

Climate Action Plan

Executive summary

All schools are required to have a Climate Action Plan and designated Sustainability Lead in place by September 2025 to ensure schools' active contribution to future sustainability and climate action.

The Project Manager is the designated sustainability lead for Caroline Chisholm School (CCS) and is responsible for development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan. A Climate Action Group involving staff and student representatives will be assembled early in 2026 to connect with the school's new strategic framework.

Work will take place during terms 1-3 to determine which climate actions will be prioritised from the DfE's four key themes:

- decarbonisation;
- biodiversity;
- adaptation and resilience;
- climate education.

1. Background

The Department for Education's (DfE) [strategy](#) for sustainability and climate change introduced requirements for all schools to:

- have a Climate Action Plan in place by 2025;
- have a designated Sustainability Lead in place by 2025;
- align with Government climate strategy.

Climate action plans must detail how the school will address climate change and improve sustainability, including approaches for decarbonisation, enhancing biodiversity, adaptation and resilience, and climate education for staff and students. The designated Sustainability Lead must be appointed to oversee planning, implementation and monitoring of the school's Climate Action Plan. The purpose of introducing these requirements is to ensure schools' active contribution to future sustainability and climate action. Other Government strategy themes for schools to align with include net zero, green careers, and improving the environment for future generations.

CCS resides at The Wooldale Centre for Learning, which is a privately funded PFI site maintained by Mitie. The site is also used during evenings, weekends and holidays for community hire that is organised by Kajima Community outside CCS's control.

2. Leading on sustainability

The Project Manager is the designated sustainability lead for CCS and is responsible for development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The Project Manager reports to the Vice Principal (Operations) on progress and issue escalation for climate action, and facilitates collaboration with colleagues and student leaders.

A Climate Action Group involving staff and student representatives will be assembled early in 2026 to connect with the school's new strategic framework.

3. Developing the plan

Work will take place during terms 1-3 to determine which climate actions will be prioritised.

Analysing our current impact (Term 1)

The site's current measures will be compiled to help the group understand areas needing work and to provide a baseline for measuring the success of future work. Metrics include:

- energy consumption (Mitie PFI reports);
- overall waste, recycling and landfill avoidance (Mitie PFI reports);
- food waste (Mitie PFI reports);
- paper towel consumption (Mitie site team);
- printing paper consumption (Curriculum Support team);
- air quality (new observation exercise using CO2 monitors);
- litter (new observation exercise to measure mass);
- attitudes to climate and sustainability (survey).

Identifying opportunities to improve (Term 2-3)

The group will reflect on the compiled data to identify priority areas for improvement. This will also be informed by desktop research and collaboration that explores other schools' insights and ideas. The group will establish goals for each of the four main areas (decarbonisation, biodiversity, adaptation and resilience, and climate education) and engage student leaders to establish young people's ideas for helping achieve those goals.

Agreeing actions (Term 3)

The group will consider the ideas put forward for each goal and will help the Project Manager develop the action plan (action, owner, date, measure) and a new Climate Calendar with key dates for initiatives and events related to the action plan. These actions and dates will be integrated into the whole school calendar and into teams' plans where appropriate.

4. Decarbonising

Decarbonisation is one of the four main climate action themes as it involves reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Mitie has implemented measures that support this, such as replacing traditional lightbulbs with more efficient LED lighting. Meanwhile, gas consumption in 2024-25 exceeded both the year's targets and the previous five years' average despite comparatively warm weather, suggesting work is needed to reduce the site's carbon emissions. The group will consider where goals and action are merited for areas like:

- energy usage (lights off, power off, doors closed, after hours use);
- energy efficiency (LED, boilers, smart meters, monitoring, high-use areas);
- resource usage and recycling (e.g. single use plastics, curriculum resources);

- food waste (monitoring, education, Chartwells theme weeks);
- paper waste (paper towels, printing paper, demand, behaviours);
- litter;
- transport emissions (bikeability, walk to school, electric vehicle charging stations, climate impact consideration for off-site events like trips, visits and conferences);
- linking with the PFI Handback project to integrate decarbonisation work into the pre-handback plans and the maintenance plans for 2030-2035.

