



# EMPOWERING SCHOOLS TO ACT ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

[camdencca.org/school-climate-charter](http://camdencca.org/school-climate-charter)



# ABOUT THE CHARTER

The School Climate Charter is a local framework to empower schools to play their part in the delivery of Camden's ambition to be a zero-carbon borough by 2030. Signatories of this Charter commit to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency and take action to contribute to addressing it in line with the [Camden Climate Action Plan 2020-2025](#).

As part of signing the charter, schools encouraged to take action as:

- educators, your school will commit to teaching our young people to be environmentally literate and to develop their knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence to practice and promote sustainability at school and in their community.
- organisations, your school will commit to ensuring any decisions you make around managing our premises, purchasing goods and managing resources and waste, take into account their impact on the environment, and will adopt sustainable practices wherever possible.





# CHARTER COMMITMENTS

The charter consists of 10 commitments covering a wide range of sustainability topics relevant to schools. Signatories will be encouraged to set targets as they work through the charter. In year one, signatories are expected to address, at least, three of the ten commitments below.

- 1 Sustainability and the curriculum** - Embed sustainability across the curriculum to ensure students are well informed and actively contributing to tackling the climate crisis in all aspects of their lives.
- 2 Single-use plastics** - Significantly reduce the use of single-use plastic with the aim of becoming a single-use plastic free school.
- 3 Waste** - Consider the waste hierarchy in the delivery of school services and activities. The waste hierarchy is made up of 5Rs: Refuse - Reduce - Reuse - Repurpose - Recycle.

- 4 Food** - Educate students about the benefits of eating less meat and offer plant-based options as part of the daily menu. Raise awareness of food waste, food miles, food production methods and food from different cultures.
- 5 Transport** - Promote active ways of travelling to school including cycling, walking and public transport.
- 6 Energy** - Raise awareness about different sources of energy, the associated carbon emissions, and how we can all contribute to reducing our energy consumption.
- 7 Procurement and circular economy** - Use your purchasing power to favour sustainable and ethical products and services. Examples include energy, stationery, food and cleaning products.

- 8 Re-wilding/biodiversity** - Rewild your outdoor spaces for the benefit of increasing biodiversity, clean air, and student well-being. This could include, depending on available space, a forest garden, an orchard, a wildlife meadow, a hedgerow, a vegetable plot, or even a simple window box.
- 9 Make climate action fun and engaging** - Ensure activities and projects involve the whole school community (students, staff and parents/representatives) and are presented in a positive and fun way.
- 10 Climate justice** - Twin with a school from another part of the world that is already experiencing the effects of the climate crisis. Link to the cultures represented in your school and explore how the climate crisis is affecting people in other parts of the world.

# SIGNING THE CHARTER



## 1. SIGN THE SCHOOL CLIMATE CHARTER

Complete the School Climate Charter online form by following this link: [sign the school climate charter](#). By completing the form you will be committing to declare a climate and ecological crisis.

When completing the form you will have the opportunity to share what your school is already doing around the charter commitments. You will also become a member of the Camden Climate Change Alliance, for free, which will give you access to a wealth of resources and support.

## 2. PUBLICALLY ANNOUNCE YOUR DECLARATION

Signatories will be published on the [Camden Climate Change Alliance \(CCCA\)](#) website and will be provided with a certificate with details of your declaration.

We encourage all signatories to make a public announcement on their school website and share the news with the whole school community.

## 3. SET TARGETS

Signatories will be encouraged to set targets under the Charter's commitments. Not all areas will need to be addressed at the same time as the focus should be on the school's current sustainability priorities. We expect the school to address 3 of the 10 charter commitments during year one.

## 4. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

The ultimate aim of the School Climate Charter is to create meaningful and sustainable climate action in schools and therefore, the ultimate aim of signing the

charter is for schools to take action to tackle the ecological and climate crisis.

Check out Transform our World's Climate Action Planner for schools, a recently launched interactive tool to support you in developing a climate action plan. Follow the link for more information: [School Climate Action Planner](#).

## 5. SHARE PROGRESS AND BEST PRACTICE

Successful sustainability activities and projects in your school can serve as inspiration and set an example for other schools to follow. We will encourage signatories to access existing platforms such as the [Sustainability Peer Support Group](#) and the [School Sustainability e-Bulletin](#) which we developed during the pandemic and have proved to be successful channels to nurture sustainability in schools.

