

Sycamore's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan



What is a Climate Action Plan?

A Climate and Sustainability Action Plan sets out how we will make Sycamore Academy more sustainable and environmentally responsible over time.

It provides a structured approach to understanding our current environmental impact, identifying priorities, taking practical action and monitoring the difference those actions make.

Our plan considers the four areas identified within national education guidance:

- **Decarbonisation:** reducing our environmental impact and carbon emissions.
- **Adaptation and resilience:** preparing our school buildings, grounds and systems for the effects of a changing climate.
- **Biodiversity:** protecting and enhancing nature and increasing pupils' connection with the natural world.
- **Climate education and green skills:** ensuring pupils develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for a changing world.

At Sycamore, our plan will be a working document. We are at the beginning of our formal climate action journey, so our focus will initially be on understanding our starting points, establishing sustainable habits and implementing realistic actions that can be built upon over the next three years.

Why Do We Want to Act?

At Sycamore Academy, we believe we have a responsibility to help protect the environment for current and future generations.

The DfE identifies education as having an important role both in tackling climate change and in improving children's and young people's knowledge and understanding of sustainability. Its national strategy focuses on education and skills, net zero, climate resilience and creating a better environment for future generations.

Our climate action is also directly connected to our wider vision for pupils. Sycamore's Academy Improvement Plan states that we want pupils to become **knowledgeable, curious, resilient, respectful and responsible**, and ready to contribute positively to their communities and wider society.

We want to act because we want to:



- **Protect our environment** by reducing waste and using resources responsibly.
- **Reduce our environmental impact** through better use of energy, water, food and materials.
- **Improve our school grounds** so that they support nature, biodiversity, outdoor learning and wellbeing.
- **Prepare for climate change** by considering issues such as heat, extreme weather, water use and the resilience of our school estate.
- **Educate our pupils** so that they understand sustainability and recognise how their choices and actions can make a difference.
- **Develop responsible citizenship**, giving pupils opportunities to contribute positively to their school and community.
- **Use school resources responsibly**, recognising that reducing unnecessary energy, water, food, paper and resource consumption can benefit both the environment and the school.
- **Work with our families and community**, recognising that sustainable change is more powerful when everyone contributes.

This fits particularly well with Sycamore's value of **Be Respectful**, which includes valuing our environment, and with our ambition to prepare pupils to contribute positively to society.

How Will We Deliver Our Climate and Sustainability Action Plan?

We recognise that lasting change will not come from one-off environmental events. Sustainability needs to become part of how we learn, work, make decisions and use our school environment.

We will therefore take a gradual and achievable approach.

Leadership and governance

- Identify a named **Sustainability Lead**.
- Ensure oversight from SLT and governors.
- Include sustainability within relevant school improvement, curriculum, premises and operational decisions.
- Review progress against our action plan regularly.



Pupils

As Sycamore does not currently have Eco Ambassadors, we will initially work through existing pupil leadership structures, including School Council, class representatives and other pupil leadership opportunities.

As the plan develops, we will consider whether a dedicated pupil sustainability group would add value.

Staff

- Ensure staff understand Sycamore's sustainability priorities.
- Encourage everyone to adopt agreed sustainable routines.
- Engage teaching, administrative, premises, catering and support staff in areas relevant to their work.
- Provide appropriate sustainability and climate education resources or development where required.

Families

- Communicate our priorities and progress.
- Encourage participation in practical initiatives such as pre-loved uniform, active travel and reuse.
- Provide opportunities for families to contribute to environmental projects where appropriate.

Governors and Trust

- Provide strategic oversight and challenge.
- Consider sustainability within estates and investment decisions.
- Support longer-term projects where these require capital investment or Trust involvement.

Community and external partners



We will explore opportunities to work with local organisations, environmental groups and national programmes where these provide meaningful opportunities for our pupils and school.

The DfE identifies free support including Sustainability Support for Education, Climate Ambassadors, Let's Go Zero Climate Action Advisors and the National Education Nature Park.

What Will We Focus On?

Alongside the four DfE areas, we have identified seven practical areas through which we can make sustainability visible in everyday school life:

Energy Use | Food | School Grounds | Travel | Waste | Water | Procurement

These provide the operational framework for turning our wider climate ambitions into practical action.

Celebrating and Building on our Successes

Before developing your CAP, it is important to assess and celebrate what has already been started and achieved. You may have already implemented sustainability initiatives, e.g. taking part in environmental action days, developing a travel plan or improving recycling within your setting. Make a note of these successes using a table like the below example, as they are a good foundation to build future actions for your CAP.