5. Developing biodiversity

The school was developed on a site with three sides bordered by green land. Much of this surrounding land is undergoing planning applications for the Wootton Valley development, with the potential for continuing changes to the local environment. The site includes two Forest School areas – both of which are home to protected newt species. CCS Friends recently funded a new sheltered area in the Primary / Early Years area to encourage greater use of Forest School learning. The group will consider opportunities for developing both biodiversity itself and young people's awareness of its importance, which might include:

- further investment in Forest School facilities and volunteer maintenance of these;
- tree planting (within and outside the site boundaries);
- developing more garden areas that attract wildlife;
- extra-curricular gardening activities, potentially including food production;
- grounds maintenance changes (e.g. no-mow-May, wild zones);
- participation in biodiversity forums and groups (e.g. Education Nature Park).

6. Adapting and developing resilience

The school is situated beside a river that flooded in 2018, causing substantial disruption for the school and its community users. Using flood as an example, adaptation concerns proactive adjustments that reduce the effects of flooding caused by climate change, such as groundworks that divert flood water away from the building. Resilience meanwhile, involves being well prepared to withstand a flood event with minimal disruption, such as sharing robust emergency plans with staff, students and parents/carers. The group will connect with the whole school community and its partners to consider the merits of initiatives like:

- engagement with Gallagher and local authorities to understand the impact of new developments on the surrounding environment and to identify beneficial measures to be collaborated upon (e.g. eco design, allotment usage);
- collaboration with the local authority and PFI group to identify and implement flood prevention measures, such as river culvert maintenance and groundworks;
- solutions for harvesting rainwater that can be used in grounds maintenance (and reduce volumes entering drainage systems);
- monitoring and reporting of CO₂ and temperature levels;
- shade for relief during extreme hot weather (shade sails, trees);
- adaptations for extreme hot weather (clothing expectations, outdoor event risk assessment, cooling measures, drinking habits, outdoor behaviours);
- competitions that engage young people and the wider community to develop adaptations and resilience.

7. Educating our community

Learning about - and learning in - the natural environment

Student-facing members of the group will reflect on the existing curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities provided for this theme and will coordinate any work detailed in the action plan to improve this, which might include:

- individual subjects' scheme of work content;
- cross-curricular content;
- assembly content and expert guest speakers;
- class / tutor time theme discussions (e.g. Picture News);
- national and global events content (e.g. Food Waste Action Week, Recycling Week);
- outdoor learning, such as Forest School and gardening lessons;
- extra-curricular and volunteering initiatives;
- connection with careers education to promote green careers.

Supporting staff learning

The Assistant Principal responsible for staff professional development will be invited to join the group in reflecting on survey insights about staff attitudes and agreeing any proposals deemed appropriate for developing staff knowledge and understanding. This might include individual and whole school training and/or engagement with middle leaders where needed.

Learning with our wider community

It could be argued that climate action might have a greater impact on young people's attitudes, choices and behaviours if this is experienced as a community-wide initiative and not a 'bolt-on' discussed only in the classroom. The action plan will consider ways for young people to recognise advocacy beyond the school site. To do this, the group will consider opportunities for engaging the wider community in its climate action work, which might include:

- direct communication to parents and carers;
- social media communication to CCS followers;
- local (and possibly national) media to promote initiatives and celebrate successes;
- engaging with cluster schools for cluster-wide collaboration on climate action;
- collaboration with trustees, local authorities, businesses and community groups;
- creating opportunities to volunteer and participate in climate action initiatives.

Developing the climate curriculum

The table in appendix A outlines which students are learning which aspects of climate and sustainability for each term. School leaders will determine the approach and timings for reviewing subjects' curricula and identifying if there are any suitable opportunities for new cross-curricular connections and initiatives.

8. Schedule

Phase	Milestone	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T1
Research	Establish action group	Sep						
	Share insights report		Nov					
Plan	Student leaders exercise			Feb				
	Present proposals to Principal			Feb				
	Agree plan			Feb				
Prepare, Launch	Decarbonisation highlights TBD				.....	.....	.....
	Biodiversity highlights TBD				.....	.....	.....
	Adaptation highlights TBD				.....	.....	.....
	Education highlights TBD				.....	.....	.....
Evaluate	Share evaluation report							Sep
	Agree plans for 2026-27							Sep

The group will also develop a Climate Calendar that includes the dates of key school and international events concerning climate action to help encourage cohesion, awareness and linked learning. The calendar will not necessarily mark every international climate-related date but will instead focus on selecting a manageable number of occasions relevant to the school's Climate Action Plan goals.