# IDEAS AND RESOURCES

The Camden Climate Charter is a platform to bring schools together to tackle the ecological and climate crisis. It is not intended to be another sustainability framework to design and deliver climate action.

We know that many schools across the borough are already taking action to protect the environment and tackle the climate crisis. Many schools are following well recognised and helpful frameworks such as Eco-schools, STARS and Sustainable Development Goals, and we will encourage you to continue to use those which you find most useful when planning and delivering climate action in your school. There is more information on general resources at the end of the document.

Nonetheless, we have pulled together a brief list of facts, actions and resources for each of the charter commitments as a starting point to inspire you and support your sustainability journey.

The charter commitment information sheets are structured under three headings:



## DID YOU KNOW?

Facts and statistics highlighting the subject.



## ACTIONS

A selection of actions to address the specific commitment.



## LINKS

Links signposting to relevant resources.

# 1

# SUSTAINABILITY AND THE CURRICULUM

Embed sustainability across the curriculum to ensure students are well informed and actively contributing to tackling the climate crisis in all aspects of their lives.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Research increasingly shows that schools using sustainability principles help their pupils to develop positive attitudes to their futures as well as their own learning. This means they are more likely to be better behaved, are more engaged in class and attain better results.
- Practising sustainability empowers children to construct knowledge, explore values and develop an appreciation of the environment and its relationship to their worlds. This lays the foundations for environmentally responsible adulthood.

## ACTIONS

1. Find creative ways to synergise environmental themes across all lesson plans. eg: 'Plant Plus', food recipes in Creative Writing. Climate activism in Art. Future energy systems in Physics. Grassroots campaigning in Citizenship. Waste in DT, etc.
2. Incorporate 'Climate convos' into form time discussions.
3. Create a climate-themed drop-down day.
4. Link different school subjects, areas and projects to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Add embedding sustainability into all job descriptions and staff reviews.
6. Encourage spending time in nature, greening the space available at your school.

## LINKS

[Sustainability Resources](#)

[WWF COP26 Resources](#)

[COP26 UK GOV Resources](#)

[Greenpeace Resources for Young People](#)

[Sustainability Exchange Teaching Resources](#)

[www.hopes-sustain.org](http://www.hopes-sustain.org)

[Climate Futures | STEM](#)







# SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Significantly reduce the use of single-use plastic with the aim of becoming a single-use plastic free school.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Plastics don't really break down; they just break up over time into microplastics that end up in the water, eaten by wildlife, and inside our bodies.
- We produce roughly 300 million tons of plastic each year and half of it is disposable! That's nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population.
- World-wide only 10-13% of plastic items are recycled.
- It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans by weight.
- Ocean microplastic outnumbers plankton (the base of the entire marine food web) by 6 to 1.



## ACTIONS

1. Encourage students to carry a reusable water bottle everywhere.
2. Raise awareness about waste related to snacks (which are normally harder to recycle).
3. Develop a culture of single-use plastic-free pack lunches.
4. Work with your caterer to reduce/eliminate single-use plastic from school meals.
5. Teach students about how to reduce/eliminate single-use plastics at home.



## LINKS

[9 reasons to refuse single-use plastic - Less Plastic](#)

[Bring your reusable campaign](#)

[Friends of the Earth Plastic Free Campaigning](#)

[Plastic Free Period Advice](#)

# 3

# WASTE

Consider the waste hierarchy in the delivery of school services and activities.  
The waste hierarchy is made up of 5Rs: Refuse - Reduce - Reuse - Repurpose - Recycle.

## ?

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The world's richest countries consume 10 times as many materials as the poorest.
- Recycling at school can establish green behaviours that will last a lifetime, both at school and home.
- Recycling and waste reduction can help your school to save money.
- In Camden, Veolia provides free food recycling to all state schools.
- Extending the average life of clothes by just 3 months per item, to 2.5 years would lead to a 5-10% reduction in carbon, water and waste footprints.
- Research shows that Brits can save over 224,695 tonnes of CO2 emissions from shopping second-hand.

## 👉

### ACTIONS

1. Apply the 5Rs as a key principle in all that the school does (Refuse - Reduce - Reuse - Repurpose - Recycle).
2. Establish an effective recycling scheme that reduces landfill waste and educate students about the value of resources.
3. Reduce paper consumption by using paper wisely (printing only when necessary and printing on both sides) and replacing paper communications with electronic channels.
4. Run second-hand sales, or swaps, around popular items such as books, clothes and school uniforms.
5. Run repairing and upcycling projects around items such as electronics, clothes, bikes, etc.

