

Walton on the Hill Primary School

Climate Action Plan: 2024-27



What is a Climate Action Plan?

In April 2022, the Department for Education published the [sustainability and climate change strategy for education](#). It states that by 2025, all education settings should nominate a sustainability lead and have a climate action plan.

A climate action plan will help education settings undertake and educate about sustainability initiatives.

This climate action plan has been developed by the executive head, head of school, chair of governors and lead governor for sustainability.

Why do we want to act?

The core message at Walton on the Hill Primary is “Global School Vision - Village School Values”, and that message is particularly significant when considering the climate crisis and the need to “Think Global; Act Local”. Our key goal is to prepare children for their futures and we want to make that future as positive as possible.

An understanding of, and respect for, the natural world has long been part of ‘the Walton Way’. We are lucky to be close to an area of outstanding natural beauty and, through outdoor learning and Forest School lessons, children learn about the environment around them. Our eco-team allows pupils to take ownership for initiatives such as recycling and improving biodiversity, as well as suggesting areas for improvement around the school site. Learning about our planet is part of curriculum topics, e.g. Oceans, Continents and the life of David Attenborough, natural disasters, polar regions and food and farming.

Given the scale and speed of the global climate crisis, its impact on children’s mental health and wellbeing, and the need to ensure children have the knowledge and skills for life in the 2030s, we must do more. Our climate action plan is fundamental to the overall school development plan and one of our strategic governance goals. It will be reviewed regularly and will help us consider environmental impact in our actions – whether smaller, everyday decisions or larger, long-term ones. Our behaviours will exemplify the value we place on sustainability and respect for the planet.

How will we deliver this climate action plan and monitor progress?

The climate action plan will focus on 4 key areas: [decarbonisation](#); [adaptation and resilience](#); [biodiversity](#); and [climate education and green skills](#). Overarching aims for each key area are set out below and key actions for the current academic year can be found here.

Our school community will work together to deliver our climate action plan, but it is crucial we engage and work with the wider community, listening to and involving pupils, parents, staff and the broader locality. As part of this, existing relationships will be strengthened and new ones forged, allowing resources and/or capacity to be lent to support green initiatives.

Delivery of the climate action plan will be supported by the governing body and progress regularly monitored by the lead sustainability governor. Staff will be equipped to develop and deliver the climate action plan by investing time and resources to support them alongside identifying named leads for specific elements.

Our overarching climate action plan (this document) will be reviewed on a three-yearly basis and amended as appropriate.

A yearly climate action plan will be used to monitor progress on a termly basis, with new targets set annually.



Decarbonisation

Our ambition is to achieve net zero carbon status by 2030. This means our school, on its site and through all its activities and procurement, will not contribute to climate change through carbon emissions.

Actions will focus on the following areas:

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



We will calculate our carbon emissions and take action to reduce them by becoming more energy efficient and choosing lower carbon and green energy options. We will help staff and children see, monitor and play an active role in reducing energy usage.

Sustainability considerations will be a key part of the wider school site strategy which will be developed in a separate document. A sustainable procurement policy will also be developed to help us consider the environmental impact of purchases and the companies we are purchasing from.

Transport is a major source of air pollution and carbon emissions, and disproportionately impacts the health of children. We will therefore work with existing organisations to promote low carbon options for the school commute for staff and pupils.

Overall rates of recycling will increase, including food waste, alongside a reduction in overall waste volumes such as single-use plastic and food packaging. We will also look at ways to improve water efficiency, harvest rainwater and recycle grey water.

We will look at various funding streams to support decarbonisation efforts including grant funding, using reserves, and working with Surrey County Council to explore potential capital funding. Efforts to become more energy efficient should also have the added benefit of reducing long-term energy costs for the school as well as other costs associated with things like waste disposal.

Adaptation and resilience

To maintain an excellent learning environment for children, we will ensure the school site is adapted to the changing climate.

Principally this will mean addressing overheating risks both within classrooms and on the wider school site including Breech Lane. We will also assess the risk of flooding and consider how to mitigate against increased surface water run-off.

Actions in this area will support improvements to the biodiversity of the site through appropriate nature-based solutions alongside plants suited for the changing climate.



Biodiversity

It is important our school plays a part in addressing the crisis in nature.

We are already making significant biodiversity improvements through outdoor learning provision and work with Surrey Wildlife Trust as part of their 3 year [Wilder Schools project](#).

We will participate in the [National Education Nature Park](#) and Climate Action Awards which will help children develop skills for the future and support climate education and green skills.

Geospatial mapping tools will identify current habitats/biodiversity on the school site and opportunities for future improvements.

We will consider the implications of introducing plant species in terms of species dominance and water usage, choosing native and drought tolerant options as much as possible. Actions to improve biodiversity will support the general site to adapt to and become resilient to the changing climate through nature-based solutions.



Climate education and green skills

Children need to understand the climate crisis in order to play an active part in prevention, whilst also being prepared for the future including being familiar with future career options.

We will ensure the education we provide gives knowledge-rich and comprehensive teaching about climate change, and that teachers are supported to offer this.

The environment children are taught within also plays a key role and will demonstrate that a sustainable environment is nurturing, engaging and enjoyable.

Actions to support climate education and green skills will focus on the following areas:

- Outdoor Learning and Forest School provision
- Curriculum
- Leadership at all levels
- Training

We will ensure curriculum plans include age appropriate references to climate change and reflect the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), as well as social responsibility and social justice (people and planet).

Our broader focus on pupil mental health and wellbeing will include eco-anxiety and sustainability and climate literacy training will be offered to staff, governors and parents alongside the wider community if demand is there.

We will continue our existing commitment to national and local environmental and ecological initiatives alongside trips and visits to other eco sites.

