

CLIMATE AMBASSADORS



In association with EAUC, STEM Learning and the University of Reading

Climate Action Plans

A climate action plan (CAP) is a detailed plan to enable an education setting, or trust, to progress or commence sustainability initiatives. It allows education settings to take a structured and strategic route toward ensuring they are acting toward, and educating about, sustainability. The CAP can sit within an individual setting, across a trust, or both. It is important that the whole education setting, or trust, is engaged when creating a CAP so that planning becomes action.

For a CAP to be effective, you must consider the following:

1. Who will own and develop the CAP and monitor progress towards your targets?
2. What additional training might your sustainability leadership team need?
3. How will the CAP fit with your governance structures? Where will progress against the CAP be reported?
4. How will you communicate with your wider community about your CAP?

A whole setting approach

Best practice shows that change is delivered when driven by a diverse team of passionate individuals. It is important that the whole education setting, or trust, is engaged in developing a CAP so that planning becomes action. Remember to include both educational and operational expertise in this team. Take a whole setting approach when developing a CAP, including individuals who represent different parts of a settings community:

- **Senior leadership team, governors, trustees and executive leaders-** critical for planning and implementation to be successful. They have the authority, capacity, and support to influence and lead strategic change within the setting and ensure climate change and sustainability feature on the agenda at key meetings.
- **Learners-**inspire enthusiasm to help drive positive change and give learners a sense of agency, whilst increasing their practical knowledge of sustainability and climate change. Learners can develop a sense of pride in their education setting and engage their parents, carers and the wider community in sustainability & climate change, expanding the impact of your CAP.
- **Teachers-** identify where climate change and sustainability teaching fits into the curriculum and embed this into learning.
- **Estates management-** it is important the estates manager or management team inform the CAP as they have the operational knowledge of an education setting. This is required for baseline data and to enact more sustainable practices.



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CAP guides and templates

There are a range of existing guides, tools, templates and examples available to help develop a CAP. Below we have listed just a few of the initiatives that support the development of CAP's across the education sector, however this list is not exhaustive. Other regional and topic-based initiatives do exist and can assist in the development of a CAP.

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

- Friends of the Earth- [Climate action plan for schools and colleges](#)
- Eco Schools- [Eco Schools Programme](#)
- WWF UK- [Schools sustainability guide](#)
- NGA- [Environmental sustainability- a whole school approach](#)
- 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](#)
- SEEd- [Whole Institution Approach Audit Tool](#)

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

- Let's Go Zero- access through [climate action advisors](#)
- Climate Education- [Sustainability action plan tool](#) (fees apply)
- Transform Our World- [School climate action planner](#)
- Climate Friendly Schools- [Climate friendly action plan](#)

CAP examples from education settings:

- Pevensey & Westham CE primary school- [Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan](#)
- The St. Barts Academy Trust- [SBMAT-Environmental-Sustainability-Action-Plan-2023-2026](#)
- Highgate (Independent school)- [Sustainability - Highgate School](#)
- The Education Alliance- [Environmental-Sustainability-Strategy](#)



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What has already been achieved?

Before developing a CAP it is important to assess and celebrate what has already been achieved. Education settings may have already implemented sustainability initiatives, for example, taking part in environmental action days, developing a travel plan or improving recycling within their 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 a CAP.

Action	Benefit/ Impact

Example CAP

The example table below shows a suggested method to approach each of the four key action areas of a CAP, referenced in the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. Please note this is an example CAP and should be adapted to suit an education setting. Under each key action area, there is a list of prompt questions, which can help in developing actions for a CAP. To better understand each action area, please follow the links to read our introductory guidance documents:

- [Decarbonisation](#)
- [Adaptation and Resilience](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Climate Education and Green Careers](#)

All education settings will have their own improvement planning processes. We think it is best if CAPs are part of business as usual within improvement planning, so this approach should be adapted to best meet an education settings planning documents.



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Decarbonisation

Our Vision (how can an education setting reduce emissions and support students to be part of the transition to net zero?):

Prompt Questions:

- What are the total carbon emissions of the education settings operations?
- How efficient are the education settings buildings?
- How could the education setting retrofit their estate and improve energy efficiency?
- Could the education setting reduce their waste and encourage reuse and recycling?
- Does the education setting adopt sustainable procurement practices?
- Does the education setting have food bins or compost their food waste on site?
- Does the education setting have a travel plan which encourages staff and students to take zero and lower emission forms of travel to and from the setting?

Action	Link to Improvement Plan	Responsibility and Key Stakeholders	Timescale	Information and/or resources required	Target/ Measure	Progress (Update at regular review points)
			Start date: Review Date:	Useful links:		
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Adaptation and Resilience

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

Prompt Questions:

- Has the education setting undertaken an assessment of climate and weather risks?
- Has the education setting experienced the effects of extreme weather in the past e.g. high temperatures in summer, flooding of buildings or grounds?
- What aspects of the education settings life has been or could be affected by these hazards? What damages were incurred?
- Who are the important people in the setting with responsibilities for preparing for and responding to these events?
- Does the setting have any vulnerable staff or students that could be at greater risk?
- Is there any important infrastructure that the setting needs to ensure remains operational, or is high cost e.g. IT equipment, boiler, laboratory or other specialist equipment?
- Does the education setting have any existing plans for action in the event of a heat wave or flood?
- Does the setting know where they can find out what their local climate might look like in the future and how these extreme events might change?

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Biodiversity

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

Prompt Questions:

- Has the education setting mapped and recorded biodiversity on their campus?
- Could the settings estate be managed differently, to provide habitats that serve to enhance local biodiversity?
- Does the estates team need CPD and/or help to provide habitats that enhance local biodiversity?
- Do pupils have opportunities to learn in and about nature? Could this be enhanced on the education settings campus or using facilities elsewhere in the local community?

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Climate Education and Green Skills

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

Prompt Questions:

- In what parts of the education settings curriculum do pupils learn about nature, climate change and the importance of sustainability? Could this be broadened and developed? How could it be integrated across all subjects and educational stages?
- How confident are teaching staff in delivering climate change and sustainability material? Do they need CPD? Do they have access to high quality resources?
- Do pupils have opportunities to learn in the natural environment? How is this part of their curricula or extra-curricular programme?
- Are pupils made aware of the likely future career opportunities which exists in the green economy? Do staff have good training about these opportunities?
- What are the skills that pupils will need to be able to develop to access these careers? How can these skills be embedded across the educational offer?

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