustainably
- We will look to provide cycle safety lessons for pupils as they move through primary school
- We will aim to participate in initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to school; as part of this work all schools will be encouraged to revisit/form Sustainable Travel Plans
- We will encourage staff to share lifts to off-site training wherever possible to reduce car use
- We will monitor the carbon footprint of our school trips and residential. We use this information to consider more environmentally-friendly options where possible, in balance with providing opportunity and curriculum extension for our pupils

Should the Trust look to own or lease any vehicles we commit to consider:

- Procurement of low emission vehicles (GHG, other exhaust gases and noise)
- Ensuring reduce fuel consumption through eco-driving or tyre pressure monitoring systems
- Procurement of environmentally friendly tyres and regenerated lubricant oils
- Ensuring the correct collection and management of used lubricant oils and tyres
- Encouraging vehicles made with recycled/bio-materials

5. Buildings and grounds

We commit to promoting natural spaces and sustainable practices around our sites. This includes:

- Making sure that there are enough rubbish bins and organising litter-picking to keep sites clean
- Helping pupils explore the weather and climate including through weather station approaches in primary schools
- Identify and protecting existing natural habitats on sites, and using them as an opportunity to teach pupils about the natural world
- Make and develop new areas of biodiversity on sites, increasing plant diversity
- Avoid the use of peat as a soil improver
- Limit plant pesticides and use alternative pest control techniques
- Use (whenever possible) locally collected water (water butts) with efficient irrigation
- Use different measures to reduce water demand such as mulching
- Procure organically produced and native plants
- Ensure appropriate materials are composting
- Procure products in recycled, compostable, reusable, recyclable or biodegradable packaging
- Act on invasive plants and animals

6. Procurement

We will ensure that we purchase all products and services that consider environmental aspects, potential impacts and costs, associated with their life cycle. Our practice of procuring products and services will ensure that they are less harmful to the environment (land, air and water), that are made with less harmful materials which when produced, used or consumed. This will include buying

local, buying recycled and recyclable, using less chemicals and reducing the carbon footprint associated with products and services.

For paper, our procurement considerations:

- Paper to be based on recycled/recyclable paper or paper based on sustainably harvested virgin fibre
- Procurement of paper that is produced through a process of low energy consumption and emissions
- Manufacturer states 'Ecological responsibility'

For cleaning, our procurement considerations:

- Use cleaning products that are effective at lower temperatures
- Avoid certain hazardous substances in the product (COSHH)
- Avoid phosphorus and limit biocides in the product
- Follow the recommended dosages
- Decrease the use of products through reviewing cleaning plans and techniques
- Improve the training of cleaning staff
- Decrease the quantity of packaging used
- Ensure the packaging used is made from recycled materials and can be recycled
- Use products made in the UK

With regard the purchase of office equipment, our procurement considerations:

- Purchase energy efficient models
- Purchase products with a restricted amount of hazardous materials and look at take back options
- Purchase products with a restricted noise level
- Use products designed for recycling, that have a longer life and have take back options
- Ensure the packaging used can be recycled
- Ensure the correct disposal of any waste products, such as re-using or recycling

For textile procurement, including clothing, woven materials, bags, rucksacks, carpets, curtains etc, our procurement considerations:

- Reuse materials that have been purchased (hand on or sell on school uniforms, ties, bags etc)
- Purchase materials and textiles which have previously used or can be reused
- Do the materials purchased contain recycled fibres
- Purchase clothes or materials that contain organic cotton or other natural fibres
- Purchase materials showing the EU organic logo or the international gold standard for organic textiles (<http://www.global-standard.org/>)
- Purchase Fair Trade textiles

For the procurement of furniture, our procurement considerations:

- Procure timber from legal and sustainably managed forests
- Use materials made partly or totally from recycled materials and/or renewable

- materials
- Avoid as much as possible hazardous substances in materials production and surface treatment
- Ensure the materials and furniture packaging can be separated and recycled or the packaging
- Materials are based on renewable raw materials
- Procure fit for use, repairable and recyclable furniture

Our priorities for 2024-25

In the first year of this Strategy we aim to:

1. Form a Student and staff consultation group, where we can discuss Sustainability issues and considerations for action; carry out inaugural Climate Conference
2. Benchmark school-level good practise which is already underway; conduct carbon surveys at school level
3. Consider actions which may be 'quick wins' including, but not limited to, those which are under Central procurement and leadership. Detail these as an 'actions taken to support sustainability' type statement within appropriate documentation – Estates Strategy, Catering Report, etc
4. Consider how school-level teams can look at behaviour change, including how some of our Eco-Schools Green Flag schools could support others within the Trust
5. Form school level Climate Action Plans
6. Centralise Climate Action Plans and consider any shared themes
7. Begin to examine our curriculum outcome statements to consider where sustainability is already, or could be better, integrated