



PEAK EDGE

ACADEMY TRUST

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY



Context

The need to act on climate change

The latest synthesis report of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (2023) delivers a stark warning about the accelerating climate crisis and the need to act on climate change. It finds that the observed rise in global average temperatures is ~ 1.1°C above pre-industrial times, with impacts being felt as increases in average and peak temperatures, frequency of severe weather events, sea level rise and disruption to ecosystems. Climate change is unjust, exacerbating existing inequalities as poorer communities face greatest impacts whilst having fewer resources available to adapt. Human activity is unequivocally driving this increase and the IPCC emphasises that urgent and deep reductions in emissions are needed to stabilize the climate and avoid the most severe and irreversible impacts.

The UK government has adopted a legal framework under the [Climate Change Act \(2008\)](#) with a national net zero target of 2050. The DfE "[Sustainability and climate change](#)" (2022) policy paper identifies the importance of the education sector, ensuring that current and future generations are given the right knowledge and skills for a world affected by climate change.

2022 and 2023 saw record breaking heat across the world. In 2022, temperatures were over 40C for the first time in the UK and 39.4C in Sheffield. This significantly exceeds the previous maximum temperature of 35.6C in July 2019. The Autumn of 2023 saw record breaking rain, with severe flooding only prevented by extensive flood prevention work carried out in recent years.

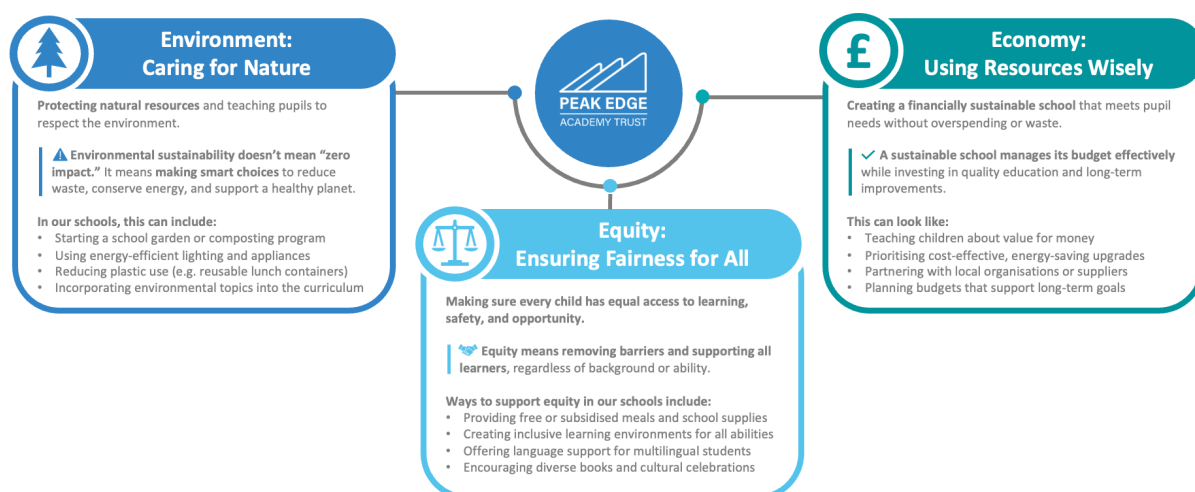
Sheffield City Council have declared a climate emergency and are working towards becoming a zero-carbon city by the start of the next decade. They have set up the Built for Change which is a programme of support led with expert input from partners to support educational settings to become more resilient to the changing climate and to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Sustainability leadership in the education sector

The Department for Education (DfE) expects all schools in England to have a designated sustainability lead and a climate action plan in place by the start of the 2025–26 academic year, as part of its wider Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. This non-statutory guidance encourages schools to adopt a whole-setting approach to sustainability, integrating environmental responsibility into leadership, curriculum, operations, and community engagement. Climate action plans should be practical and tailored, helping schools reduce their environmental impact while fostering a culture of sustainability. This document aims to provide the strategic context for our Trust's Climate Action Strategy, aligning local efforts with national priorities and reinforcing the importance of sustainability leadership across all settings.

To us, sustainability means meeting our needs today without harming future generations. It relies on three connected pillars — Environment, Economy, and Equity — known as the Three Es. True sustainability happens when all three are in balance.

The infographic below explains more about our interpretation of the Three Es in educational settings.



Our Trust's ambition

Sustainability at the Heart of Education.

Our aim is that by 2030, Peak Edge will empower every pupil and community in our Trust to lead the way in sustainability through climate education and managing our estates responsibly.