Action	Completed or Ongoing?	CAP Pillar (decarbonisation, biodiversity, adaptation & resilience or climate education)	Who was involved? (e.g. admin, SLT, governors, learners, site team)	Benefit/ Impact
Explore energy efficiency improvements (LED lighting, controls etc.)	Completed	D	Trust	



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Sycamore Academy Climate Action Plan 2026-2029

Overall vision

At Sycamore Academy, we want pupils to understand and care for the world around them and to recognise that small, sustained actions can make a meaningful difference.

Over the next three years, we will work with pupils, staff, governors, families and community partners to:

- reduce unnecessary energy use, waste and consumption;
- make the school site more resilient to extreme weather;
- improve biodiversity and pupils' access to nature;
- strengthen climate and sustainability education;
- enable pupils to lead positive environmental action;
- ensure sustainability becomes part of normal school improvement and operational decision-making.

Year	Strategic focus	Intended outcome
Year 1: 2026/27	Establish and understand	Put leadership structures in place, celebrate existing work, gather baseline information and introduce a small number of visible whole-school actions.
Year 2: 2027/28	Embed and develop	Use baseline findings to improve routines, curriculum, grounds and community participation.
Year 3: 2028/29	Strengthen and sustain	Evaluate impact, establish longer-term targets and ensure effective practices are embedded in school systems.



Decarbonisation

Our Vision : At Sycamore Academy, we will develop a culture of environmental responsibility by reducing unnecessary waste, energy consumption and resource use. Through sustainable choices and everyday actions, pupils, staff and families will work together to minimise our environmental impact and contribute positively towards a more sustainable future.

Adaptation and Resilience

Our Vision *(how can an education setting adapt their buildings and systems to prepare for the effects of climate change?):*

At Sycamore Academy, we will create a school environment that is safe, resilient and prepared for the challenges of a changing climate. We will develop our buildings, grounds and procedures to help pupils, staff and families respond effectively to extreme weather while ensuring learning, wellbeing and inclusion remain at the heart of our decision-making.

Biodiversity

Our Vision *(how can an education setting enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and increase access to, and connection with, nature?):*

At Sycamore Academy, we will enhance our school grounds to create thriving spaces for wildlife, learning and wellbeing. By increasing biodiversity and strengthening pupils' connection with nature, we will inspire a sense of responsibility, curiosity and care for the local and global environment.

Climate Education and Green Skills

Our Vision *(how can an education setting prepare students for a world impacted by climate change through education & practice?):*

At Sycamore Academy, we will equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand environmental challenges and contribute positively to a sustainable future. Through our curriculum, enrichment opportunities and pupil leadership, children will develop as informed, responsible citizens who recognise the impact they can have in protecting the world around them.



DfE area key

- D: Decarbonisation
- A: Adaptation and Resilience
- B: Biodiversity
- C: Climate Education and Green Skills

Some actions contribute to more than one DfE area. The strongest or most direct connection is shown first.

1. Energy Use

Intended outcome

Sycamore will understand how energy is used, reduce unnecessary consumption and establish energy-efficient behaviours across the academy.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Review available energy bills and consumption information to establish a starting point.	D	Sustainability Lead; Office or Business Manager; Site Manager	Baseline information recorded.	
Year 1	Complete a termly energy walk to identify lights, screens and equipment left on unnecessarily.	D, C	Site Manager; Sustainability Lead; School Council pupils	Initial audit completed and priority areas identified.	
Year 1	Introduce a clear “ Last Out, Lights Out ” expectation for classrooms and shared spaces.	D	All staff and pupils	Expectation communicated and visible reminders in place.	
Year 1	Allocate a classroom energy responsibility through existing class jobs rather than creating a new pupil group.	D, C	Class teachers; pupils	Responsibility operating in each class.	



Year 1	Ensure computers, screens and interactive boards are turned off when not required and at the end of the day.	D	All staff; IT support	Reduced instances of equipment being left on.	
Year 2	Compare energy use with the Year 1 baseline and identify one or two areas for targeted improvement.	D	Sustainability Lead; Site Manager; SLT	Comparative review completed.	
Year 2	Review heating timings and controls with the Site Manager and Trust estates team, while maintaining safe and appropriate temperatures.	D, A	Site Manager; Trust estates team	Heating arrangements reviewed and actions documented.	
Year 2	Deliver a pupil-led energy awareness week through School Council.	C, D	School Council; teachers	Campaign delivered and pupil voice collected.	
Year 3	Repeat the energy review and evaluate whether routines have reduced unnecessary consumption.	D	Sustainability Lead; Site Manager	Three-year comparison completed.	
Year 3	Develop a prioritised proposal for longer-term improvements such as LED lighting, improved controls or other energy-efficient replacements.	D, A	SLT; governors; Trust estates team	Costed or prioritised premises proposals identified.	
Year 3	Include energy efficiency when equipment reaches the end of its useful life and requires replacement.	D	SLT; Office or Business Manager; Trust	Sustainability considered in relevant replacement decisions.	

