

ACE Schools Climate Action Plan 2025–2030

(Working Document)

1. Introduction and Context

ACE Schools is a multi-site Alternative Provision and Health & Welfare provider operating across Plymouth, Devon, and Cornwall. We work with children aged 5–19, many with complex needs, high levels of disadvantage, and significant barriers to education.

The DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022) requires all schools to designate a sustainability lead and to have a Climate Action Plan in place by the start of the 2025–26 academic year. ACE recognises its responsibility to prepare young people for a sustainable future while also reducing the Trust’s environmental footprint.

Our circumstances are unique:

- We operate across a wide geographical area with sites in three counties.
- Only three sites are owned by ACE Schools; the remainder are leased, hospital-based, or shared spaces, limiting the scope for major capital interventions.
- Our transient pupil population (approx. 300% turnover annually) means we must balance sustainability goals with practical, flexible, short-term provision.

Despite these challenges, ACE Schools is committed to embedding sustainability in everything we do — from curriculum delivery and careers guidance to day-to-day operations and staff culture.

2. Our Vision and Ambition

- To contribute meaningfully to the UK’s 2050 net zero target.
- To ensure pupils develop the knowledge, skills, and agency to live sustainably.
- To promote biodiversity, wellbeing, and resilience across our sites and communities.
- To work collaboratively with Local Authorities, NHS partners, and building owners to maximise environmental improvements within our leased and hospital-based environments.

3. Leadership and Governance

- Sustainability Lead: [Christine McNamara – Assistant Headteacher, ACE Schools]
- Estates Support: [Clinton Bray/Holly Griffiths]
- Curriculum & Careers Lead: [Multiple Curriculum Leads and Rachel Illingworth - CEIAG]
- Local Leads: Each site will nominate a Sustainability Champion.
- Trust Board Oversight: TBC.

The Climate Action Plan will be reviewed by the Sustainability Lead and reported annually to the Board.

4. DfE Climate Action Pillars – ACE Commitments

a) Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency

- Baseline energy use across the three ACE-owned sites by July 2026.
- Install smart meters in owned sites; encourage landlords to do the same.
- Introduce “Switch Off Fortnight” annually, led by pupils.
- Procurement policy to favour energy-efficient appliances.
- Explore opportunities for renewable energy partnerships on owned sites.

b) Adaptation and Resilience

- Explore a Trust Heatwave Policy.
- Flood and overheating risk assessments completed for ACE-owned sites.
- Ensure staff and pupils understand climate-linked wellbeing risks (e.g. hydration, safe travel).

c) Biodiversity and Nature

- Expand Forest School at Poole Farm
- Develop biodiversity projects on owned sites: wildflower planting, vegetable beds, “green walls”.
- Encourage student-led eco projects (bird feeders, bug hotels, recycling schemes).

d) Climate Education, Green Skills and Careers

- Embed climate and sustainability themes into PSHE, Science and Humanities.
- Develop pupil voice projects on sustainability (e.g. “ACE Eco Council”).
- Partner with local colleges, training providers and employers to expose pupils to green careers pathways.
- Provide staff CPD on climate literacy.

e) Travel & Fleet (AP/Outreach Focus)

- Baseline ACE minibus use and staff outreach mileage; pilot route-planning and journey consolidation.
- Encourage active travel where appropriate and safe; promote car-share options for staff where feasible.

f) Waste, Water & Circular Procurement

- Apply the waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, repair, recycle; rationalise printing and single-use items.
- Introduce basic water-use checks on owned sites; work with landlords on water efficiency for leased/hospital sites.

- Implement a device lifecycle approach (repair/reuse before replace) and include sustainability criteria in purchasing.

g) Engagement & Publication

- Publish this CAP on the ACE website; share termly progress snapshots with staff and stakeholders.
- Join national networks (e.g., Let's Go Zero) to access shared resources and PRU/AP-relevant practice.
- Create pupil voice showcases to celebrate micro-projects completed by short-stay cohorts.

5a. Headline Targets (2025 Baseline unless stated)

- Energy: -10% electricity use in owned sites by July 2027 vs. 2025 baseline.
- Participation: 100% sites deliver at least one biodiversity micro-project per academic year.
- Climate Literacy: 90% staff complete climate-CPD by Sept 2027.
- Travel: -10% per-capita outreach mileage by July 2027 (where operationally safe and appropriate).

5. Actions and Timescales (2025–2028)

Priority	Action	Timescale	Lead	Measure of Success
Energy Use	Baseline energy and carbon footprint (owned sites)	By July 2026	Estates	Report produced, shared with Trustees
Awareness	Launch “Switch Off Fortnight” across all sites	Nov 2025	Site Champions	Termly energy reduction results
Biodiversity	Planters/green zones in all bases	Ongoing 2026–28	Site Leads	Visual improvements; staff/pupil feedback
Curriculum	Sustainability CPD for staff	On-going 2026 - 2028	CPD Lead	80% staff climate literacy confidence
Pupil Voice	Establish ACE Eco Council	Jan 2026	Sustainability Lead	At least one project per year

6. Monitoring and Review

- Updates shared with staff.
- Annual review presented to Trustees.
- Impact measured via:
 - Energy usage reductions.
 - Biodiversity and green space evidence.
 - Pupil/staff surveys on awareness.
 - Student projects and curriculum outcomes.

7. Conclusion

This Climate Action Plan is a living document, designed to grow and evolve with ACE Schools. While we face constraints around buildings and pupil turnover, our ambition is clear: to embed sustainability in our ethos, our curriculum, and our daily practices — preparing our young people not only for successful futures, but also to be active contributors to a sustainable society.