



SHERBORNE SCHOOLS GROUP

Environmental & Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2025-26

This paper is written for Staff, Governors, Pupils and Visitors.

The Sherborne Schools Group (SSG) recognises that humanity is facing a global environmental and climate emergency evidenced by scientific indicators. We are committed to acting to minimise our negative impact on our environment and society by focusing on five key target areas: **Waste, Operational energy use, Estate development, Transport and Investment portfolios.**

As an organisation we aim to be sector leading in environmental sustainability and be carbon-neutral by 2030 through:

- Increasing understanding of these topics amongst staff, pupils and our wider community
- Developing the biodiversity of our school sites
- Reducing our carbon footprint
- Promoting courage, adaptability and resilience to influence positive environmental change
- Reviewing our investments to ensure they dovetail with our sustainability pledge

#letsgozero <https://letsgozero.org/>

The Sherborne Schools Group recognises an environmental and climate emergency at a global, national and local level

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Strategy: Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a template to facilitate opportunities for staff and pupils across the Group and the wider community to participate in the preparation of our Environmental and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

We recognise our responsibility, along with others around the world, to act now and respond to scientific indicators to help collectively reduce: the earth’s temperature from rising; extreme weather events, and if possible, reverse the decline in biodiversity and to protect our planet from the effects of our lifestyles. The importance of education in climate change and why it matters now, is recognised across the globe and is therefore a critical aspect for us to address at SSG. In 2025 the UK Government stated that *“Green jobs will not be niche. We anticipate that sustainability and climate change will touch every career.”* As a Group of schools, it is imperative that we educate the young people in our care to be ready for their future and equip them with knowledge and understanding about their environment so that they can make informed decisions about sustainability and the climate.

A coordinated approach to education and action regarding the global environment and climate emergency is fully aligned with our Group Strategy which our Governing Body fully endorse. We aim to **Lead Environmental Sustainability and Drive Significant Carbon Reduction through the following Objective:** Embed environmental sustainability across the Group and achieve meaningful, measurable reductions in carbon emissions in line with long-term Net Zero ambitions.

Rewilding of our campuses began in 2019, and the impact of the decisions and actions taken then, are being appreciated now. In August 2021, part of the Group signed up to the national schools' campaign ‘Let’s Go Zero’, aiming to be carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. Future focal points will be considered and where appropriate targeted as part of our continued commitment to sustainability in all its forms.

This Strategy and Action plan takes account of our current position, considers potential new commitments, both short and longer term, the importance of partnership with our suppliers, the local community, Dorset Council, and our staff, pupils, Governors, parents and visitors. in the implementation of impactful measures.

Gaining a greater understanding of our carbon footprint that we produce as individuals, collectively as a community as well as that of our business, will enable us to effectively educate on both the negative and positive impact our actions have on the environment. A deeper knowledge, understanding and appreciation will consequently enable all in our community to make a difference, and support the global movement for urgent action.

Our Strategy and Action Plan sets out the challenges that the Group has identified as either: having a significant impact on carbon emissions; an immediate opportunity to make a difference or the potential to educate and increase awareness and thus reduce our impact on both the physical and social environment.

The Strategy and Action Plan highlights key information, including on how the Group will put strategies in place to measure and track emissions, make changes to cut carbon emissions, measure the impact of such reductions and enable a collegiate approach and sense of team achievement across the School community. Strategies will also be incorporated which focus on offsetting any actions which generate negative consequences on both the physical and social environment, for example rewilding grounds within the Group.

Encouraging and empowering all members of the community to play their part, however small in tackling this global challenge, will enable every individual to feel involved and invested in as well as helping them experience the power and collective impact of individual choices in promoting and facilitating change for good.

Sustainability Leads

The Sherborne Schools Group is committed to raising awareness and driving positive change regarding sustainability and climate action. To ensure this key area of education is given the focus it demands, the headteacher of each school will be driving this policy forwards.



