

The New Sustainability Lead

Your first half-term, one week at a time

Most sustainability leads get the role with no training and no time for it. This is not a plan for changing the school. It is a plan for finding out what is already there, working out who else cares, and doing one visible thing, so that by half-term the role exists properly.

WEEK 1 Find out what you've inherited

- ☐ Ask the office, the head and the previous lead for the existing climate action plan. Check the shared drive too.
- ☐ Read it against the DfE's four pillars: decarbonisation, biodiversity, green skills and curriculum, adaptation. Note which are real and which are just a heading.
- ☐ Find out who signed it off and when it was last looked at.
- ☐ List what already exists that nobody calls climate action: eco club, garden, recycling, walk-to-school week, the year 8 energy unit.

WEEK 2 Find out who else cares

- ☐ Talk to the site manager or caretaker. They know where the energy goes and what's been broken for three years.
- ☐ Find out which governor has sustainability, or whether anyone does.
- ☐ Ask around the staffroom, quietly. Three or four names is plenty.
- ☐ Ask the pupils. Ten minutes with the school council will tell you more than you expect.

WEEK 3 Do one visible thing

- ☐ Pick something small, cheap and already half-wanted. Bins that work. Lights on a timer. One assembly. The eco club, restarted.
- ☐ Do it, finish it, then tell people it happened. Newsletter, briefing slide, school socials.
- ☐ Write down what it cost, in money and in your time. You'll need that number later.

WEEK 4 Governors and SLT

- ☐ Ask for ten minutes at SLT or governors. Not to present a plan: to report what you found and what the three biggest gaps are.
- ☐ Ask for a named governor link, and a review slot in the calendar before the end of spring term.
- ☐ If you can ask for a third thing, ask for time. Even an hour a fortnight changes what's possible.
- ☐ Be honest about the plan you inherited. Governors would rather know.

WEEK 5 Write down what year two looks like

- ☐ Sketch the year as a cycle: audit in autumn, plan by Christmas, act in spring, review in summer. Put dates against each.
- ☐ Decide the three things you'll measure. Not thirty. Three.
- ☐ Book the staff meeting slot now for the first sustainability session in the spring.
- ☐ Write a one-page summary and put it in the shared drive where the old plan was.

WEEK 6 Rest

- ☐ You've found the plan, found the people, done one thing, told the people who matter, and written down what comes next. That's a good first half-term.

When you get to week 5

After the Launch is a workbook for sustainability leads on keeping a climate action plan alive year after year: the audit-plan-act-review cycle above, with staff meeting sessions, audit sheets and templates ready to run. £10 in print, £5 as a PDF. Free classroom resources and a £15 strategy call are on the site too.

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