SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP POLICY

Leading sustainably. Building resilience.
Preparing for the future.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's strategic approach to sustainability leadership. It explains how sustainability is embedded within leadership, decision-making, curriculum, operations and school improvement, and establishes the responsibilities and arrangements that support coordinated and effective action across the school.

Riverside Bridge School recognises its responsibility to promote environmental sustainability and to prepare pupils for life in a changing world. As a specialist school for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), we are committed to embedding sustainable thinking, responsible resource management and environmental stewardship throughout every aspect of school life.

We believe that sustainability extends beyond environmental protection. It encompasses the creation of safe, healthy and resilient learning environments, the responsible management of resources, and the development of the knowledge, skills and values that enable pupils to contribute positively to their communities and the wider world. Our approach reflects the Department for Education's expectation that education settings establish effective sustainability leadership and develop a Climate Action Plan that promotes resilience, biodiversity, climate education and the transition towards net zero. Sustainability is embedded within the school's Flow Curriculum, Preparation for Adulthood curriculum, BridgeWorks structured teaching approach and wider school improvement priorities. Through these approaches, pupils develop an understanding of the natural environment, learn practical life skills, and experience meaningful opportunities to participate in sustainable activities appropriate to their individual needs and developmental pathways. This policy establishes the strategic framework for sustainability leadership at Riverside Bridge School. The operational priorities, objectives and actions are set out within the school's Climate Action Plan, which is reviewed regularly to ensure that the school continues to respond effectively to environmental challenges and emerging national guidance.

Our responsibilities to pupils and the school community

Riverside Bridge School will:

- provide clear leadership and accountability for sustainability;
- maintain and regularly review a Climate Action Plan;
- embed sustainability within strategic planning, curriculum, operations and school improvement;
- provide accessible and meaningful opportunities for pupils to engage with sustainability;
- manage resources responsibly and seek to reduce the school's environmental impact;
- consider climate resilience, biodiversity and environmental sustainability within estate planning and development;
- engage staff, pupils, families, governors and partners in sustainability where appropriate;
- monitor progress and continually develop our approach in response to evidence, changing needs and national guidance.

Through these commitments, Riverside Bridge School aims to embed sustainability as a shared responsibility across leadership, learning and school operations. We will continue to strengthen environmental responsibility and climate resilience in ways that support high-quality education, pupil wellbeing and the long-term development of the school.

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APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

PURPOSE

Setting direction. Building resilience. Driving sustainable improvement.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the strategic framework through which Riverside Bridge School promotes environmental sustainability, climate resilience and responsible resource management across all aspects of school life.

The policy sets out the school's commitment to providing effective sustainability leadership, embedding sustainable practices within decision-making and ensuring that environmental responsibility supports the education, wellbeing and future aspirations of our pupils. It reflects the Department for Education's expectation that education settings nominate a Sustainability Lead and maintain a Climate Action Plan to coordinate and drive sustainability priorities.

This policy provides the governance framework for:

- establishing clear leadership and accountability for sustainability;
- embedding sustainability within the curriculum, school operations and strategic planning;
- promoting a whole-school approach that engages pupils, staff, families, governors and external partners;
- supporting compliance with relevant legislation and national guidance;
- driving continuous improvement through the implementation and monitoring of the school's Climate Action Plan.

The operational priorities, objectives and actions that support this policy are contained within the Riverside Bridge School Climate Action Plan, which is reviewed regularly to ensure the school continues to respond effectively to emerging environmental challenges, national guidance and the needs of the school community.

Section 02

LEGISLATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

Meeting expectations. Applying guidance. Supporting responsible practice.

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant legislation, Department for Education guidance and recognised good practice relating to sustainability, environmental management and climate resilience within education settings.

In particular, the policy reflects:

- Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended);
- Environment Act 2021;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015);
- Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy;
- Department for Education Sustainability Leadership and Climate Action Plans in Education guidance;
- Department for Education Good Estate Management for Schools guidance.

Although a Sustainability Leadership Policy is not a statutory requirement, the Department for Education expects education settings to establish effective sustainability leadership and maintain a Climate Action Plan as part of a whole-setting approach to environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

This policy should be read alongside the Riverside Bridge School Climate Action Plan and other related policies governing health and safety, estates management, educational visits, curriculum, procurement and business continuity.

Section 03

PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Thinking sustainably. Acting responsibly. Planning for the future.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to embedding sustainability as a core principle of effective leadership, education and school improvement. We recognise that environmental responsibility should support, rather than compete with, our primary purpose of providing high-quality education and care for pupils with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles.

- ✓ **Whole-school responsibility** - Sustainability is embedded across leadership, curriculum, estates management, procurement and daily practice, with all members of the school community contributing to environmental improvement.
- ✓ **Inclusive participation** - Sustainability initiatives are designed to be accessible, meaningful and appropriate for all pupils, regardless of their communication, cognitive, sensory or physical needs.
- ✓ **Education for the future** - Pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and experiences that enable them to understand the natural environment, make responsible choices and prepare for adulthood.
- ✓ **Environmental stewardship** - The school is committed to reducing its environmental impact through responsible resource management, improved biodiversity, efficient use of energy and water, waste reduction and sustainable procurement.
- ✓ **Climate resilience** - We seek to understand and respond proactively to climate-related risks, ensuring that our learning environment remains safe, resilient and adaptable to changing environmental conditions.
- ❖ **Evidence-informed improvement** - Sustainability priorities are monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with national guidance and the evolving needs of the school community.

