



Sustainability Policy & Climate Action Plan

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Sustainability Policy and Climate Action Plan for Veritas Multi-Academy Trust

1. Introduction

Veritas MAT is committed to fostering a culture of sustainability within our 3 primary schools: Warden House in Deal, Mundella in Folkestone and Pilgrims' Way in Canterbury. Each of our schools are unique with regards to their sustainability requirements and capacity to achieve the DfE "let's go zero" aspiration by 2030.

As an educational provider, however, we understand the importance of embedding sustainability into all aspects of school life, ensuring that our students, staff, and communities understand and take responsibility for environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Our sustainability policy aims to guide our 3 schools in Kent towards the "let's go zero by 2030" target by creating a Climate Action Plan to promote an environmentally responsible future, reducing waste, conserving resources, and promoting sustainability across all areas of our operations, curriculum, and ethos.

2. Policy Statement

We strive to ensure that sustainability is central to our educational philosophy, operations, and the communities we serve.

Our commitment is to:

- Promote environmental awareness and responsible citizenship among all stakeholders.
- Reduce our ecological footprint by conserving resources and minimising waste.
- Embed sustainable practices across our schools' infrastructure, operations, and curriculum.
- Work with local communities and stakeholders to enhance sustainable practices beyond the school gates.
- Implement a Climate Action Plan across the trust to achieve the "let's go zero by 2030" target.

3. Climate Action Plan

The Department for Education (DfE) have stated that by 2025 all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a Climate Action Plan, as set out in the DfE Sustainability and Climate Change strategy paperⁱ.

A Climate Action Plan is a detailed plan, as shown at Appendix A, to enable our trust to identify and implement sustainability initiatives across the following key areas:

- Decarbonisation
- Adaptation and resilience
- Biodiversity
- Climate education, training and jobs

The Veritas MAT Climate Action Plan will be published on the trust website and updated regularly to show progress made in achieving our objectives.

4. Objectives

The 4 primary objectives of this policy to meet our Climate Action Plan commitments are:

Environmental Sustainability:

- Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions across all our schools.
- Promote water conservation and reduce water wastage.
- Minimise waste generation and increase recycling efforts across the Trust.
- Use sustainable materials and practices in school buildings and maintenance.
- Foster biodiversity and green spaces within school grounds.

Curriculum and Learning:

- Incorporate sustainability topics and environmental issues into the curriculum.
- Encourage student-led projects that promote sustainability, such as our “Eco-Conference”, School Council “Climate Warriors” and green initiatives.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in sustainability-focused extracurricular activities.
- Educate students about sustainable living and responsible consumption.
- Encourage School Councils to discuss and lead on sustainable issues both within the school infrastructure, families and the local community.

Operational Sustainability:

- Implement sustainable procurement practices, ensuring that products and services purchased by the Trust are ethically sourced and environmentally responsible.
- Use digital technology efficiently to reduce paper consumption.
- Adopt sustainable travel options, including promoting walking, cycling, and car-sharing schemes where possible.

Community Engagement:

- Engage with parents, local communities, and other stakeholders to foster a wider culture of sustainability.
- Collaborate with local organisations and businesses to share best practices and resources.
- Support local sustainability initiatives and campaigns.

4. Actions and Strategies

To achieve our objectives, we will undertake the following actions through our Climate Action Plan:

- **Energy Management:** Implement energy-saving initiatives such as LED lighting, energy-efficient heating systems, and smart meters to monitor and reduce energy usage.
- **Waste Reduction:** Ensure recycling programs are available across all schools and encourage the reduction of single-use plastics, with a focus on composting and reusing materials where possible.

- Sustainable Transport: Promote active transport through walking buses, cycling, and school travel plans that encourage the use of public transport and sustainable travel methods, especially when travelling between schools.
- Sustainable Food Choices: Promote healthy, sustainable food options in school meals, including locally sourced and seasonal ingredients, and encourage reducing food waste.
- Staff Training and Awareness: Provide training for all staff to raise awareness of sustainability issues and ensure that sustainable practices are consistently applied throughout school operations.
- Green Infrastructure: Develop and maintain green spaces that encourage biodiversity, including planting trees, creating wildlife gardens, and using rainwater harvesting systems.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Climate Action Plan is key to the success of this policy and will be reviewed regularly by the Trust's sustainability committee, ensuring that progress towards achieving sustainability targets is measured and assessed. Key performance indicators will be set, and regular reports will be shared with stakeholders to demonstrate progress.

Areas for improvement will be identified, and strategies will be updated to ensure continued progress towards sustainability goals.

6. Responsibility

The responsibility for implementing this policy lies with all leaders, staff, students, governors and trustees.

Specific roles include:

- Trust Leadership: The Board of Trustees and CEO will provide overall strategic direction and oversight for sustainability initiatives within the trust as a whole, through the Climate Action Plan.
- Local Academy Committee: The LAC will provide tactical guidance for each individual school.
- Headteachers: Headteachers will ensure the leadership and implementation of sustainability practices at the school level.
- Sustainability Committee: A dedicated group within the Trust will be responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring sustainability initiatives across the Trust.
- All Staff and Students: Every member of the school community is encouraged to actively contribute to sustainability efforts, both in the classroom and in daily school operations.

7. Conclusion

At Veritas MAT, we recognise that sustainability is not just an environmental issue but a responsibility we share in shaping the future of our children and communities. By embracing sustainability in all aspects of our schools' operations and ethos, we are providing our students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to create a better, more sustainable world.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in achieving the Trust's sustainability goals.

Simon J Haseltine

Chair, Veritas MAT

Appendix A: Climate Action Plan Template

Appendix A – Veritas MAT Climate Action Plan Template

The Veritas Climate Action Plan will be owned by the Sustainability Lead at Trust Board level. It will have 6 columns to identify our sustainability issues, goals and actions:

- Goal, Action, Steps, Timeline, Resources, RAG rating.

Goal

This is the area of climate action that we will be addressing through the plan. It could include:

- establishing our baseline
- decarbonising
- biodiversity
- climate education and green careers
- resilience and adaptation
- active and sustainable travel
- air quality within our schools
- waste
- consumption and recycling
- food
- any other relevant areas bespoke to our school environments.

Actions

These are the activities that we will undertake within each goal – actions to be clear and achievable.

Timeline

Decide when we want to achieve the actions identified.

Resources

Include in this section anything that you might need to meet the action. For example:

- who will be the lead?
- staff time required
- funding needed – impact on Veritas budget
- expertise needed

RAG

An additional column would help manage expectations and achievements by being RAG rated to illustrate our progress towards “let’s go net zero” by 2030.

ⁱ Published 18 May 2023