## 🔗

### LINKS

[www.recycle-more.co.uk](http://www.recycle-more.co.uk)

[www.wastebuster.co.uk](http://www.wastebuster.co.uk)

[www.keepbritaintidy.org/how-eco-schools-can-help-deliver-carbon-reductions](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/how-eco-schools-can-help-deliver-carbon-reductions)

[www.recyclenow.com/schools](http://www.recyclenow.com/schools)

[www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades](http://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades)





# 4

# FOOD

Educate students about the benefits of eating less meat and offer plant-based options as part of the daily menu. Raise awareness of food waste, food miles, food production methods and food from different cultures.

## QUESTION MARK **DID YOU KNOW?**

- Food production is responsible for one-quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. 14.5% of global greenhouse gases are caused by meat and dairy production.
- You can reduce two thirds of your carbon emissions by cutting animal products off your diet.
- Beef, Lamb and cheese produce 3 times more CO2 compared to poultry and pork.
- Plant-based milk generates less than half the amount of CO2 emissions compared with animal milk.
- In the UK, we throw away 6.6 million tonnes of household food waste a year, almost three quarters is food we could have eaten.
- 4.5 millions tons of edible food is wasted by UK households in a year, worth £14 billion.
- £700 of food a year is wasted by an average family with children in the UK.



## HAND CURSOR **ACTIONS**

1. Introduce plant-based options as part of the daily canteen offer.
2. Reduce/eliminate food packaging, particularly single-use plastics including plastic bottles (both from the canteen and packed lunches).
3. Offer Fairtrade-certified products as part of the canteen snacks.
4. Grow food on the school grounds, even if this is mainly for educational purposes.
5. Reduce food waste both by working with your catering provider and educating students. Compost any unavoidable food waste, it is FREE in your Veolia contract.



### LINKS

Love food hate waste: [Love Food Hate Waste |](#)

School food matters: [Why Sustainable Food? | School Food Matters](#)

WWF Food growing resources: [Food growing resources and activities | WWF](#)

# 5

# TRANSPORT/CLEAN AIR

Promote active ways of travelling to school including cycling, walking and public transport.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Increased physical activity contributes to students physical and mental wellbeing
- The average journey to school is less than one kilometre, that's around a 10-minute walk.
- Closing the roads around schools to traffic at pick-up and drop-off times has been shown to reduce polluting nitrogen dioxide levels by up to 23%.
- Idling for a 30 second period produces nearly twice as much pollution as switching off then restarting the engine.
- Leaving engines running while stationary is simply an unnecessary source of air pollution, it is also illegal.

## ACTIONS

1. Participate in the STARS programme to help your pupils travel to school sustainably, actively and responsibly.
2. Work with the Council to implement a healthy school street, to close the road your school is on to traffic during drop off and pick up times.
3. Run an anti-idling campaign to stop cars idling outside your school gates.
4. Help your pupils learn about cycling proficiency by taking advantage of Camden Council's free cycling training courses.
5. Engage staff members to change the way they travel to school to become more sustainable (car-sharing, using public transport, cycling etc.)

## LINKS

[stars.tfl.gov.uk](https://stars.tfl.gov.uk)

Play Streets [www.camden.gov.uk/play-streets](https://www.camden.gov.uk/play-streets)

[School travel plans - Camden Council](#)

[Cycle skills and bike maintenance courses - Camden Council](#)

[Cycle Skills - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://tfl.gov.uk)

Anti-idling [toolkits and comms materials](#)

[Clean Air Camden Initiative - Schools Resources](#)





# ENERGY



Raise awareness about different sources of energy, the associated carbon emissions, and how we can all contribute to reducing our energy consumption.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- 90% of carbon dioxide emissions in Camden come from heating and powering buildings.
- Gas heating will be the biggest source of CO2 emissions in Camden in 2030 and already accounts for 30% of local air pollution.
- Energy usage and energy bills are a large proportion of annual school expenditure.
- Small changes in behaviour can lead to significant cost savings on energy use.