Simon Heard (Headmaster)



Ruth Sullivan (Head)



Annie Gent (Head)



Hilary Phillips (Head)

Strategy: Key Target Areas

Five key target areas have been identified as a focus for the SSG community. By considering these areas, we believe considerable progress will be made across our community in increasing understanding, reducing our impact on the physical and social environment and subsequently helping to reduce the negative impacts of climate change. We will also be promoting the qualities and values of courage, adaptability and resilience to make a difference.

The key target areas of agreed focus are:

- Waste and water management
- Operational energy use, greenhouse emissions (let's go zero)
- Estate development including biodiversity management, rewilding, sustainable construction, renovation and refurbishment
- Transport and sustainable travel management
- Enhance both the physical and social environment
- Investment portfolios

To raise awareness of the importance of sustainability for current and future generations, all pupils at SSG will be exposed to myriad aspects of this topic through formal teaching in classrooms, lectures, activities, clubs, trips and discussions. As part of our commitment to developing citizens of the future who will be an influence for good.

Our sustainability action plan requires **all pupils**, where applicable to:

1. **Engage** with discussions and educational activities relating to environmental awareness and **participate** in assemblies and talks related to sustainability.
2. **Contribute** to the Group's Eco-Councils / sustainability clubs, either directly or indirectly through engaging with initiatives and discussions.
3. Accept **personal responsibility** for their own carbon and environmental footprint and take action to reduce these wherever possible.
4. **Promote** the Group's Environmental and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan both within and beyond their own school.
5. **Raise ideas and suggestions** to promote awareness about environmental matters to facilitate progress in reducing the Group's carbon footprint and protecting the environment.
6. **Support** the Group's community and outreach programme to ensure the wider community benefits.

To bring about the most effective change, pupils will work in partnership with staff and the wider community. This commitment will expect **all members of SSG** to:

1. Understand and quantify the environmental and carbon footprints associated within their area of responsibility for each of the **key target areas above**.
2. Identify potential actions to reduce the environmental and carbon footprints as part of the **strategic development** of their area(s) of responsibility.
3. Contribute to their department development plan to ensure consideration of **operational aspects** and the identification of short-term opportunities and longer-term operational actions, that can be incorporated and budgeted for.
4. **Take action** and set targets ensuring all aspects of the Group's performance in relation to climate change and its potential to make a difference has been considered, however large or small, committing to:
 - ✓ Increase understanding

- ✓ Reduce our impact
 - ✓ Promote courage, adaptability and resilience
5. In every meeting agenda, consider the environmental and carbon impact of all actions and initiatives, to ensure our carbon footprint is considered across our organisation in the way we choose to conduct daily business, noting this consideration in meeting minutes.
 6. Monitor and feedback results of interventions, on a termly basis where possible, and at least annually. These will be used in school and Group data and carbon monitoring displays.
 7. Continue to increase and be ambitious with targets.

SSG would not exist without the wise counsel, input, energy and vision of its **Governing Body, all who are committed to:**

Supporting the Group in all its endeavours to reduce the negative impacts of its actions on the physical and social environment and taking responsibility for adopting the Environmental Social Governance (ESG) approach when managing Group assets. ESG requires that explicit consideration is given to the relevance of environmental and social factors when investment decisions are taken, with the long-term return of an investment portfolio in mind. ESG investing aims to correctly price social, environmental, and economic risks and opportunities.

ESG investing is part of the wider concept of Responsible Investment. Whilst ESG investing focuses on how these particular issues can impact the long-term return of assets, responsible Investment also considers non-financial value creation and reflects investor values in an investment, environmental and social responsibility strategy. Responsible investment is an 'umbrella term' for the various ways in which investors can consider environmental, social and governance within stock selection and portfolio construction.

Sustainable investing describes investments in economic activities which contribute to an environmental objective. These are measured by key resource efficiency indicators, for example, the use of energy, renewable energy, raw materials, water and land, on the production of waste, and greenhouse gas emissions, or the impact on biodiversity and the circular economy, etc. provided that such investments do not significantly harm any of those objectives and that the investee companies follow good governance practices, in particular with respect to sound management structures, employee relations, remuneration of staff and tax compliance."

