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|  | **Introduction to the**  **Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark** | ADD CHARTER LOGO |

Sunderland is playing its role in tackling the global challenge of climate change and Sunderland schools are already working hard to deliver green projects across the city and are playing a key role in climate education within our communities.

In 2019 Sunderland City Council declared a climate emergency and has since been working with organisations across the city to reduce carbon emissions, in line with Sunderland's ambitions to be carbon neutral by 2040.

Carbon neutral means having a balance between the amount of carbon being emitted and the amount of carbon being absorbed, stored and offset.   
  
Starting in 2025, all schools in England have been advised to have a Sustainability Lead and a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in line with guidance from the Department for Education and their Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. 

**What is the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark?**

The Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark was launched in January 2025. The Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark has been developed to support your school to look after the planet, implement actions to reduce carbon emissions and to give credit to schools that have embedded sustainable behaviour within your school and the local community. In addition, the charter mark recognises the dedication of schools within the city in contributing towards a greener Sunderland and a more sustainable planet. The Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark is managed by City of Sunderland’s Low Carbon Team.

Updates and information relating to the charter can be found here: ADD LINK

**How to get involved?**

As a first step towards attaining the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark, your school must nominate a named Sustainability Lead. The Sustainability Lead will have/ develop good knowledge of climate change and how to embed this into your school community, as well as acting as the first point of contact for learners, staff or parents/guardians who have any climate change queries.

**To attain your Award:**

* The school must have a designated Sustainability Lead
* The Sustainability Lead must attend the Sunderland Climate Friendly Schools Network meetings on a regular basis
* The school meets all green criteria outlined in the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark
* The Sustainability Lead ​must be willing to join the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark moderation team and moderate at least one school over the course of the next academic year

You can apply for Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark online ADD LINK or to find out more, please contact [lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk)

**Links to the Sunderland Healthy School Charter Marks:**

The Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark is one of the six Health and Wellbeing related Charters that contribute to the Sunderland Healthy Schools Award - <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/professionals/sunderland-healthy-school-award>

Criteria in the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark which are highlighted in pink, indicate where actions can contribute to your Climate Action Plan and one of the other six Health and Wellbeing related Charters.

**Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark Accreditation Process:**

To become accredited please complete the below Application Form, including the 'Evidence Gathered' section noting what has been collated and return it to [lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk), who will arrange to view the required evidence through an agreed method, for example, an onsite visit, electronically or through a Teams call.

The charter is split into three sections: Culture & Ethos; Education & Curriculum; and Family & Communities, each with several standards. It is anticipated that evidence will be gathered to demonstrate the standards have been met, recognising some of the work may already be taking place informally within school and the charter mark is an opportunity to begin to formalise the work in practice.

There are examples listed below to support schools in gathering evidence. There is flexibility in this, as schools may have other examples including evidence that clearly links to sustainability and climate action. When gathering evidence, it is possible to cross reference with other charter marks, as each can complement the work covered in another area such as the Active Charter Mark.

**Low Carbon Charter Mark Accreditation Verification**

To aid the accreditation process, schools are encouraged to establish and maintain a folder (hard copy or electronic) containing relevant evidence. This will be verified through an onsite visit or alternative methods if necessary.

To ensure the Low Carbon Charter Mark meets a consistently high standard throughout the city, schools that have attained the Charter will be asked to review evidence submitted by another school to ensure the whole process is embedded within the school practice. When possible, an onsite visit will be arranged.

**Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark Support to Schools**:

Schools who would benefit from support to establish the Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark can access this support from Sunderland’s Low Carbon website ADD LINK. Please contact [lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:lowcarbon@sunderland.gov.uk) with any queries or support requests. Information and resources will be circulated to schools who are working towards/ interested in applying for the charter mark.

**Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark – Accreditation Application**

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| **Name of School** |  |
| **School Address** |  |
| **Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark Contact Name** |  |
| **Contact Phone number** |  |
| **Contact Email address** |  |

**Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark – Accreditation**

| **Culture and Ethos** | | | |
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| **Subcategory** | **Award** | **Suggested Evidence** | **Notes and Evidence** |
| **Leadership** | School to have a designated Sustainability and Climate Change Lead​/Team, recognised by the school and/or senior management. | 1.       Name of the member(s) of staff  2.       If there is a team approach, a named single point of contact  3.       Photo with name/s on display board |  |
| **Policy** | School to carry out a Sustainability and Climate Change audit and/or calculate the school carbon footprint. | 1. Evidence of a completed Sustainability and Climate Change audit and/or a calculated carbon footprint  2. Evidence of access to utilities data |  |
| School to develop a Climate Change Action Plan bespoke to their setting for the whole school, in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) sustainability leadership and climate action plans guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainability-leadership-and-climate-action-plans-in-education> | 1.       Evidence of School Climate Change Action Plan, developed from findings from audit/ school carbon footprint  2. Evidence of key themes - Decarbonisation, Adaptation and Resilience, Biodiversity, Climate Education and Green Careers |  |
| School to develop a Sustainability and Climate Change Policy bespoke to their setting for the whole school, in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) sustainability leadership and climate action plans guidance. | 1.       Evidence of Sustainability and Climate Change Policy  2. Evidence of key themes - Decarbonisation, Adaptation and Resilience, Biodiversity, Climate Education and Green Careers |  |
| Linked to the Great Active Charter. School supporting an Active Travel policy.  If achieved, this can be incorporated into the schools Climate Action Plan. | 1.       Evidence of an adopted Active Travel policy |  |
| **Process** | Implementing a whole school approach by starting to adapt school practices/processes to include sustainability and climate action, which enables access to information, resources and support for staff, students and the wider school community. | 1. Evidence of whole school approach, i.e. staff responsible for the development and implementation of a climate action plan, wider staff involvement, student involvement, governor involvement and wider community involvement  2. Evidence of Climate Change Induction/training  3. Case study of implementing the process |  |
| **Environment** | Develop an environment throughout the school to promote a whole system approach to Climate Action. | 1. Evidence of school Climate Action Plan being implemented  2. Evidence of regular meetings between head teacher, senior leadership and Sustainability and Climate Change Lead  3. Evidence of supporting pupils and staff to have access to sustainability and climate action opportunities |  |
| School to establish or develop a school Climate Action Club as part of, or following, the development of the school Climate Action Plan. | 1. Evidence of clubs i.e. session plans, session climate activities, photographs |  |
| Linked to the Food and Nutrition Charter. Ensure access to free drinking water is available throughout the setting.  If achieved, this can be incorporated into the schools Climate Action Plan. | 1.       Evidence to ensure pupils have regular fluid intake during school time, i.e. school risk assessment and photo of free drinking water |  |
| **Ethos** | Support Sunderland in reaching climate change targets. | 1.     Case study of Climate Action in Sunderland  2. Evidence of getting involved in Sunderland initiatives |  |
| **Staff Development** | The Sustainability and Climate Change Lead to attend the termly Climate Friendly Schools Network meeting regularly​ | 1.       Evidence of staff attending meeting i.e. attendance record from meeting or minutes of meeting |  |
| School Sustainability and Climate Change Lead willing to join the Charter moderation team and moderate at least one school over the course of the next academic year | 1.       Evidence of being part of the Charter moderation team |  |

| **Education and Curriculum** | | | |
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| **Subcategory** | **Award** | **Suggested Evidence** | **Notes and Evidence** |
| **Teaching & Learning** | School to teach sustainability and climate change themed lessons and deliver themed activities | 1. Evidence of accessing and teaching sustainability and climate change teaching resources  2. Evidence of delivering sustainability and climate change activities and initiatives  3. Evidence of accessing resources and teaching Green Careers |  |
| School to access and teach lessons from the Wear Sustainable Resources ADD LINK | 1.       Evidence of accessing resources by gaining access to the Wear Sustainable Resources Google Drive  2.       Evidence of teaching Wear Sustainable Resources  3.       Evidence of accessing the Wear Sustainable Resources Loan Box |  |
| Linked to OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). Reusing items from your school community, such as clothing, old equipment and recycling, in outdoor play activities with learners.  If achieved, this can be incorporated into schools Climate Action Plan. | 1. Evidence of reusing items from your school community |  |
| Linked to the Food and Nutrition Charter. Herb, fruit or vegetable growing opportunities delivered within the academic year  If achieved, this can be incorporated into schools Climate Action Plan. | 1.       Evidence of Herb, fruit or vegetable growing |  |
| Have a dedicated display board or a method of providing appropriate messages, information and posters on sustainability and climate change, utilising relevant and current sources of information | 1.       Evidence of information shared and resources used i.e. photographs of display board, social media posts, sustainable messaging, newsletters |  |

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| **Families and Communities** | | | |
| **Subcategory** | **Award** | **Suggested Evidence** | **Notes and Evidence** |
| **Parents/Carers & Local Community** | School to involve families and the wider community in the development of the sustainability and climate agenda | 1.       Evidence of regular engagement with families and wider school community i.e. meetings, workshop or surveys involving families, online journals, communications |  |
| School to involve families and the wider community in climate action | 1.       Evidence of activities delivered with families and wider school community |  |
| Linked to the Food and Nutrition Charter. School to promote donating unused items in the household to charities instead of providing staff with new gifts at Christmas and end of school year.  If achieved, this can be incorporated into schools Climate Action Plan. | 1.       Evidence of school community donating reusing items i.e. uniforms, costumes, household items |  |
| **Student & Staff Voice** | Appropriate methods are used to ensure the engagement of staff and pupils in achieving the Charter Mark | 1.       Evidence of staff and pupil engagement i.e. Notes of discussions with pupils, photographic evidence of how pupil ideas and feedback have been adopted into practice. |  |
| **Activities & Event, Citywide Involvement** | School to promote their involvement in the Charter Mark to encourage a whole school approach. | 1.       Evidence of promotion and involvement in the Charter Mark i.e. school newsletter  2.       Evidence of link to Charter Mark on school website  3. Evidence of activities in school and citywide activities i.e. Sunderland Climate Friendly Schools Summer Conference |  |