## ACTIONS

1. Actively monitor and measure energy and water consumption, checking the accuracy of fuel bills.
2. Switch to a renewable energy supplier.
3. Include learning about energy and carbon emissions from buildings as part of the curriculum, involving pupils with monitoring and engagement, such as through the [Eco Schools](#), HOPES Sustainability, and [Less CO2 programmes](#)
4. Run a simple energy audit to identify potential areas of improvement and opportunities to implement cost-effective measures such as led lighting, draught-proofing windows, motion sensors, smart meters, amongst others.
5. Explore opportunities for installing renewable technologies through establishing local community energy projects such as [Power Up North London](#) or utilising existing schemes such as [solar for schools](#).



## LINKS

[www.lessco2.org.uk](http://www.lessco2.org.uk)

[www.letsgozero.org](http://www.letsgozero.org)

[www.solarforschools.co.uk](http://www.solarforschools.co.uk)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools)

[Home](#) | [Energy Sparks](#)



# 7

# SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT/ CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Use your purchasing power to favour sustainable and ethical products and services. Examples include energy, stationery, food and cleaning products.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- As a buyer of consumables, you have the power to ask your providers to comply with your sustainability principles.
- Sustainable procurement is used to ensure that purchasing reflects broader goals linked to resource efficiency, climate change, social responsibility and economic resilience.
- Sustainable procurement requires a higher degree of collaboration and engagement between all parties in a supply chain.
- Emissions resulting from sources outside of our control, for example, the products we buy, are referred to as indirect emissions or 'scope 3' emissions. Emissions from our procurement activity fall into this category.



## ACTIONS

1. Identify opportunities within your school to influence your supply chain and reduce your indirect emissions. Avoid long term inflexible contracts.
2. Source locally/ within the UK to reduce freight emissions.
3. Switch to a clean energy provider.
4. Choose sustainable stationery and ensure the paper you buy is certified by a recognised label.
5. Explore options to make eco-friendly uniforms available and accessible to students. Set up uniform clothes swaps.



## LINKS

- [Teaching Resources - Fairtrade Schools](#)
- [Refurbished Furniture - Rype Office](#)
- [What is the Circular Economy - WRAP](#)





# REWILDING/BIODIVERSITY



Rewild your outdoor spaces for the benefit of increasing biodiversity, clean air, and student well-being. This could include, depending on available space, a forest garden, an orchard, a wildlife meadow, a hedgerow, a vegetable plot, or even a simple window box. Every little bit of school space matters!



## DID YOU KNOW?

- No matter how small your available green space is, there are lots of biodiverse planting options that will both improve your outdoor space and contribute to supporting local fauna.
- Water features from ponds to a sink are great spaces for wildlife including frogs, newts and dragonflies as well as many types of birds.
- Dense vegetation can reduce noise pollution as well as improve air quality by capturing small particulate matter.
- Government evidence proves that connecting students to nature has a direct benefit to both learning and well-being. You can apply for FREE fruit trees from [camdenforest2025.wordpress.com](https://camdenforest2025.wordpress.com) supported by KOKO.



## ACTIONS

1. Join the new Camden Beeline project. You will get free advice on how to rewild your school, no matter how little outside space you have, plus tree seeds/plants.
2. Increase trees, shrubs and other plants around the school perimeter – for example, what could you plant to screen the school grounds from roads or parked cars, or on unused space on the edges of playgrounds?
3. Support your local wildlife by installing birdbaths, feeders, bird houses, bat houses, hedgehog homes, mini ponds, amongst others.
4. Create an Edible Playground to inspire hands-on learning and get pupils excited about growing and eating healthy food.
5. Rewild the school's grounds by planting wildflower meadows or patches and introducing bee-friendly plants.



## LINKS

[Edible Playgrounds | Trees for Cities](#)

Access free trees for your schools:  
[camdenforest2025.wordpress.com](https://camdenforest2025.wordpress.com)

[Foodscape - Join our urban farms to grow your own veg](#)



# 9

# MAKE CLIMATE ACTION FUN AND ENGAGING

Ensure activities and projects involve the whole school community (students, staff and parents/representatives) and are presented in a positive and fun way.



## IDEAS AND ACTIONS

- Identify the school's environmental priorities.** Host a '[Climate Connectors' workshop](#) at your school. This workshop will foster collective insight, and inspire all members of staff to create sustainability projects, and 'barrier bust' challenges. For more info: [thinkanddocamden.org.uk](http://thinkanddocamden.org.uk)
- Empower students to act.** Create a student-led action group to help design and implement climate actions in your school.
- Encourage peer to peer learning.** Encourage climate lesson plans to be written by students themselves. Encourage older students to run discussion sessions with younger students.