Action Plan

For the Group to effectively minimise its negative impact on the environment and maximise its ability to effect positive change relating to biodiversity and habitat enhancement, a clear, simple and easily understood commitment to action is needed to address the key target areas. SSG commits to:

- ✓ Increasing understanding of climate change amongst all constituents / stakeholders
- ✓ Reducing our negative impact on the environment
- ✓ Maximising its ability to effect positive change relating to biodiversity and habitat enhancement
- ✓ Promoting courage, adaptability and resilience

Increase Understanding

Ensuring that tackling climate change is recognised as a priority across every aspect of SSG

Increasing understanding of our carbon footprint as an educational institution and business as well as from a personal perspective, will be achieved by working with our providers, and as individuals, focusing on targets for carbon and waste reduction, energy efficiency, and key commitments. This commitment to developing a greater understanding of climate change includes educating our pupils and strengthening our staff's knowledge about their own carbon footprint and the impact their actions can have on the environment. Additionally, we will develop strategies in conjunction with staff and pupils to ensure they are appropriately informed when decisions about how to minimise their negative impact.

Understanding about the negative impact that some of our actions can have on the environment and how we can reduce these will be embedded in and across all areas of the Group through clear, targeted education and discussions via the curriculum, co-curricular provision, assembly, Prayers, boarding houses, management of estates and grounds, departmental meetings, in administration and in support teams. Our pupils, staff and community will be educated in how to understand the language of carbon as well as its impact, for example, 'how many kg of CO₂ did you emit today and what impact might this have had?'

We will support staff in encouraging environmental education and promoting climate action through proactive communication and discussion so that they in turn can engage other staff and pupils in considering the following:

- Waste – volume, strategies for reduction
- Operational energy use
- Estate development
- Transport

Discussions with staff and pupils might include ideas and strategies related to energy efficiency measures, reducing waste, increased recycling and reuse, continued re-wilding and promotion of biodiversity, understanding of the environmental considerations of our providers etc

We will ask that staff showcase positive changes compiling and circulating information regularly across a wide range of climate change influences, sustainability examples and initiatives and case studies of carbon-offsetting, to focus discussion, identify changes across our local, national and global community and to continue to educate and increase awareness of the choices available which will bring about improvements to the environment in the short, medium and long term.

Reducing our Impact

Measuring and reducing carbon emissions across our areas of responsibility

We aim to reduce our impact on climate change by considering in every meeting the environmental and carbon impact of every action and initiative. This will help ensure that our carbon footprint is considered across and within our organisation by the way we choose to conduct daily business. This is in addition to the specific actions identified as priorities for the benefit of the environment.

We will discuss with staff and pupils the areas for potential improvement and measure (where applicable) the carbon footprint and implement any obvious immediate changes. Staff will be asked to add to their development plans, any areas to be considered as strategic objectives, considering and discussing the areas of agreed focus:

- Waste
- Operational energy use
- Estate development

- Transport

As a Group we will agree changes that will minimise climate impact, reduce energy consumption, reduce the use of consumables, reduce waste and increase recycling and re-use. We aim, in all areas of the Group, to set ambitious targets for reductions in our carbon footprint and record and feedback to the Climate Action Committee positive and negative progress.

Promoting Courage, Adaptability and Resilience

Encouraging pupils and staff to share opinions, ask questions, challenge key issues, drive change and make a difference

This involves promoting courage and adaptability in staff and pupils, enabling them to feel empowered to question and challenge traditional approaches and decisions for the benefit of the environment. By encouraging pupil and staff voice, we will be establishing a 'can do' approach, led by pupils and staff, in each of our key target areas.

