

Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy 2026-27

Policy owner	Board of Trustees
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Review / update date	4 October 2026
Next scheduled review	September 2027
Earlier review	Following relevant legal/regulatory change, serious incident, significant organisational change or identified deficiency

1. Purpose

AET aims to carry out its educational and charitable activities in a way that uses resources responsibly, reduces avoidable environmental harm and supports long-term organisational resilience. Environmental decisions must remain connected to AET's charitable purposes and trustees' duties.

2. Governance and trustee duties

- Trustees will consider material environmental and sustainability risks as part of normal governance and risk management, including premises, energy, procurement, travel, extreme weather, supply chains and financial resilience.
- Environmental action must be within AET's powers and should further, support or be incidental to its charitable purposes. AET will not represent environmental activity as a separate charitable purpose unless its governing document lawfully permits this.
- Trustees will balance environmental, financial, operational and beneficiary considerations and record significant decisions where appropriate.
- Where environmental work would amount to a new charitable purpose rather than supporting existing purposes, AET will obtain appropriate advice and Charity Commission authority where required.

3. Commitments

- Comply with applicable environmental, waste, premises and health and safety law.
- Reduce unnecessary energy and water use and improve efficiency when proportionate and affordable.
- Prevent waste where possible, then reuse, recycle and dispose of waste lawfully.
- Prefer durable, repairable, reusable, energy-efficient and responsibly sourced goods where these provide appropriate value and meet operational needs.
- Consider environmental and social factors in procurement alongside quality, safeguarding, cost, accessibility and value for money.
- Reduce unnecessary printing and duplication while ensuring that digital alternatives remain accessible and secure.
- Encourage public transport, walking, cycling, car-sharing and efficient journey planning where practical, safe and suitable.
- Consider environmental performance when maintaining, fitting out, leasing or acquiring premises, including insulation, lighting, heating/cooling controls and water efficiency.
- Work with suppliers, landlords, partners and funders to improve sustainability where AET has influence.

4. Climate resilience and continuity

AET will consider how heat, flooding, severe weather, poor air quality, energy disruption and other environmental events could affect children, staff, premises and continuity of services. Relevant controls will be incorporated into risk assessments, business continuity and emergency planning.

5. Measurement and reporting

- AET will use proportionate information to monitor material areas such as energy use, waste, travel or carbon impacts where reliable data is reasonably available.
- Public statements about sustainability, carbon reduction or environmental impact must be accurate, evidence-based and not misleading.
- Where AET sets environmental targets, they should be realistic, measurable where practicable, and reviewed periodically.
- AET will avoid creating administrative burdens that are disproportionate to its size, resources and charitable impact.

6. Staff and participant engagement

Staff, volunteers and learners will be encouraged to use resources responsibly and contribute practical ideas. Training or guidance will be provided where environmental responsibilities form part of a role. Sustainability initiatives involving children will be educational, inclusive and appropriate to age and need.

7. Ethical finance and investment

Any investment or banking decision involving environmental or ethical factors must be made consistently with trustee duties, AET's governing document, financial policies, risk appetite and the need to obtain suitable returns and security. Environmental preference alone will not override trustees' duty to act in AET's best interests.

8. Review

The Board will review this policy at least annually and following significant changes to AET's premises, operations, environmental risks or relevant law/guidance. Material environmental risks should be reflected in AET's risk register where appropriate.

Key legal and guidance references

- Charity Commission, Environmental responsibility for charities, updated 7 March 2024.
- Charity Commission, Charities and risk management (CC26), updated 16 September 2026.
- Charity Commission, Decision-making for charity trustees (CC27), updated 9 September 2024.
- Charities Act 2011, as amended by the Charities Act 2022.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other applicable environmental and waste legislation.

This policy should be read alongside AET safeguarding, health and safety, data protection, complaints and other relevant operational policies. Where AET operates on school or third-party premises, the host organisation's applicable safeguarding, emergency and premises procedures must also be followed.

Reviewed by: Hakan Gokce