At Peak Edge we will achieve this through the following strategic actions:

- Empowering Future-Ready Learners:** Equip all pupils with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a climate-impacted and nature-depleted world by embedding and advocating for a culture of sustainability into our curriculum, values, communities and everyday practice.
- Creating Resilient Learning Environments:** Enhance biodiversity, air quality, and access to nature across all our schools, fostering stronger connections between young people and the natural world for the benefit of themselves and future generations.
- Leading the Journey to Net Zero:** Monitor and cut emissions across our trust, innovate for impact, and involve pupils in real-world, meaningful climate solutions.
- Building Climate Resilience:** Future-proof our buildings and systems to withstand the challenges of a changing climate.

Our work so far

Across our Trust we have started several initiatives, for example we have:

- Installed solar panels
- Installed LED lighting
- Upgraded heating systems
- Repaired and upgraded roofs, including an installation of a 'green roof'
- Replaced old windows with energy efficient alternatives

- Developed woodland areas to deliver 'Forest Schools' education
- Improved waste management and recycling processes
- Promoted active travel initiatives
- Partnered with organisations who have made sustainability commitments

Acting on climate change within the Trust

This section outlines how the Trust will take decisive action on climate change going forwards.

Leadership and governance

- The Trust Lead on climate change and sustainability is Zoe Singh (Co-Headteacher, Dobcroft Nursery Infant School) and will be supported by Jim Dugmore (CEO, Peak Edge). They will also be supported by Yvette Hawksworth (COO, Peak Edge) on buildings and estates and Mike Barnes (Headteacher, Hunter's Bar Infant School) and Sarah Binns (Headteacher, Stannington Infant School) on curriculum and careers.
- The Trust will discuss the development and implementation of climate action with the Board of Trustees every term.
- Joseph Birkby (Trustee, Peak Edge) will act as a representative of the Trustee Board with a sustainability monitoring focus.
- The above named individuals will form a core strategy group along with Nathan Edwards (Governor, Abbey Lane) and supported by Let's Go Zero.
- The Trust wide working group has been established to support school-based sustainability leads. This group includes representatives from all areas including teaching, leadership, estates, finance and governance.
- Each school will nominate a sustainability lead who will have time allocated to this role (other staff will deliver and support specific actions but this individual will coordinate for the school and communicate with the Trust sustainability network).
- The Trust will establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of the four climate action pillars at the Trust level. This should include quantitative measures for decarbonisation and energy efficiency, in line with the Trust headline goal for net zero.

Actions to be taken at Trust level

Biodiversity and nature

- The Trust will actively seek out and deliver projects in our schools that will increase biodiversity by at least 10% and access to nature on our sites by Summer 2027.

Decarbonisation and energy efficiency

- Establish our carbon baseline using <https://www.countyourcarbon.org/> in all Phase 1 schools by 1st January 2026.
- The working group will collate and analyse each school's energy data and baseline carbon footprint by 1st February 2026.

- Schools will aim to reduce their overall carbon emissions equivalent by 10% in the year following their baseline, working towards net zero by 2050.
- The Trust will investigate the feasibility of fitting smart meters in all schools, where they are not in place already, by September 2027.
- The Trust will run an annual “switch off fortnight” campaign sharing results between schools.
- A Trust wide strategy will be developed that ensures policies and practices consider energy efficient procurement and sustainability by July 2026.
- The Trust will continue to work with major suppliers to improve the sustainability of catering and products offered to schools.
- Schools will continue to engage with and promote active travel initiatives and use this information to raise levels of consciousness in the community.
- The Trust will continue to promote and develop sustainable waste management strategies in all schools.

Adaptation and resilience

- The working group will develop a climate risk assessment tool for use in schools by Spring 2026.
- Schools will complete a climate risk assessment by March 2026 and use this information to make an action plan.
- The Trust will develop a heatwave policy template for schools to adapt and adopt by Summer 2026.
- The Trust will review and refine the Estates Management Plan to take account of the sustainability resilience and future climate trends by Summer term 2027.

Climate education

- The Trust will establish a network meeting for sustainability leads in order to share curriculum ideas and resources between schools by Summer 2027.
- The Trust will provide CPD for sustainability leads where additional training needs are identified such as climate literacy.
- Schools will develop their Eco Council model, to ensure Pupil Voice is embedded in our approach and children are encouraged to actively lead and participate in climate action.
- Schools will review their curricula to ensure an age appropriate level of climate education is delivered to their pupils by Summer 2027.

Additional actions at school level

The Trust will support each individual school to develop a Climate Action Plan appropriate to their needs and circumstances through workshops delivered by Let's Go Zero. It will keep a record of these plans as they are developed and updated, to enable ongoing monitoring and implementation.

Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed termly by the Trust Sustainability Lead and the Chief Executive Officer, reporting to the Board of Trustees.

The working group and core group will monitor and review progress regularly.

All School Leaders are required to read the strategy and participate in its implementation.