2. Food

Intended outcome

Sycamore will reduce avoidable food waste, promote responsible food choices and help pupils understand how food production and consumption affect the environment.



Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Undertake a simple sample audit of lunchtime food waste rather than trying to measure every meal throughout the year.	D, C	Catering team; midday staff; School Council	Sample audit completed and common causes identified.	
Year 1	Gather pupil views about portion sizes, popular meals and reasons food is left.	C, D	School Council; catering team	Pupil feedback discussed with catering provider.	
Year 1	Reinforce messages about taking an appropriate amount and avoiding unnecessary waste.	C, D	Teachers; midday staff; catering team	Messages included in assemblies and lunchtime routines.	
Year 1	Map existing curriculum coverage of food waste, food miles, sustainability and responsible use of resources.	C	Geography, science and DT leaders	Existing coverage identified without creating additional standalone units.	
Year 2	Work with the catering provider to trial one manageable response to the Year 1 findings.	D	SLT; catering provider; pupils	Agreed improvement trialled and reviewed.	
Year 2	Develop a small food-growing project using herbs, vegetables or fruit appropriate to the available site and staff capacity.	B, C, A	Curriculum leaders; staff; pupils	At least one manageable growing area established.	
Year 2	Use food growing and food waste as real contexts within science, geography, DT and mathematics.	C, B	Subject leaders; teachers	Relevant curriculum links evidenced.	
Year 3	Repeat the sample food-waste audit using the same method as Year 1.	D, C	Catering team; School Council	Comparable findings available.	
Year 3	Explore composting plant-based waste if arrangements are safe, manageable and supported by the catering and premises teams.	D, B, C	Site Manager; catering provider; Sustainability Lead	Feasibility decision recorded or small pilot established.	
Year 3	Review sustainable food provision with the catering provider alongside nutrition, affordability, allergies, cultural needs and pupil uptake.	D, C	SLT; catering provider; pupils and families	Review completed and appropriate actions agreed.	



3. School Grounds

Intended outcome

Sycamore will gradually develop its grounds to support wildlife, climate resilience, outdoor learning, inclusion and pupil wellbeing.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Map existing trees, planted areas, grassed spaces and habitats.	B, C	Site Manager; science or geography lead; pupils	Simple site map and photographic baseline completed.	
Year 1	Identify areas that become excessively hot, lack shade, collect water or become unusable following heavy rain.	A	Site Manager; SLT; staff and pupils	Priority areas recorded.	
Year 1	Complete one manageable biodiversity activity, such as a bird count, insect survey or habitat observation.	B, C	Teachers; pupils	Baseline observations recorded.	
Year 1	Identify one suitable area for initial habitat or planting improvement.	B, A	Site Manager; Sustainability Lead	Area selected and realistic plan agreed.	
Year 2	Establish one pollinator-friendly or sensory planting area using appropriate plants.	B, A, C	Site Manager; inclusion team; pupils; volunteers	Planting area established and maintained.	
Year 2	Add a small number of suitable habitat features, such as bird boxes, bug hotels or feeders.	B, C	Staff; pupils; community volunteers	Features installed and monitored.	
Year 2	Increase purposeful curriculum use of the grounds for observation, science, geography, art and wellbeing.	C, B	Subject leaders; teachers	Examples of planned outdoor learning evident.	
Year 2	Consider accessibility, sensory needs and quiet spaces when improving the grounds.	A, B	SENDCo; inclusion team; Site Manager	Accessibility considered in the design and review.	
Year 3	Repeat the biodiversity activity using the same method as Year 1.	B, C	Pupils; staff	Comparable observations recorded.	



Year 3	Extend planting or habitat work only where Year 2 projects have been successfully maintained.	B, A	Sustainability Lead; Site Manager	Successful provision sustained and selectively extended.	
Year 3	Develop an annual seasonal maintenance plan covering planting, watering and habitat care.	B, A	Site Manager; relevant staff and pupils	Maintenance responsibilities and timings agreed.	
Year 3	Incorporate shade, drainage, biodiversity and accessibility into future grounds-development decisions.	A, B	SLT; governors; Trust estates team	Priorities included in premises planning.	