- Run sustainability events.** Whole school events around the climate subject are a great way of encouraging participation and shared learning in a fun way. Examples include a green week, a series of student-led debates, clothes and toy swap events "swap shop not sweat shop!".
- Embark upon a [visioningcamden2030.com learning module](#).** "Let's create the future we want to see by envisioning it." See Kate Stockings learning module at Hampstead school: [Classroom Resources – Kate Stockings](#)
- Encourage and support upcycling projects** - Design and create an upcycling zone where you can run regular workshops to upcycle different goods such as electronics, clothes, furniture, toys, etc.

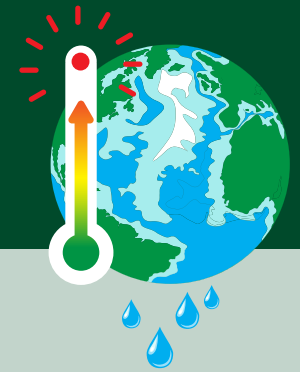
- What's on the menu?** Is it plastic....? Invite students to explore the food chain at your school and discuss alternatives.







# CLIMATE JUSTICE



Twin with a school from another part of the world that is already experiencing the effects of the climate crisis. Link to the cultures represented in your school and explore how the climate crisis is affecting people in other parts of the world.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly.
- Rising temperatures are fuelling environmental damage, creating food and water insecurity, and causing weather extremes that can have devastating effects on communities and people's lives.
- The UN estimates that weather emergencies influenced by climate change have forced on average about 21.5 million people to move every year since 2010.
- 90% of refugees now come from countries which are most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change.



## ACTIONS

1. Educate students on the global impacts of climate change, empowering them to understand that local actions have global impacts.
2. Consider links between students and their families or relatives that may have links to other parts of the world that are affected by Climate Change.
3. Start a school twinning with one from an area directly affected by climate change.
4. Start a climate justice club, encouraging campaigning, discussions and actions.
5. Embed climate justice into other activities relating to climate change.



## LINKS

[United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - Resources](#)

[Mary Robinson Climate Justice Foundation - Resources](#)

[Environmental Justice Atlas](#)

[Teach Climate Justice - Zinn Education Project Resources](#)

[Educators for Social Change Resources](#)  
[Resources | Trócaire \(trocaire.org\)](#)



# KEY GENERAL RESOURCES

There are a number of established frameworks to support schools in their efforts to implement climate actions.

## [Eco-Schools](#)

The Eco-Schools programme is a seven-step framework that empowers young people to introduce and lead environmental actions and education in their schools. It covers a huge range of sustainability issues including the climate crisis, plastic pollution and biodiversity loss amongst others. The framework can be adapted and used in any education setting whether nursery, primary, secondary, college, SEND settings or Pupil Referral Units.

## [Transform Our World](#)

Transform our world is a collaborative online hub that supports teachers in bringing environmental and social action into the classroom through showcasing quality-rated resources. It offers a free, easy-to-use digital tool -[Climate Action Planner](#)- to enable teachers, students and staff to identify actions they can take to reduce their school's environmental impact.

## [Teach Sustainable Development Goals](#)

TeachSDGs organisation connects global educators dedicated to responding to a call to action within education to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. They point to open and accessible resources, lessons plans, and global projects directly aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals.

## [ThoughtBox Education](#)

Join a global community of educators rethinking learning for a changing world

## [Green Schools Project](#)

Green schools project's mission is to enable young people to fulfil their potential by providing resources and support to schools to engage them in environmental projects, building their skills and aspirations while encouraging them, their community and wider society to live in a more sustainable way.

## [SEEd \(se-ed.co.uk\)](#)

SEEd has compiled a comprehensive list of online resources enabling and empowering children, young people, and adults to learn about sustainability and climate change at home. Alongside this are a host of resources for teachers of all key stages to aid in teaching

## [STARS – Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe](#)

STARS is TfL's accreditation scheme for London schools. STARS inspires young Londoners to travel to school sustainably, actively, responsibly and safely by championing walking, scooting and cycling. STARS supports pupils' wellbeing, helps to reduce congestion at the school gates and improve road safety and air quality.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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