

**The Cam Academy Trust
SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

Approved in consultation with the Community & Partnership and Audit and Risk Committees on behalf of the Trust Board	15.02.2024 & 27.02.2024
Reviewed without changes:	
Reviewed:	Annually
Date of next review:	February 2025
Responsible Officer:	S. Holmes – Trust Senior Manager; J. Powell (Trustee)
Category – 1	Version –1

1. Purpose

This document sets out the Trust Policy for Sustainability. Through each of the following sections, it hopes to: define sustainability; illustrate why the Trust considers sustainability a strategic matter; provide wider context from a governmental level; set out the Trust’s vision; and determine governance, measurement and accountability structures.

2. Definition

Sustainability is defined by the Brundtland Commission as “*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. More specifically, sustainability can be viewed as having three dimensions: environmental, economic, and social.

- **Social sustainability:** the availability of proper health systems, peace and respect for human rights, decent work, gender equality, quality education, and rule of law.
- **Economic sustainability:** economic growth via appropriate production, distribution and consumption.
- **Environmental sustainability:** protection, conservation and, where possible, enhancement of the natural environment, ecology and biodiversity, which includes tackling climate change and mitigating against negative impacts.

Although the socioeconomic dimensions of sustainability are important—and indeed, there is an inherent interconnectivity of the three dimensions—environmental sustainability is the dimension on which this policy focusses. References to sustainability in this document should be taken with this in mind.

3. Motivation

The Trust has six principles which drive its strategic and operational activities. Pursuing action on sustainability clearly aligns with these principles: this is *why* the Trust considers sustainability important.

- **Excellence Principle.** Sustainability is a generation-defining challenge and therefore should be a key focus within any excellent educational provision, ensuring students have the skills and mindset to contribute to a more sustainable green economy. Furthermore, cost savings driven by more sustainable choices enable greater investment in education provision.
- **Comprehensive Principle.** Sustainability involves topics accessible and relevant to all students, regardless of ability, background or individual context; it is a truly ‘comprehensive’ subject.

- **Broad Education Principle.** Sustainability is broad, cross-cutting and interdisciplinary. While traditionally associated with Science and Geography, its integration into other subjects, including the arts, languages, and PSHE, enriches the educational experience, fostering a holistic understanding of sustainability's relevance in various aspects of life.
- **Community Principle.** Sustainability action presents opportunities for positive community engagement. When Trust academies embrace sustainability, they can become a hub for action, actively involving and benefiting communities.
- **Partnership Principle.** Sustainability initiatives create a platform for internal dialogue and knowledge sharing within the Trust. They also open doors to external partnerships with a range of organisations, who often offer valuable resources and expertise. Embracing sustainability thus enables the strengthening of current, and forging of new, partnerships that can amplify the impact of action.
- **International Principle.** Sustainability transcends borders; there is a moral imperative for action from all organisations across the World, including the Trust. Furthermore, sustainability must be a central topic when cultivating true global citizens.

Alongside the six principles, the Trust strives for all students to become capable, confident and caring. There is a further synergy with action on sustainability here.

- **Capable.** Students will develop the knowledge, skills and mindset that they will need beyond their time in school to live in a changing environment and be able to pursue sustainability action in their personal and professional lives.
- **Confident.** As a result of the above, students will be able to make the most of their talents, be able to engage critically in current and future debates about the environment and to make a positive contribution to their communities.
- **Caring.** An emphasis on working with each other and recognising the position of other people throughout the world will help students to develop a proper caring attitude and to understand the moral imperative to do so as caring individuals and members of a global society.

4. Wider context

Local government

The Trust operates within several local government contexts, and many of these organisations have made commitments on sustainability. For instance, Cambridgeshire County Council has declared a climate and environment emergency.

UK Government Context

The UK Parliament approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency in 2019. The UK also became the first major economy in the world to set a legally-binding net zero greenhouse gas emissions target of 2050. Although this date is several decades away, the Trust will need to set out how it will contribute to achieving the target.

In 2021, the UK Government issued the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, announcing that a white paper would be brought forward covering sustainability and climate change in the education sector. In April 2022, the DfE published this white paper; a summary is shown below in *Table 1*. This white paper highlights DfE's expectations of sustainability action in the education sector, and its content should act as a guide for the Trust. The DfE is frequently publishing new guidance and support, available online.

Vision <i>The UK will become a world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030.</i>	
Strategic aims	Action areas
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellence in education and skills for a changing world: preparing all young people for a world impacted by climate change through learning and practical experience. 2. Net zero: reducing direct and indirect emissions from education and care buildings, driving innovation to meet legislative targets and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage practically in the transition to net zero. 3. Resilience to climate change: adapting our education and care buildings and system to prepare for the effects of climate change. 4. A better environment for future generations: enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality and increasing access to, and connection with, nature in and around education and care settings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about the natural environment. • Support for teaching. • Learning in the natural environment. 2. Green skills and careers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net zero strategy. • Additional support for green jobs and skills. • Support and guidance for green careers. 3. Education estate and digital infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New blocks and new builds. • Existing estate. • Resilience, adaption, access to Nature and environmental conditions. • Heating solutions. • Water strategy. • Reporting frameworks, reporting processes and targets. 4. Operations and supply chains. 5. International.

