Environmental and Sustainability Policy

The Spark Group

Introduction

The Spark Group exists to promote and prepare young people for sustainable careers. We are committed to promoting environmental responsibility and sustainable practices across our learning activities and day to day operations.

We recognise the importance of protecting the environment for future generations and aim to reduce our environmental impact through practical, responsible and sustainable approaches.

Our Commitments - What We Will Do

Energy Use

- Use energy-efficient equipment and practices in our offices and facilities where practical
- Use energy more efficiently and avoid unnecessary consumption
- Make use of energy storage and other appropriate energy solutions where practical
- Encourage staff and learners to adopt sensible energy-saving practices

Waste Reduction

- Minimise the amount of waste we create and recycle as much as possible
- Avoid unnecessary single-use items and encourage the use of reusable alternatives
- Reuse materials and equipment wherever practical before considering disposal or replacement
- Dispose of remaining waste responsibly and through appropriate recycling or waste arrangements
- Consider opportunities to reduce waste within our learning activities, including the reuse and recycling of construction materials

Digital-First Working and Paper Reduction

- Use digital documents, forms and processes wherever practical
- Reduce unnecessary printing and avoid maintaining duplicate paper and digital records where this is not required
- Consider digital solutions when reviewing or introducing business and learning processes
- Use digital-first approaches to improve efficiency and reduce both paper use and unnecessary administrative workload
- Continue to identify opportunities to move suitable processes from paper to digital

Sustainable Purchasing

- Consider the environmental impact of products and services when making purchasing decisions, alongside cost, suitability, availability and business need
- Consider recycled, reusable, environmentally preferable and second-hand options where practical and affordable
- Reuse existing equipment and resources wherever suitable
- Purchase second-hand office furniture and IT equipment where appropriate
- Consider the sustainability credentials of suppliers where practical
- Use local suppliers wherever possible, particularly where suitable goods or services are available locally

Water Use

- Take reasonable steps to reduce unnecessary water use
- Encourage staff and learners to use water responsibly
- Include appropriate water saving checks within routine office/centre procedures

Employee Involvement

- Encourage employees to suggest ideas for reducing energy use, waste and environmental impact
- Share relevant sustainability ideas and improvements through normal team and leadership meetings
- Build a culture where everyone feels responsible for making sustainable choices as part of their everyday work

Community, Learning and Partnerships

- Incorporate sustainability and environmental awareness into our learning activities where appropriate
- Work with local organisations, employers and partners to promote green skills and sustainable practices
- Support practical learner activities that encourage the reuse of materials and consideration of environmental impact
- Work with partners who share our commitment to sustainability where appropriate

Improvement and Progress

- Review our environmental and sustainability actions regularly and identify opportunities for improvement
- Set practical and achievable actions that reflect our organisation, activities and resources
- Keep a simple record of progress, improvements and quick wins
- Review our action plan annually and use the findings to inform priorities for the following year

Who Is Responsible

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for providing overall direction, making appropriate decisions and ensuring that environmental and sustainability considerations are incorporated into our operations.

All employees are responsible for following this policy, adopting sustainable practices in their day-to-day work and contributing ideas for improvement.

Review

This policy and the accompanying Environmental and Sustainability Action Plan will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is a significant change to our activities, premises or business priorities.

The review will consider progress made during the previous year, areas for improvement and priorities for the forthcoming year.

The policy will be updated where necessary to reflect changes in our organisation, relevant requirements, good practice and business priorities.

Approval

This policy has been approved by The Spark Group's Senior Leadership Team.

Version number:	3.0
Document written by:	Debbie Sturridge, Business Manager
Date:	0710.26
Review due:	October 2027

Action Plan 2026-27

Purpose: To build on the improvements made during 2025–26 and continue to embed practical environmental and sustainability improvements across The Spark Group

Review Cycle: Annual, or sooner if required

Action		Person/s Responsible	Timescale
1.	**Premises Move**		
1.1	Consider environmental and sustainability factors and solutions when selecting and planning the new layout, including energy efficiency, lighting, heating etc	SLT	Dec-26
1.2	Consider reuse, donation or responsible disposal of new and existing furniture, equipment and materials when moving premises	SLT	Dec-26
1.3	Establish appropriate recycling and waste arrangements in the new premises	SLT	Dec-26
1.4	Review the use and operation of the GivEnergy battery storage system following the move and consider whether further energy-saving measures are appropriate	SLT	Dec-26
2.	**Digital-First Working and Paper Reduction**		
2.1	Review key business and operational processes and identify those that can move from paper to digital	SLT	Starting Sep-26
2.2	Introduce digital-first working as the default approach for documents, forms and processes	Everyone	Starting Sep-26
3.	**Sustainable Purchasing and Suppliers**		
3.1	Develop an understanding of the environmental and sustainability credentials of	SLT	Apr-27

	key local suppliers where this information is readily available.		