



HCAT Strategic Climate and Sustainability Plan

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HCAT Strategic Climate and Sustainability Plan

1. Introduction

At HCAT, we are committed to embedding sustainability across every aspect of school life. We recognise the responsibility we hold in tackling the climate crisis and preparing our students to become environmentally responsible citizens.

This Strategic Climate and Sustainability Plan Strategy detail our aim to lead and embed environmental sustainability into our schools & trust practice, in line with the DfE's sustainability strategy, by setting out our plans for transforming our approach to sustainability and climate change. This includes how our schools will reduce their climate impact and broader environmental impact and promote biodiversity. This applies to curricular and extracurricular activities, estates, catering, and procurement throughout our Trust.

This strategy has been developed alongside the Department for Education's five action areas, setting out our long-term vision and practical commitments.

2. Our Approach

We aim to lead by example in the way we handle environmental issues inside our workplaces. Where it's relevant, we expect our suppliers to meet environmental standards in the services and goods they provide too.

The aim of our Sustainability Strategy Plan is:

- To reach carbon neutrality by 2050 by reducing our carbon footprint as much as possible
- To bring an awareness of sustainability to the forefront of our education, not only in our taught curriculum but around school, in our extra-curricular activities and general ethos
- To ensure all sites, buildings and operations across the Trust are as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible.

3. Overarching Aims

Area 1: Climate Education

We will educate our students about climate action and give them the understanding and resources to live sustainably.

We will ensure all students develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to thrive in a world shaped by climate change.

- Embed climate education across the curriculum, from early years through to Key Stage 4.
- Provide opportunities for students to take part in sustainability projects such as gardening clubs, biodiversity monitoring, and recycling initiatives.
- Share our progress and achievements through assemblies, newsletters, and pupil-led campaigns.
- Develop teacher CPD opportunities and strengthen links with climate education networks.

Area 2: Green Skills and Careers

We will ensure our staff and students have the skills required for jobs that help protect our planet and build a greener future.

We want to prepare our students for the jobs of the future, equipping them with green skills that are in demand across many sectors.

- Highlight pathways into green careers within subjects such as science, design technology, and geography.

- Partner with local employers and organisations to bring in guest speakers and run green career workshops.
- Provide practical learning opportunities through eco-clubs, community environmental projects, and enterprise initiatives.
- Showcase role models and opportunities in the green economy at careers fairs and through employer encounters.

Area 3: Education Estates and Digital Infrastructure

We will embrace the challenges and opportunities inherent with school buildings, digital technology and infrastructures and improve them for current and future generations.

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and creating greener learning environments.

- Conduct full energy audits of our schools and prioritise energy efficiency upgrades such as LED lighting and improved insulation.
- Explore renewable energy opportunities including solar panel installation.
- Design school estates to promote biodiversity with rewilded areas, native planting, and wildlife habitats.
- Maximise the use of digital platforms to reduce reliance on paper and ensure ICT equipment is procured sustainably.

Area 4: Operations and Supply Chain

We aim to positively shape the practices of our supply chain by promoting key environmental principles. This includes encouraging the adoption of circular economy models, reducing waste generation, and improving resource efficiency throughout operations.

We aim to lead by example in sustainable practices across our operations and procurement.

- Eliminate single-use plastics across all schools.
- Increase recycling rates by providing clear systems and education for staff and students.
- Embed sustainability criteria into procurement processes, prioritising suppliers with strong environmental credentials.
- Reduce waste by promoting repair, reuse, and circular economy approaches.

Area 5: International Contribution

As a trust, we recognise the importance of working beyond our local context, connecting our students to global sustainability challenges.

- Build international links to share best practice in sustainability education.
- Encourage pupil voice through global citizenship projects, connecting climate action to social justice and equity.
- Support students in understanding the UK's role in the global transition to net zero.
- Contribute to wider partnerships and forums to influence and learn from international sustainability initiatives.

4. Our Commitment

Through this plan, HCAT will create an educational environment where sustainability is not an add-on, but a central pillar of everything we do. By aligning our Strategic Climate and Sustainability Plan Strategy with the DfE's strategy, we are building a culture of responsibility, resilience, and innovation that prepares our students for the future while protecting the planet for generations to come.



