

# Academy Trusts' Guide to SECR Compliance

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**As climate change and sustainability take centre stage in policy discussions, academy trusts in the UK are now expected to play their part in reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency. The Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) framework, introduced by the government, aims to enhance transparency in energy consumption and encourage organizations, including large academy trusts, to take proactive steps toward a greener future.**

The SECR initiative is more than just another bureaucratic requirement; it's a strategic move to help organizations monitor, manage, and ultimately reduce their carbon footprint. By tracking energy use and implementing efficiency measures, academy trusts can not only comply with regulations but also drive down operational costs and showcase environmental leadership.

## **Understanding SECR and Its Impact on Academy Trusts**

SECR requires organizations that meet specific financial or operational thresholds to report their annual energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and the steps they are taking to improve efficiency. In the education sector, large academy trusts are the primary focus of this regulation, particularly those that satisfy at least two of the following criteria:

- An annual turnover exceeding £36 million

- A balance sheet total of over £18 million
- More than 250 employees

Trusts that fall under these conditions must integrate SECR reports within their annual financial statements. Those below the threshold, while not legally required to participate, are encouraged to do so voluntarily to align with sustainability goals and prepare for potential future regulatory changes.

### **What Must Academy Trusts Report?**

For those trusts required to comply, the SECR report provides a comprehensive view of energy consumption and efficiency strategies. It includes:

- Annual energy use, covering gas, electricity, and fuel consumption across all school buildings and transport operations.
- Carbon emissions data, calculated in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), which reflects the total greenhouse gases produced by the trust's activities.
- Energy efficiency measures, detailing any sustainability improvements implemented during the year, such as upgrading to LED lighting, optimizing heating systems, or installing solar panels.
- Methodology and data collection approach, ensuring consistency in reporting and transparency in calculations.

### **Why SECR Matters for Academy Trusts**

For many academy trusts, the idea of tracking energy data may seem like an administrative burden, but the benefits extend far beyond compliance. SECR provides a clear roadmap for reducing energy costs, enhancing operational efficiency, and improving sustainability credentials.

First and foremost, environmental responsibility is a growing concern for students, parents, and communities. Schools that take sustainability seriously demonstrate leadership in fostering an eco-conscious mindset in young learners. This not only aligns with national environmental policies but also helps trusts build a strong reputation as forward-thinking institutions.

Beyond environmental benefits, SECR also presents an opportunity for financial savings. Energy-efficient practices, once implemented, can significantly cut down

costs on electricity and heating bills. In an era where school budgets are stretched thin, any opportunity to reduce expenses without compromising educational quality is invaluable.

## **Steps for Effective SECR Compliance**

Navigating the SECR process requires a structured approach. Academy trusts should begin by assessing their eligibility and determining whether they meet the reporting thresholds. From there, establishing a reliable system for collecting accurate energy data is crucial. Many trusts choose to work with external consultants or energy monitoring services to ensure precision in their reporting.

Once data is gathered, trusts need to analyse and implement efficiency improvements. This could mean investing in renewable energy sources, optimizing heating and cooling systems, or even engaging in behavioural change programs to encourage students and staff to conserve energy.

When the reporting period ends, the final SECR report should be integrated into the trust's annual financial statements. By clearly outlining energy consumption trends and efficiency measures, trusts can not only demonstrate compliance but also highlight their commitment to sustainability.

## **Encouraging Voluntary Participation**

Even if an academy trust does not meet the official SECR thresholds, voluntarily adopting its principles can be a proactive step toward long-term sustainability. By tracking and publishing energy use data, smaller trusts can gain valuable insights into their consumption patterns and identify cost-saving opportunities. Additionally, early adoption of SECR practices can position trusts ahead of potential future regulatory shifts, ensuring they remain compliant if reporting requirements expand.

## **Conclusion**

SECR represents more than just a reporting obligation—it's a vital tool for academy trusts to enhance their energy management strategies, reduce environmental impact, and achieve long-term financial efficiency. By taking ownership of their energy use and implementing sustainability initiatives, academy trusts can play a significant role in supporting the UK's broader

environmental objectives while securing their own financial and reputational benefits.

For full details on SECR requirements, visit the official UK government guidance: [SECR for Academy Trusts](#).