The Group will look for opportunities to collaborate with local businesses, providers and suppliers, charities and other schools. By encouraging the sharing of ideas and practice, including the limitations on lifestyles (for example everyone will expect pupils to fly home to see their family if they live overseas but that this is offset by them not commuting daily to school). We aim to work in partnership to share knowledge and positive actions and encourage staff and pupils to feel pride in even the small changes that they make. Records and celebration of the changes made across the Group will be shared with SLTs, staff and the marketing department. The Group is also aware of the potential for climate anxiety amongst staff and pupils and we aim to support individuals affected.

Further proposals for achieving our Sustainability Commitment can be found in Appendix 1.

Implementation and timescale

The Environmental and Sustainability Action Plan is a five-year plan (September 2025 – August 2030) to be reviewed and updated annually by the Executive. This timeline provides a realistic period during which SSG can prioritise actions and set meaningful targets that can be achieved with current or limited additional resources, and to plan a future agenda at a Group, School, Departmental and House level, that can be fully costed and budgeted.

All line managers are required to evidence the Group's commitment to Climate Emergency Action when preparing their annual development plans. They will also be required to report on significant changes to process or behaviour that you believe will have a long-term impact on reducing our carbon emissions.

SLT will measure their school's impact through data collection relating to operational energy use, transport consumables and waste, and estate development.

SSG will achieve its Environmental and Sustainability Action Plan through the following:

- ✓ From September 2025 place an Environmental Responsibility statement on the Group and individual school [website](#):
- ✓ Maximising its ability to effect positive change relating to biodiversity and habitat enhancement
- ✓ Promoting courage, adaptability and resilience

Appendix 1: Action Plan Proposals to Achieve our Environmental and Sustainability Action Plan

Increasing understanding of climate change amongst all constituents / stakeholders

1. Encouraging and where possible promoting and actioning pupil initiatives linked to sustainability.
2. Directly involve pupils in the measuring and improving of biodiversity across the Group.
3. Provide opportunities for pupils and staff to spend time in the outdoor environment to develop their connection with nature (for example, through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Sport, Adventure and Leadership).
4. Collaborate with [Cape Farewell](#) during the academic year 2025 – 2026, to stimulate our community into a close consideration of climate change, through engagement with art, science and the spoken and written word.
5. Engage pupils with AI and technology to consider the environment through activities such as Minecraft Club – [Reinventing Cities](#).
6. Appointing an Environmental, Ecology and Sustainability Ambassador in Residence to coordinate pupil ideas, lead pupil sessions and deliver an associated educational programme (from September 2026).

Reducing our negative impact on the environment

Encouraging all staff to:

1. Querying whether goods and services are necessary by exploring alternative solutions;
2. Consider sustainable alternatives when ordering resources, e.g. stationery and soft fabrics;
3. Make environmentally sound choices across the school in design, renovation and construction;

Ensuring the Facilities Department:

1. Only use contractors who operate in an energy conscientious and environmentally friendly manner including:
 - maximising their recycling of waste and using environmentally sustainable products; Stewardship Council timber, low Volatile Organic Compound paints and recycled materials
 - checking whether the product already exists on site and is available to use;
 - having minimal packaging and utilising recycled and recyclable materials
 - offering a packaging take-back compliance scheme;
2. Use Display Energy Certificate (“DEC”) to monitor the environmental impact of all building refurbishments; and
3. Install goods and engage with services which are rated Energy Saving Trust certification and European Union Energy Star;
7. Use products which are durable, recyclable, repairable, refillable or re-usable as appropriate;
8. Prohibits the use of materials derived from threatened ecosystems, species or environments, and avoiding products and services that cause cruelty to animals;
9. Support the principles of fair and ethical trade, and social and ecological labels; and
10. Sourcing locally from suppliers with sustainable practices;
11. Exploring alternative energy sources such as ground-source heat pumps.