4. Travel

Intended outcome

Sycamore will promote safer, healthier and more sustainable travel while recognising the practical circumstances and needs of its families and staff.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Carry out a simple pupil and staff travel survey.	D, C	Sustainability Lead; School Council; Office Team	Travel baseline completed.	
Year 1	Identify barriers that prevent families from walking, cycling or scooting.	A, C	School Council; families; SLT	Key barriers identified without making assumptions about family circumstances.	
Year 1	Promote one established active-travel event rather than running repeated campaigns.	D, C	Staff; pupils; families	One annual event delivered and participation recorded.	
Year 1	Reinforce a no-idling message at the school entrance.	D, C	SLT; Office Team; families	Message communicated through agreed channels.	
Year 2	Review the security and suitability of cycle and scooter storage.	D, A	Site Manager; pupils; SLT	Review completed and feasible improvements identified.	
Year 2	Use road safety, air quality and travel choices within relevant PSHE, science and geography learning.	C, D	Subject leaders; teachers	Curriculum links identified and taught.	



Year 2	Trial one active-travel incentive or class challenge.	D, C	School Council; teachers	Trial completed and evaluated.	
Year 3	Repeat the travel survey using the same questions as Year 1.	D, C	Sustainability Lead; School Council	Changes in travel patterns identified.	
Year 3	Retain only the travel initiatives that families and pupils found helpful and achievable.	D	SLT; families; pupils	Sustainable annual approach agreed.	
Year 3	Raise any infrastructure or road-safety concerns with appropriate Trust or local partners.	A, D	Headteacher; Trust; relevant local partners	Identified concerns appropriately shared and logged.	

5. Waste

Intended outcome

Sycamore will reduce unnecessary consumption, reuse resources where appropriate and improve the consistency of recycling.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Carry out a manageable sample waste audit covering classrooms, offices and communal spaces.	D, C	Sustainability Lead; Site Manager; School Council	Main waste sources identified.	
Year 1	Review recycling arrangements and introduce clear, consistent labels using accessible words and images.	D, C	Site Manager; Office Team; staff	Consistent arrangements in agreed areas.	
Year 1	Establish a photocopying and paper-use baseline using available copier information or paper-order records.	D	Office or Business Manager	Baseline recorded.	
Year 1	Set printing to double-sided and black-and-white by default where technically appropriate.	D	Office Team; IT support	Default settings reviewed and implemented where possible.	October 2026 – Black and White.



Year 1	Reduce unnecessary photocopying by prioritising shared modelling, reusable resources and digital staff documents where suitable.	D	SLT; teachers; Office Team	Expectations communicated and paper use monitored.	
Year 1	Provide classroom trays for clean, single-sided paper that can be reused.	D, C	Teachers; pupils	Reuse system established.	
Year 1	Launch and promote pre-loved uniform.	D, C	Office Team; families	Scheme promoted and participation recorded.	September 2026 - Cress
Year 2	Set an evidence-based paper-reduction target using the Year 1 baseline.	D	SLT; Office or Business Manager	Target agreed and monitored.	
Year 2	Review laminating and single-use classroom resources and agree when their use is genuinely necessary.	D	Curriculum leaders; teachers	Agreed guidance communicated.	
Year 2	Pilot one further reuse initiative, such as a book, costume or Christmas jumper exchange.	D, C	School Council; Office Team; families	One exchange event completed.	
Year 2	Repeat the sample waste audit.	D, C	Sustainability Lead; pupils	Findings compared with Year 1.	
Year 3	Evaluate changes in paper orders, photocopying or printing against the baseline.	D	Office or Business Manager; SLT	Three-year comparison available.	
Year 3	Embed successful paper, recycling and reuse expectations into staff induction and operational guidance.	D	SLT; Office Team	Agreed routines documented.	
Year 3	Review waste arrangements with relevant contractors and identify any realistic next steps.	D	Office or Business Manager; Site Manager; Trust	Contractor arrangements reviewed.	