Table 1 – Summary of DfE white paper (April 2022)

5. Trust Vision

The Trust Board acknowledges the damage that humankind has had on the natural environment and declares a climate and ecological emergency. It realises the urgency with which sustainability action is required. **Therefore, the Trust’s vision is to become a model of sustainability within the education sector, fostering empowered leaders across its community to shape a more sustainable world.**

In framing its vision, the Trust has decided to mirror those set out by the DfE above:

- 1. Excellence in education and skills for a changing world:**
 - To promote the benefits of environmental sustainability, social responsibility and climate change within and beyond our academies.
 - To train our staff:
 - To understand the imperative of action in this area.
 - To deliver high quality sustainability education / be comfortable discussing issues with pupils.
 - To equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills and mindset they need to play a positive role in supporting environmental sustainability and tackling climate change.
 - Ensure pupils have the opportunity to participate practically in both supporting and leading sustainability developments at both individual school and whole Trust level.
 - Educate pupils about green career opportunities.

2. **Net zero:**

- To reduce consumption of energy, water and physical products.
- To reduce our carbon emissions across scopes 1, 2 and 3, using data to set accurate targets to reach net zero.
- To limit business travel where possible and encourage sustainable travel among staff and pupils.
- To increase the efficiency of the buildings and infrastructure across the estate, including water efficiency, and ensure all users are aware of behaviours required to maintain energy efficiency.
- To increase the proportion of plant based, sustainably and ethically sourced menu choices and work with suppliers to reduce energy consumption and waste in our kitchens.
- To include sustainability criteria as part of all procurement processes and to seek to procure goods and services from suppliers with robust and ambitious environmental management, corporate social responsibility and net zero plans in place.

3. **Resilience to climate change:**

- To increase the resilience of school buildings, grounds and community to the demands of a changing climate, ie, flooding, extreme cold and excessive heat, in order to ensure that education is unaffected by climate change and severe weather.

4. **A better environment for future generations:**

- To increase biodiversity across the MAT estate and ensure grounds maintenance supports this aim.
- To improve air quality
- To improve access to, and connection with, nature in and around our estate.
- To reduce production of waste, the proportion being sent to landfill and increase re-use and recycling.

6. **Delivery, accountability and governance**

The strategic aims set out “what” the Trust hopes to achieve. The delivery of these strategic aims will be delegated to each school as far as possible, with structures in place to ensure accountability. The Trust will also play an important role to guide and coordinate action, aid knowledge sharing and innovation, and provide further resources. There will be some aspects on which only the Trust can make progress on, e.g. procurement, capital expenditure. This section specifies the responsibilities of each school, and the Trust.

School-level

Each school will nominate a sustainability lead. Whilst Headteachers hold ultimate responsibility, the sustainability lead will be responsible for creating, and overseeing the delivery, of the school sustainability action plan. This should detail how progress will be made towards each of the Trust sustainability strategic aims over the course of the short (<1 year) and medium-long term. There will be no prescribed format for this sustainability action plan, but schools may wish to follow the format of the exemplar can be found in *Appendix A*. In some schools, the most appropriate format for the short-term plan may be as a section contained within the larger school development plan. The sustainability action plan should be published on the school’s website and shared with the central Trust.

Each school’s Local Advisory Body will nominate a governor with oversight for sustainability. They will liaise with the school sustainability lead, and others as appropriate. The primary source of accountability will come toward the end of the academic year, when each school, through its sustainability lead, will report on

progress against their sustainability action plan. In this way, the Local Advisory Body and Trust Board will be able to monitor progress. Again, there will be no prescribed format for this report, but an exemplar can be found in *Appendix B*. This report should be added to the school's website.

Trust-level

The Trust will identify an officer with responsibility for sustainability. They will provide leadership at an operational level. This will involve:

- Supporting schools with their sustainability efforts as detailed above (e.g. developing an action plan).
- Leading a central Trust sustainability operations group to include representatives from finance, procurement and estate management; the aim of this group will be to make progress on issues not possible at a school-level.
- Convening and leading meetings of school sustainability leads.
- Supporting schools with knowledge sharing through the sharing of good practice, both from within and outside the Trust.
- Overseeing the creation and maintenance of the central Trust sustainability action plan.
- Updating the Board, and Community and Partnerships committee, on Trust-wide progress.

The Trust will also seek to appoint Curriculum Leads who will fulfil a similar role to other cross-Trust subject leads, facilitating sharing of ideas and resources between schools.

The Board will identify a trustee with oversight for sustainability. They will ensure primarily ensure clarity of vision and strategic direction, as well as holding leaders accountable. They will liaise frequently with Trust officer.

The anticipated relationship between the school-level and trust-level governance arrangement is shown below.