5. Our Action Plan

Our Aspirations

At HCAT, we are committed to embedding sustainability across every aspect of school life. We recognise the responsibility we hold in tackling the climate crisis and preparing our pupils to become environmentally responsible individuals. We recognise the vital role that education plays in addressing the climate crisis and preparing our pupils to be responsible global citizens. Our Climate Action Plan sets out a clear, strategic vision for embedding sustainability at the heart of school life, aligning with the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. This plan has been developed in collaboration with staff, pupils and community partners and outlines targeted actions across the DfE's five action areas:

1. Climate Education
2. Green Skills and Careers
3. Education Estates and Digital Infrastructure
4. Operations and Supply Chain
5. International Contribution

By creating practical, meaningful opportunities to learn about and protect our natural world, we aim to empower pupils with the knowledge, skills and values they need to thrive in a changing world, while making substantial improvements to our school environment and the wider community.

Priority:	Intent:	Aspirations:
Area 1: Climate Education We will educate our students about climate action and give them the understanding and resources to live sustainably.	We recognise that our young people deeply value the planet and understand the importance of protecting its limited resources. They are aware that these resources are not infinite and are committed to living sustainably, with a desire to leave the world in a better state for future generations. It is essential that we equip students with the knowledge, skills, and tools to take meaningful climate	Empower students to engage in and lead climate initiatives, fostering both local and global impact through education and action. Integrate climate education throughout the entire curriculum, ensuring every subject contributes to environmental awareness and responsibility. Promote a culture of sustainability across the HCAT Family, encouraging everyone to embrace the

	action and make environmentally responsible choices throughout their lives.	principles of reducing, reusing, and recycling through both learning and practice. Celebrate and showcase HCAT's climate education efforts and achievements, highlighting the positive difference being made across our schools and communities.
Looking Ahead - Area 1: Climate Education - Inspire students to become responsible global citizens by deepening their understanding of climate action and strengthening their connection to the natural world. - Equip students with the knowledge and tools to recognise their individual environmental impact, as well as the broader footprint of HCAT's operations. - Provide access to academic qualifications in climate action and sustainability, as they become available, to support future career pathways and lifelong learning.		
Area 2: Green Skills and Careers We will ensure our staff and students have the skills needed for jobs that help protect our planet and build a greener future.	It's essential that both students and staff develop the skills needed for careers that support environmental protection and contribute to a greener future. As the UK leads the Green Industrial Revolution and works to restore nature, we want our students to be prepared to play an active role. Our goal is to nurture their interest in climate change and sustainability by equipping them with the knowledge and capabilities—particularly in STEM subjects—that will enable them to apply green skills in any career path they choose. We aspire to spark enthusiasm for careers that help combat climate change, achieve net zero emissions, restore biodiversity, and build a sustainable future for all.	Provide staff and students with training focused on developing green skills that are relevant and transferable to future careers in sustainability-focused industries. Establish and grow meaningful partnerships with businesses and sectors within the green economy to support smooth transitions from education into environmentally conscious employment. Champion green careers across the HCAT community by embedding them into careers fairs and guidance programmes, inspiring students to pursue roles that contribute to a sustainable future.
Looking Ahead - Area 2: Green Skills and Careers Integrate green skills and industry knowledge into careers education, promoting pathways into sustainability-focused sectors and ensuring students are aware of the training and career opportunities available to them.		

- Create engaging classroom experiences using real-world data, drawn from initiatives such as low-carbon boiler installations, LED lighting upgrades, solar panel systems, and energy monitoring technologies, helping students connect learning with practical environmental impact.

Area 3: Education Estates and Digital Infrastructure

We will embrace the challenges and opportunities inherent with school buildings, digital technology and infrastructures and improve them for current and future generations.

Creating energy-efficient and environmentally friendly school environments is key to showing students that sustainable living is achievable. These improvements not only benefit the planet but also positively impact physical and mental wellbeing.

By enhancing our buildings and digital infrastructure, we can reduce our environmental footprint and inspire students, families, and communities to do the same.

We are committed to understanding and addressing the challenges and opportunities within our school settings to ensure they support a greener future for current and future generations.

Develop and implement a decarbonisation strategy across HCAT's education estate, aligned with energy usage and carbon reduction goals, including clear measures to lower overall consumption.

