

Laudato Si

St. Joseph's Catholic School

Climate Action Plan (2026–2030)

"We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world."

(Laudato Si, 229)



Vision

At St. Joseph's Catholic School, our approach to sustainability aims to align our aspirational mission – to achieve excellence with God's love and inspiration – with the principles set out by the late Pope Francis in his encyclical entitled, *Laudato Si*.

Our climate action plan is therefore firmly grounded in our Catholic calling to *care for our common home*, and moreover to educate our students to be *stewards of creation*.

We seek to instill in our students the core values that will help to build a future generation of compassionate citizens; ones who will lead the way towards a just and sustainable future within their own communities and inspire others to the same cause.

Introduction and overview

The guiding principles of Laudato Si are woven into every aspect of our climate action plan, which moreover reflects UK policy ambitions for net zero, climate resilience, biodiversity, and education for sustainability.

As such, it is designed to provide strategic and measurable actions across the four key pillars required by the Department for Education, namely:

1. Adaptation and resilience:

Detailing how St. Joseph's is preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change

2. Biodiversity and nature:

Outlining our efforts to protect and enhance nature and wildlife within the grounds of St. Joseph's and its surroundings

3. Climate education and green skills:

Highlighting how our students are supported to understand climate change, sustainability, and taught to develop relevant skills

4. Decarbonisation and net zero:

Focusing on our actions to measure and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions at St. Joseph's as we work towards net zero

Along with an important **fifth pillar**, that centres around our unique responsibilities as a Catholic educational setting and reminds us of our spiritual calling and values:

5. Faith integration and spiritual formation:

Rooting our climate action in the Catholic spiritual tradition, as we strive to nurture ecologically-aware students with compassion for both the poor and the planet, consistent with Laudato Si.

1. Adaptation & Resilience

Goal: Prepare students, staff, and the school community for the challenges of climate change while promoting wellbeing, safety, and ecological responsibility.

Key Actions

a) Climate Risk Assessment & Response

- *Conduct a school-wide climate risk assessment (flood risk, overheating, extreme weather).*
- *Develop protocols to protect health and ensure continuity of learning during extreme weather.*

b) Green Campus Safety

- *Install shaded outdoor learning zones and water refill stations to address heat stress and encourage hydration.*
- *Establish emergency procedures that integrate climate risk into school safeguarding plans.*

c) Community Resilience Initiatives

- *Partner with local parish and community groups to share resilience resources and plan joint emergency responses (e.g. heatwave support hubs, tree planting for cooling).*
- *Promote contemplations on ecological resilience in assemblies and pastoral programmes, linking faith with action.*

Outcomes

1. A climate risk register with mitigation measures, updated annually.
2. Increased student and staff understanding of adaptation responses.

2. Biodiversity & Nature

Goal: Enhance biodiversity around the school estate, and deepen students' connection with the natural world, thereby fulfilling both spiritual and ecological commitments.

Key Actions

a) Campus as a Living Laboratory

- *Transform school grounds into biodiverse habitats (wildflower meadow, sensory garden, composting area, and food gardens).*
- *Install bird boxes, insect hotels, native trees, and hedgerows.*

b) Nature-Connected Learning

- *Develop cross-curricular nature projects in Religious Education, Science, Geography, and Art.*
- *Engage with local environmental partners, e.g., National Education Nature Park, to support student field activities.*

c) Stewardship Celebrations

- *Celebrate Climate & Creation Care Days, reflecting Laudato Si themes, with prayer services and nature activities.*
- *Establish a Creation Care Award, recognising student action for biodiversity.*

Outcomes

1. Measurable increases in campus biodiversity year on year.
2. Student stewardship projects linked to curriculum and spiritual life.

3. Climate Education & Green Skills

Goal: Equip learners with the requisite knowledge, skills, and moral purpose to become agents of ecological transformation, responding to both Laudato Si and national education strategy imperatives.

Key Actions

a) Integrating Sustainability Across the Curriculum

- *Embed climate and sustainability content in Science, RE, Art and Design, Geography, ICT, and Humanities.*
- *Use Laudato Si themes in literacy and theological reflection, exploring human dignity and care for creation as Catholic social teaching.*

b) Green Skills Development

- *Offer extracurricular clubs (Eco Warriors, Green Tech) and project-based learning opportunities.*
- *Facilitate student leadership roles in sustainability (Eco-Council or Green Ambassadors).*

c) Formation & Staff Training

- *Provide professional development on climate education and pedagogies for sustainability.*
- *Enable staff to access carbon literacy training and resources to support curriculum integration.*

Outcomes

1. A mapped climate learning progression across all Key Stages.
2. Increased student participation in sustainability projects and external awards.

4. Decarbonisation and Net Zero

Goal: Reduce the school's carbon footprint, enhance operational efficiency, and contribute to national and global net zero goals.

Key Actions

a) Emissions Baseline & Reduction Strategy

- Calculate current greenhouse gas emissions as a baseline.
- Set targets for energy reduction, such as upgrading to high-efficiency heating.
- Publish targets that have already been met, such as having LED lighting throughout the school site.

b) Renewable Energy & Resource Efficiency

- Install solar panels on all suitable roofs (planned for Easter 2026).
- Explore battery storage projects.
- Improve insulation and energy monitoring in buildings.

c) Sustainable Travel & Procurement

- Promote walking, cycling, and public transport for school travel.
- Review procurement policies to favour low-impact, ethical, and fair-trade goods, echoing the integral ecology and ecological economics focus of *Laudato Si*.

d) Waste & Circular Economy

- Implement robust recycling, food waste composting, and single-use reduction strategies.
- Host repair cafes and upcycling events to engage the local community.

