

What is a **Sustainability governor**?

The sustainability governor role includes all the usual responsibilities of a governor, with the added focus of providing strategic leadership to the school or trust on climate action, sustainability and preparing pupils for green careers. To support you in this role, Governors for Schools manages the Sustainability Governor Network, supported by platinum sponsor, Deloitte.

What does being a governor involve?

School governors provide schools with strategic leadership and accountability for educational and financial performance.

The 3 core functions of a school governing board are to:

- ✓ Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- ✓ Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- ✓ Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent

Why are **Sustainability governors** needed?

The Department for Education recommends that every school has a Climate Action Plan and a Sustainability Lead in place by the end of 2025.

Schools should also be preparing to have net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Currently, schools in England are estimated to emit around 9.4 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per year.

Schools often lack the expertise amongst staff to ensure they are meeting all their sustainability obligations. A Sustainability Governor can provide support and signpost to additional resources.

The UK economy will increasingly need "green skills" as it transitions towards a sustainable and low-carbon future; industry links can increase the knowledge of school staff about jobs of the future and widen the aspirations of pupils.

Reducing emissions across schools estates needs prioritisation and strategic oversight, including managing tight budgets, monitoring stakeholder engagement and holding leadership to account - all key roles of a governor

What does being a **Sustainability governor** involve?

Alongside the core responsibilities of a governor, Sustainability governors also:

- ✓ Support school Senior Leadership to improve their understanding of sustainability, and their obligations.
- ✓ Make sure sustainability is embedded in the school's long term strategy
- ✓ Ensure both the school leaders and the governing board are involved in the development and monitoring of the climate action plan, supporting the school's Sustainability Lead to deliver a plan that is effective and in line with strategic priorities.
- ✓ Support school Senior Leadership to embed climate action into the ethos of the school, including effective engagement of all stakeholders.

What support is there?

Join the Sustainability Governor Network on LinkedIn by visiting bit.ly/SustainabilityGovernorNetwork

The network provides essential guidance, resources, and collaboration opportunities to help school governors drive environmental action at a strategic level. The network is open to all those involved in school governance, as well as those considering joining a board.

The Department for Education also runs sustainability support programmes that we would recommend you learn about in order to support a school:

- [Sustainability Support for Education](#)
- [Climate Ambassadors](#)
- [National Education Nature Parks](#)

What next?

When you're introduced to a school, we would recommend that you talk about your interest in championing sustainability at a strategic level. To find out more about the school, you could ask:

1. Who is their sustainability lead, and what is their channel to feedback to the governing board?
2. How well progressed is their climate action plan?
3. Have pupils and other stakeholders been involved in developing the plan?
4. What impact do they anticipate the plan to have on the school estate, school finances, the curriculum etc?
5. How could you best use your skills/expertise/passion to support the school on it's journey to net zero?