Adopt innovative energy and water-saving technologies and practices throughout our buildings and services, ensuring reductions in both usage and costs on a like-for-like basis.

Apply sustainable design principles and whole-life cost approaches to all new construction and major refurbishment projects, ensuring our estates operate with maximum environmental and economic efficiency.

Transition to a cloud-first digital infrastructure across all schools, eliminating the need for on-site server systems and reducing our environmental impact.

Achieve an annual reduction in printing and photocopying, decreasing reliance on paper and promoting more sustainable resource use.

Looking Ahead - Area 3: Education Estates and Digital Infrastructure

- Ensure all building improvement projects consider the integration of low-carbon technologies and infrastructure, including cabling and energy-efficient systems.
- Commit to net zero targets for all newly constructed buildings, aligning with long-term sustainability goals.
- Promote and implement a cloud-first digital infrastructure across all schools, supporting Scope 1 and 2 decarbonisation efforts by reducing reliance on on-premises systems.

- Explore and adopt water-saving technologies and management practices, contributing to overall resource efficiency. - Achieve net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2050, through strategic planning and sustainable operational practices.		
Area 4: Operations and Supply Chain We aim to positively shape the practices of our supply chain by promoting key environmental principles. This includes encouraging the adoption of circular economy models, reducing waste generation, and improving resource efficiency throughout operations.	We recognise the powerful role education plays in shaping sustainable habits and influencing wider change. By modelling eco-friendly practices—such as embracing the circular economy, reducing waste, and using resources efficiently—we can inspire not only our students but also our supply chain to carry these values into their communities and beyond. Sectors that successfully connect learning with action see the greatest progress in sustainability. To drive meaningful change, strong coordination and committed leadership are essential. Across HCAT, we’re already seeing passionate individuals and leadership teams leading the way—not only by teaching sustainability and improving infrastructure, but by transforming everyday operations to meet the challenges of climate change head-on.	Incorporate sustainability principles into the planning, development, and delivery of HCAT services, generating positive economic, social, and health outcomes for staff, students, and the wider community. Implement a comprehensive waste and recycling strategy with the goal of achieving zero landfill, promoting responsible waste management across all sites. Work to reduce Scope 3 emissions linked to our supply chain, aligning with HCAT’s broader net zero ambitions and encouraging environmentally responsible procurement and partnerships.
Looking Ahead - Area 4: Operations and Supply Chain - Procure goods and services from suppliers who align with HCAT’s values and are committed to achieving net zero by 2050, with clear plans in place to demonstrate how they will meet this target. - Introduce carbon literacy training for at least one staff member in every HCAT school, equipping them with the knowledge to understand climate change, emissions reporting, and how to develop a climate action plan—enabling them to share learning and lead initiatives within their own settings. - Develop a trust-wide approach to food sustainability, promoting transparency and accountability by publishing a statement that outlines how food is sourced and managed across all schools.		
Area 5: International Contribution	We are committed to making a broader impact by inspiring both young people and adults across the	Establish HCAT as a nationally recognised leader in sustainability and climate action education, setting a benchmark for others across the sector.

As a trust, we recognise the importance of working beyond our local context, connecting our students to global sustainability challenges.	education sector to take meaningful action toward a sustainable future. Through sharing best practices and showcasing successful examples of environmental change, we aim not only to contribute to the wider system but also to lead and support lasting, sustainable transformation. Our ambition is to be a catalyst for change—empowering others to embed sustainability into education and beyond.	Contribute to national dialogue and thought leadership on sustainability and climate action within education, helping to shape policy and practice. Empower students and young people across the country to take meaningful climate action, by highlighting the role everyone plays in building a sustainable future for all.
Looking Ahead - Area 5: International Contribution • Promote HCAT’s sustainability and climate action strategy, showcasing the initiatives we’re undertaking and positioning our approach as a model for others to follow. • Gather global insights and examples of effective support and solutions, to better understand what works in diverse contexts and apply those learnings within our own settings. • Share our experiences openly—including successes and challenges—to contribute to sector-wide learning and improvement. • Engage with individuals and organisations working on sustainability at all levels, from local to international, to discover innovative ideas and deepen our understanding of climate action.		