



683. Sustainability & Climate Action - Policy & Governance - Sustainability Policy & Procedure Review

Category:	Sustainability & Climate Action
Subcategory:	Policy & Governance
Status:	Best Practice
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Recommended
Commonality:	Common

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your commitment to maintaining current and effective sustainability policies directly enhances the wellbeing of pupils and staff by ensuring that environmental responsibilities are clearly defined and consistently applied across the organisation. By keeping these vital documents relevant and accessible, you demonstrate professional dedication to creating a sustainable learning environment that protects health, reduces costs, and builds confidence in the school's governance systems while recognising the vital contribution facilities staff make to educational excellence.

Task Summary

Best Practice: This task ensures that the organisation's sustainability policy and related procedures are reviewed annually to keep them relevant and consistent with the Climate Action Plan. The review process involves assessing whether current policies remain appropriate for the organisation's operations, incorporating any changes in legislation or best practice, and ensuring procedures remain practical and effective. Staff should evaluate implementation feedback, identify areas for improvement, and update documentation to reflect current organisational needs. The revised policies should maintain consistency with the Climate Action Plan while remaining accessible to all staff. This

review supports governance assurance and helps ensure sustainability initiatives are effectively implemented across the organisation.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Climate Change Act 2008:** Provides the overarching framework for climate action policies and procedures.
- **Environment Act 2021:** Introduces new requirements for environmental governance and policy development.
- **DfE guidance on sustainability policies in education:** Recommends best practice approaches for developing and maintaining sustainability policies in schools and colleges.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Ensures policies consider environmental justice and equal access to sustainable facilities.
- **ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems:** Provides international best practice for environmental policy development and review.

Typical Frequency

This task should be completed yearly, ideally aligned with the academic calendar and board reporting cycles. The frequency could vary based on significant changes in legislation, organisational structure, or if implementation issues are identified that require policy adjustments. In education settings, annual review ensures policies remain relevant to curriculum changes and evolving sustainability priorities, though more frequent reviews might be needed if new environmental risks emerge or major operational changes occur.

Applicability

This task is recommended and common, applying to most schools and colleges as part of good sustainability governance practices. While not always statutory, regular policy review is widely regarded as essential for effective climate action implementation. The task applies regardless of organisation size, though larger establishments with multiple sites may find more complex policy frameworks requiring more detailed review processes. Schools and colleges should consider this task essential for maintaining effective governance and ensuring sustainability policies support both operational and educational objectives.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** This is a Competent Person task that should be carried out by staff with knowledge of policy development, sustainability, and organisational governance. Typically, this would involve the Sustainability Lead working with senior leadership or governance

representatives.

- **Contractor Requirements:** Not applicable as this is a Competent Person task.
- **In-House Requirements:** The person completing this task should have experience with policy development, knowledge of sustainability issues, and familiarity with organisational governance processes. Training in policy review or environmental management would be beneficial.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is required for this task.
- **Delivery Model:** This task is normally completed in-house by trained staff, though external consultants may provide specialist input for complex policy areas or regulatory compliance.

Key Considerations

Important factors include ensuring policies remain practical for staff implementation, coordinating with curriculum areas for integration opportunities, and considering resource implications of policy changes. The review should not disrupt normal operations if timed appropriately. Consider stakeholder input from different departments and ensure policies align with the organisation's overall strategic objectives. Risk assessment should evaluate whether current policies adequately address emerging environmental risks.

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Access to current sustainability policies and procedures
- Understanding of organisational governance processes
- Knowledge of current legislation and best practice
- No specific safety requirements

Tools & Materials

- Current sustainability policy and procedure documents
- Legislative updates and guidance documents
- Stakeholder feedback records
- Policy review templates and checklists
- Board/Trust meeting documentation

Method (Step-by-Step)

1. **Gather Current Documentation:** Collect all current sustainability policies, procedures, and related documents.
2. **Review Legislative Changes:** Assess any new legislation, regulations, or guidance that affects sustainability policies.
3. **Evaluate Implementation:** Review feedback on current policy effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
4. **Stakeholder Consultation:** Consult with relevant staff, governors, and external stakeholders for input.
5. **Update Documentation:** Revise policies and procedures to reflect changes and improvements.
6. **Obtain Approval:** Secure leadership approval for revised policies through appropriate governance channels.

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

Revised policies should be clear, practical, consistent with current legislation, and aligned with the Climate Action Plan. Procedures should be actionable and supported by adequate resources for implementation.

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. If policies are found to be inadequate, immediate actions should include consulting with legal or compliance specialists and developing interim guidance for staff.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

No reinstatement required. Ensure old policy versions are archived appropriately and new versions are distributed to relevant staff.

Completion Checks

Confirm that all policies have been reviewed, updated as needed, approved by leadership, and that evidence has been uploaded to Compliance Pod.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** No statutory evidence is required for this task.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Revised policy and procedure documents, and minutes of leadership approval meetings.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

Common mistakes include failing to consult stakeholders before major changes, creating overly complex policies that are difficult to implement, or not aligning policies with available resources. Best practices include using plain language accessible to all staff, ensuring policies are regularly communicated and training provided, and linking sustainability policies to curriculum objectives. In educational settings, involve pupil representatives in policy development to increase engagement. Warning signs include policies that remain unchanged for extended periods or frequent implementation issues.

Quick Reference Checklist

- ☐ Collect current policy and procedure documents
- ☐ Review legislative and best practice updates
- ☐ Assess implementation effectiveness
- ☐ Consult stakeholders for input
- ☐ Update policies and procedures as needed
- ☐ Obtain leadership approval
- ☐ Distribute updated documents
- ☐ Upload evidence to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Sustainability & Climate Action - Policy & Governance - Climate Action Plan Annual Review & Update
- Sustainability & Climate Action - Policy & Governance - Sustainability Lead Appointment & Confirmation

- Sustainability & Climate Action - Policy & Governance - Climate Action Progress Report to Governors & Trust Board
- Sustainability & Climate Action - Education & Engagement - Curriculum Integration Check for Climate & Sustainability

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