6. Water

Intended outcome



Sycamore will understand how water is used, respond promptly to avoidable waste and use water more responsibly across the site.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	
Year 1	Review available water bills or consumption information to establish a starting point.	A, D	Office or Business Manager; Site Manager	Available baseline information recorded.	
Year 1	Complete a water walk to identify dripping taps, leaking toilets and areas of unnecessary use.	A, D, C	Site Manager; pupils; relevant staff	Initial water audit completed.	
Year 1	Establish a clear process for reporting leaks and water-related site concerns.	A, D	Site Manager; all staff	Reporting process communicated.	
Year 1	Use existing curriculum learning to teach water conservation and efficiency.	C, A	Teachers; geography and science leaders	Relevant learning clearly mapped.	
Year 2	Install water butts in a small number of suitable, secure locations if the site assessment supports this.	A, B, C	Site Manager; Sustainability Lead	Suitable rainwater collection established.	
Year 2	Use collected rainwater for planting where safe and appropriate.	A, B	Site Manager; pupils and staff	Rainwater used in maintaining planted areas.	
Year 2	Introduce drought-tolerant planting in selected areas.	A, B	Site Manager; relevant staff	Suitable planting established.	
Year 3	Review water use against the baseline and identify persistent issues.	A, D	Site Manager; Office or Business Manager	Comparative review completed.	
Year 3	Consider water-efficient fittings when existing taps, toilets or equipment require replacement.	A, D	Trust estates team; Site Manager	Sustainability considered in relevant replacement decisions.	
Year 3	Include rainwater management, drainage and water efficiency within future premises planning.	A, B	SLT; governors; Trust estates team	Priorities reflected in longer-term planning.	



7. Procurement

Intended outcome

Sycamore will increasingly consider environmental impact when buying goods and services while continuing to prioritise safety, quality, affordability, inclusion and educational need.

Year	Practical actions	DfE area	Responsibility and stakeholders	Success measure	Progress
Year 1	Review a small number of frequently purchased items, beginning with paper, stationery and disposable products.	D	Office or Business Manager; Office Team	Initial review completed.	
Year 1	Introduce the principle of check, reuse, then purchase for suitable classroom and office resources.	D, C	All staff	Expectation communicated.	
Year 1	Purchase durable or reusable resources where they provide appropriate quality and value.	D	Budget holders; Office Team	Sustainability considered in relevant purchases.	
Year 1	Continue pre-loved uniform arrangements as a practical example of reuse and reduced consumption.	D, C	Office Team; families	Scheme maintained and promoted.	
Year 2	Develop a short sustainable purchasing checklist for relevant school-controlled purchases.	D	Office or Business Manager; SLT	Checklist introduced without creating an excessive approval process.	
Year 2	Explore recycled or responsibly sourced paper and refillable products where viable.	D	Office Team; budget holders	Suitable alternatives trialled or adopted.	
Year 2	Consider packaging, durability, repairability and expected life when comparing appropriate products.	D, C	Budget holders	Criteria used for selected purchasing decisions.	
Year 3	Review the impact and affordability of sustainable purchasing changes.	D	Office or Business Manager; SLT	Review completed and successful changes retained.	



Year 3	Work with the Trust to identify where sustainability can be considered in larger contracts and approved supplier arrangements.	D, A	Headteacher; Trust procurement; governors	Relevant opportunities identified and discussed.	
Year 3	Embed proportionate sustainability considerations into purchasing guidance and budget planning.	D	SLT; Office or Business Manager	Agreed principles documented.	

CAP guides- these guides and programmes provide information that can help with the development and delivery of a CAP:

- Sustainability Support for Education- [Sustainability Support for Education](#)
- Eco Schools- [Eco Schools Programme](#)
- NGA- [Environmental sustainability- a whole school approach](#)
- WWF UK- [Schools sustainability guide](#)
- Local authority guides e.g. [Brent schools climate action guide](#), [Waltham Forest](#), [Enfield Council](#), [Bolton Council](#), [Lambeth Council](#) and [Brighton & Hove- Our City Our World](#)
- Friends of the Earth- [Climate action plan for schools and colleges](#)
- SEEd- [Whole Institution Approach Audit Tool](#)

CAP templates and tools- existing CAP templates, designed for education settings:

- Let's Go Zero- access through [climate action advisors](#)
- Climate Action Plan online tool- [Climate Action Plan](#)
- Transform Our World- [School climate action planner](#)
- Climate Friendly Schools- [Climate friendly action plan](#)

CAP examples from education settings:

- Multi Academy Trusts- [The St Barts Academy Trust](#), [Eastern Multi Academy Trust](#), [Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust](#)
- Colleges- [City College Norwich](#), [Milton Keynes College Group](#)
- Schools- [Saint Lawrence Church of England Primary School](#), [Thomas Mills High School and Sixth Form](#), [Drake Primary School](#), [Bures CEVC Primary School](#), [Hook Infant School](#), [Woodfield Primary School](#), [Egerton Primary School](#), [Wicklewood Primary School and Nursery](#),
- Nurseries- [Enchanted Land Day Nursery](#), [Cippenham Nursery School](#), [London Early Years Foundation](#)