Term	CCS existing planned dates	Other potential calendar days
1 Sep-Oct	Recycling Week (PSHE, Oct) Big Health and Happiness Week? World Food Day - assembly	World Clean Up Day (Sep) No Disposable Cup Day (Oct)
2 Nov-Dec	World Diabetes Day – assembly	Switch Off Fortnight (Nov) Carbon Literacy Day (Dec)
3 Jan-Feb		Veganuary (Jan) Food Waste Action Week (Feb)
4 Mar-Apr	British Science Week – assembly Earth Day – assembly	Global Recycling Day (Mar) Earth Month (Apr)
5 Apr-May		Meat Free May
6 Jun-Jul	CCS Friends uniform donation station World Ocean Day - assembly	Great Big Green Week (Jun) Plastic Free July
Summer		Site works (e.g. EV charging)

Appendix A - climate curriculum content

Term	Year	Subject and topic	Source
1 Sep-Oct	7	RS: animal/meat ethics	Unit 7.6 Do we have....
	7	English: Thunberg (climate)	Unit One – Y7 Drama
	10	Science: non/renewable energies	SOL [P4.2]
	10	Geography: climate change	OCR
	11	English: 'The Big Smoke'	Unit 1
	11	Business: ethics, envt and business	2.1 SOW [lessons 9-12]
	11	Science: climate change – atmosphere	SOL [C5.3]
	12	Travel: factors affecting travel & tour.	BTEC spec, D – Factors...
	13	Geography: Earth Life support system	A Level Geo H481 Spec
	7-13	PSHE: Recycle Week	Recycle Week
2 Nov-Dec	7	Geography: atmosphere (Our planet)	KS3 G Mastery Cur Frmwk
	10	Science: material cycling	SOL [B4.3]
	10	Science: energy conservation, global warming, renewable energies	SOL [P4.2]
	12	Business: env't issues, envt objectives	AQA [3.1.3, 3.4.1]
	13	Business: CSR, green audits	AQA [3.7.3]
3 Jan-Feb	8	Science: climate change – human impact on climate, biodiversity	SOL [C2.3, B3.2]
	9		
	7	Science: biodiversity & conservation	SOL [B3.2, B1.3]
	9		
	8	History: industrial impact (pollution)	TBA
4 Mar-Apr	8	Science: pollution, using resources, carbon footprint	SOL [C3.3, C2.3]
	9		
	8	Geography: climate change	KS3 G Mastery Cur Frmwk
	8	English: drought (Dharker)	Unit 4 – Year 8
	9	Science: sustainable resources	SOL [C3.3]
	10	Science: metals extraction, recycling	SOL [C4.2]
5 Apr-May	10	French: global environmental issues, protecting the envt, technology solutions for envt	French SoW
		German: environmental issues	German SoW
		Spanish: climate change, helping the envt, environmental issues	Spanish SoW
	10	Computing: impacts of digi tech (e-waste, energy consumption, resource depletion)	OCR J277: T2 Env...
	11		
6 Jun-Jul	9	Science: non/renewable energies, sustainable supply	SOL [P3.4]
	9	RS: evil (human envt impact – brief)	Unit 9.1 Problem of Evil
	10	Science: ecology, adaptation	SOL [B4.5]

Term TBA	10	Science: food security, waste	SOL [B4.5]
	12	Philosophy: ethics of eating animals	Philosophy Curriculum Grid
	12	Psychology: social change	Psychology Curriculum Planning
	13	Law: right to protest	Law Curriculum Grid
	13	Sociology: green crime	Sociology Curric. Planning
	13	Criminology: climate action	Criminology Curriculum Grid
	TBD	DT – info pending	
	TBD	Food – info pending	
	Y3	PSHE – relationships (global citizen)	Jigsaw (3-11)
	Y4	PSHE – changing me (envt change)	Jigsaw (3-11)
	Y6	PSHE – my world (global citizen)	Jigsaw (3-11)