Outcomes

1. Annual emissions reduction and energy cost savings.
2. A culture of resource stewardship across the school community.

5. Faith Integration and Spiritual Formation

Goal: Root climate action in the Catholic spiritual tradition, nurturing ecological conversion and compassion for the poor and the planet, consistent with Laudato Si.

Key Actions

a) Spiritual Formation

- *Integrate ecological themes into Masses, prayer services, and liturgical seasons (e.g., Season of Creation).*
- *Provide prayer cards and reflections on creation care for school worship.*

b) Pastoral Outreach

- *Host eco-justice engagement opportunities with local parishes, charities (CAFOD), and diocesan networks.*
- *Encourage service projects focussed on sustainable living and care for vulnerable communities impacted by climate change.*

Outcomes

1. Strengthened sense of vocation and stewardship in students.
2. Visible alignment of mission (God's love and excellence) with climate action.

Monitoring, Reporting & Accountability

Governance

- a) Establish a Climate Action Committee.
- b) Ensure that said committee has representation from:
 - *SLT,*
 - *Staff,*
 - *Students,*
 - *Governors, and*
 - *Parish partners.*
- c) Link actions to the School Development Plan.
- d) Report progress annually to the community.

Measurement

- a) Use key performance indicators (KPIs) for:
 - *Energy,*
 - *Biodiversity,*
 - *Curriculum reach, and*
 - *Community engagement.*

Communication

- a) Publish progress publicly, both on the school website and in newsletters.
- b) Celebrate successes and reflect the school's journey of integral ecology, namely care for people, planet, and future generations.

Conclusion

This plan sets out a *holistic, faith-rooted climate strategy* that fulfils Department for Education expectations, reflects UK policy goals, and embodies the *Laudato Si* call for ecological stewardship.

It invites the whole school – staff, students, families, and parish – to walk together in caring for God’s creation, thereby learning, acting and growing in *wisdom, compassion and excellence*.

Links

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainability-leadership-and-climate-action-plans-in-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems>

Climate Action Timeline (2026–2030)

Year 1: Foundation & Baseline (2026)

Theme: Listening, discernment, and preparation

Pillar	Key Actions	Responsibility	Evidence
Leadership	Appoint Sustainability Lead & Climate Action Committee (incl. students, chaplaincy, governors)	Headmaster	Committee minutes
Adaptation	Climate risk assessment (heat, flooding, extreme weather)	Site Manager	Risk register
Biodiversity	Audit school grounds; join National Education Nature Park	Laudato Si Lead	Audit report
Education	Curriculum audit for climate & Catholic social teaching	Deputy Head (Curriculum)	Curriculum map
Decarbonisation	Establish carbon baseline (energy, waste, travel)	Business Manager	Baseline report
Faith Life	Launch Creation Care prayer & assemblies	Chaplain	Worship plan

Year 2: Early Action & Engagement (2027)

Theme: Education and participation

Pillar	Key Actions	Responsibility	Evidence
Adaptation	Install water refill points and shaded outdoor areas	Site Manager	Photos, invoices
Biodiversity	Plant native trees, wildflower areas, insect hotels	Laudato Si Lead and Eco-Council	Biodiversity log
Education	Embed sustainability units in KS3 & KS4	Heads of Department	Schemes of work
Decarbonisation	Energy monitoring system	Business Manager	Energy data
Community	Parish & CAFOD partnership projects	Chaplain	Event records

Year 3: Embedding & Skills (2028)

Theme: Transformation

Pillar	Key Actions	Responsibility	Evidence
Adaptation	Review emergency plans for extreme weather	SLT	Updated policies
Biodiversity	Outdoor classroom / prayer garden	Laudato Si Lead	Completion report
Education	Launch Green Skills pathway (clubs, careers)	Careers Lead	Student participation
Decarbonisation	Reduce waste by 25%; composting & recycling	Site Manager	Waste audits
Faith Life	Annual Season of Creation programme	Chaplain	Liturgy plans

Year 4: Scaling & Leadership (2029)

Theme: Witness and leadership

Pillar	Key Actions	Responsibility	Evidence
Adaptation	Community climate resilience event	SLT	Attendance records
Biodiversity	Student-led biodiversity research projects	Laudato Si Lead	Student reports
Education	Student sustainability leadership awards	Laudato Si Lead and Eco-Council	Award records
Decarbonisation	Explore solar PV feasibility	Governors	Feasibility study
Outreach	Share best practice with local schools	Headmaster	Network minutes

Year 5: Review & Renewal (2030)

Theme: Reflection and renewal

Pillar	Key Actions	Responsibility	Evidence
All	Full review of Climate Action Plan	Governors, Headmaster and Laudato Si Lead	Review document
Adaptation	Update risk assessment	Site Manager	New risk register
Education	Review curriculum impact	Deputy Head	Student outcomes
Decarbonisation	Publish emissions reduction progress	Business Manager	Annual report
Faith	Jubilee celebration of creation care	Chaplain	Celebration records