These principles are implemented through the school's Climate Action Plan, which provides the operational framework for delivering sustainability objectives across the four Department for Education priority areas of adaptation and resilience, biodiversity and nature, climate education and green skills, and decarbonisation and net zero.

Section 04

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leading collectively. Sharing responsibility. Maintaining accountability.

Effective sustainability leadership requires a whole-school commitment, supported by clear governance, defined responsibilities and shared accountability. Riverside Bridge School recognises that sustainability is most effective when it is integrated into strategic planning, operational decision-making and everyday practice.

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- approving this policy and ensuring that sustainability forms part of the school's strategic direction;
- providing appropriate challenge and oversight of sustainability performance;
- receiving reports on progress against the Climate Action Plan;
- ensuring that sufficient resources are considered to support agreed sustainability priorities.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and that sustainability is embedded within the school's leadership, planning and continuous improvement processes. This includes ensuring that environmental considerations are appropriately balanced alongside educational priorities, pupil wellbeing, financial sustainability and operational effectiveness.

The school will designate a **Sustainability Lead** to coordinate the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The Sustainability Lead will:

- coordinate the development, implementation and review of the Climate Action Plan;
- monitor progress against agreed objectives and report to senior leaders and governors;
- promote sustainable practices across the school;
- support staff awareness and engagement;
- maintain awareness of national developments and emerging good practice.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that sustainability is considered within strategic planning, curriculum development, estate management, procurement, risk management and school improvement, ensuring that environmental priorities support the long-term development of the school.

All staff are expected to contribute to the school's sustainability objectives through responsible day-to-day practice, supporting pupils' understanding of sustainability where appropriate, and promoting efficient use of resources, environmental responsibility and safe working practices.

The school values the contribution of pupils, families, governors, contractors and partner organisations in promoting sustainability. Opportunities will be provided, where appropriate, for the wider school community to contribute to environmental initiatives, support sustainable practices and participate in the ongoing development of the school's sustainability objectives.

This distributed leadership approach ensures that sustainability is embedded across all areas of school life rather than being the responsibility of a single individual, supporting long-term organisational resilience and continuous improvement.

Section 05

WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

Embedding sustainability. Engaging pupils. Improving practice.

Riverside Bridge School adopts a whole-school approach to sustainability, recognising that meaningful and lasting environmental improvement is achieved when sustainability is integrated into leadership, learning, operations and the wider school community.

Sustainability considerations are incorporated into strategic decision-making, curriculum development, estate management, procurement and daily operational practices. This approach supports the efficient use of resources while maintaining safe, effective and inclusive learning environments for pupils with complex SEND.

Within the curriculum, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of the natural environment, responsible citizenship and sustainable living through learning experiences that are appropriate to their individual communication, cognitive and developmental needs. Sustainability is embedded across the Flow Curriculum, Preparation for Adulthood and wider enrichment opportunities, enabling pupils to develop practical life skills and an appreciation of their role within their local and wider communities.

Operationally, the school seeks to promote sustainable practice through:

- responsible management of energy, water and other natural resources;
- reducing waste and encouraging recycling and reuse where appropriate;
- considering environmental impact within purchasing and procurement decisions;
- maintaining and enhancing biodiversity across the school environment where practicable;
- ensuring that estates planning supports climate resilience and long-term sustainability;
- encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours amongst pupils, staff and visitors.

The school also recognises the importance of collaboration. We will work, where appropriate, with families, local authorities, contractors, community organisations and other partners to support sustainability initiatives, share good practice and contribute to wider environmental objectives.

The operational delivery of these priorities is set out within the Riverside Bridge School Climate Action Plan, which identifies specific objectives, actions, responsibilities and measures of success across the Department for Education's four sustainability priority areas.

Section 06

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Measuring progress. Reviewing impact. Strengthening practice.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to the ongoing review and development of its sustainability practices to ensure that they remain effective, proportionate and aligned with national priorities and the needs of the school community.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through the delivery of the Climate Action Plan, which sets out measurable objectives, identified actions, designated responsibilities and review arrangements. Progress will be evaluated through regular monitoring of agreed priorities, environmental performance and the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives across the school.

Monitoring may include consideration of:

- progress against the objectives within the Climate Action Plan;
- curriculum development and pupil engagement in sustainability education;
- energy, water and resource efficiency where appropriate;
- waste reduction and recycling initiatives;
- biodiversity and estate improvement projects;
- procurement and resource management practices;
- compliance with relevant legislation, guidance and environmental responsibilities.

The Sustainability Lead will report periodically to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board on progress, achievements, emerging risks and future priorities. Where appropriate, the Climate Action Plan will be updated to reflect changes in legislation, Department for Education guidance, estate developments or the evolving needs of the school.

The Governing Board will review this policy annually, or sooner where significant legislative, organisational or operational changes require amendment. The Climate Action Plan will be reviewed more frequently as required to ensure that priorities, actions and measures of success remain current.

Continuous improvement will remain central to the school's approach, ensuring that sustainability is embedded within strategic planning and contributes positively to the long-term development of Riverside Bridge School.

Section 07

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside other Riverside Bridge School policies, procedures and operational documents that support environmental sustainability, health, safety and effective estate management.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Sustainability Action Plan
- Curriculum Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management and Risk Assessment Policy
- Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan
- Educational Visits Policy
- Procurement and Financial Procedures
- Premises Management Policy

Together, these documents provide the strategic and operational framework through which the school promotes environmental sustainability, manages environmental risks and supports the long-term resilience of the organisation.