Facilitating the Estates and Catering Departments to:

1. Minimise the use of chemical fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides;

2. Use the most environmentally supportive products, e.g. peat-free compost as standard;
3. review water management of the entire estate to produce water and money-saving projects
4. work to prevent or manage any water leakages; improvement to plumbing network.
5. installing rainwater harvesting, including on all new build projects, and use of grey water (water from baths, sinks etc);
6. installing additional water butts for external grounds use where feasible;
7. seeking added value to our water contract through additional water reduction initiatives from our water supplier;

Decrease carbon emissions associated with transport use:

1. Encourage walking or cycling to work where possible;
2. Encourage car sharing amongst staff;
3. Encouraging staff to join the cycle to work scheme or the electric car scheme;
4. Installing electric vehicle charging points on site
5. Commit to changing the Group Transport Fleet from petrol / diesel to Electric
6. review www.homerun-app.com and if it can help the Group's sustainable travel management;

Enhance and enrich the biodiversity of the School sites

1. Improve and enrich biodiversity on site through pro-active management of the Group's grounds;
2. Increase the planting of native flower and trees species, in turn enhancing pollen and nectar sources;
3. Improve habitats to encourage bird, bat and small mammal nesting opportunities;
4. where feasible, time estates works so as not to interfere with the bird nesting season (March/August);
5. Prohibit the planting of non-native species;
6. Use the Group sites as an educational and recreational resource for pupils, staff and the community.
7. Promoting opportunities to increase biodiversity and climate resilience across the Group.

Appendix 2: Action Plan suggestions to get the conversation started

Data

Gather statistics so that impact can be measured, by term or month if possible. Should we get some expertise on this? E.g. Carbon Trust,

- a. Energy usage by boarding house/building/school
- b. Amount of food waste
- c. Amount of waste collected
- d. Amount of paper recycled
- e. Amount of other recycling
- f. Number of emails sent
- g. Volume of Internet use
- h. Number of deliveries received
- i. Transport distances/costs
- j. Number of LED bulbs and traditional bulbs
- k. Water usage

Negative emissions

Establish our current negative emissions, initiatives and possible impact e.g.

- a. Solar panels
- b. Re-wilding
- c. Ground source heat pump

Taskforces

Establish our own footprint – bring in the pupils and create a Climate Action Committee (CAC). Individuals to make carbon pledge and log it somewhere. Staff forum as well or combined – one member of staff to lead? Create taskforces for main areas of transport, energy use, consumables and waste, and development.

Considerations

- Curriculum – where does this sit (multiple subjects?) and harmony/spirituality with the environment
- Digital impact
- Deliveries
- Heating – insulation (after sorting thermostats, energy supplier (their supply of renewable energy))
- Lighting
- House consumables e.g., toilet paper, paper towels, clothes washing/drying, food waste, single use plastics
- Pupil individual impact – water bottles, deliveries, clothes washing/drying, food waste, fashion, school uniforms
- Lodestone – food suppliers, seasonal, food miles, packaging, waste, % beef, lamb and dairy, palm oil, deforestation, Display carbon footprint of different foods at mealtimes along with dietary information
- Waste – food (foodbank and RIDAN (or similar) composter), paper, interactive boards.

- Key part of appraisals – role in emission reduction (transport)
- Sherborne Train
- Water fountains back in use
- Staff milk (fridges used in lockdown)
- Where in the curriculum? Personal footprint, making choices, speaker events, parent events, OGs, Environmental management iGCSE?
- Clothing swaps
- Book swaps
- Transport – electric vehicles and charging points, talk to Tesla (work with SS)
- Start planting trees (any other measures?) and add offsets to calculation – 125 Anniversary?
- Extend rewilding – create habitats for specific flora and fauna
- Plants in classrooms for improved air quality

Actions

1. Pick our battles and develop our own timeline for greatest impact
2. Get started on our plans to address our main concerns and instant wins discussing and debating our impact on carbon emissions – what do we need to change?
3. Set the agenda pushing for change – who do we target and how do we get others on board?
4. Draw up the timeline and get started assigning tasks to groups and departments
5. Monitor results of interventions, feedback and ratchet up targets. Display results of carbon usage - maybe have 'carbon monitoring screen' with pie chart updating regularly.
6. Encourage every member of the community to make a pledge on a 'Climate Emergency Pledge Board'.