

Sort it out with waste stations

Join the many schools across Western Australia (WA) making landfill the last resort by correctly sorting waste at school with waste stations!

A waste station consists of several bins positioned together for disposal of different waste types.

Waste stations have proven to be the most effective way of encouraging people to separate their waste at the source. Good placement of bins, consistent colours, clear signage, and education are some of the ways you can encourage your school community to sort waste correctly.

For more information about the WasteSorted Schools program visit www.wastesortedschools.wa.gov.au

Setting up waste stations

Consider your waste streams

Assessing the types and quantity of waste generated at your school will help determine which bins to include in your waste stations. A WasteSorted Schools [waste audit](#) can help you do this.

Some common waste separation streams at school are:

- general waste (landfill)
- organics
- Containers for Change
- paper and/or cardboard
- co-mingled recycling.

Before selecting an additional waste stream, ensure there is a reliable method of disposal in place. Some waste streams can be managed on site at school, such as organics, while others rely on the use of a service provider. State Government schools in the Perth metropolitan area must arrange waste services through the [Common Use Arrangement \(CUAWAS2016\) for Waste Disposal and Recycling Services](#). Non-government and regional schools may select any service available.

Choose your location

To make waste separation as easy as possible, place your waste stations in high-use areas, such as classrooms, student eating areas, canteens and staff rooms.

Where possible, waste stations should replace all other bins in that area. To help determine the most suitable placement of your waste stations, consider using the WasteSorted Schools [Visual Bin Audit Toolkit](#) for most frequently used bins.

Placing bins together rather than on their own increases the likelihood of correct waste separation as students tend to use whichever bin is closest, often without checking.





Some suggestions for waste station configurations in different areas are:

Classrooms

- General waste, paper, organics

Staffroom

- General waste, organics, Containers for Change, co-mingled recycling

Canteen

- General waste, organics, Containers for Change, co-mingled recycling

Eating areas

- General waste, organics, Containers for Change

Note: putting co-mingled recycling bins in student eating areas can lead to high levels of contamination as most containers (e.g. yogurt pots, tuna tins) will still contain food residue and therefore be ineligible for recycling

Select your bins

Waste stations work best when consistent colours and signage are used for each waste stream. WasteSorted Schools recommend using the Australian standard bin colours to ensure consistency between bin use at school, home and in the wider community. This does not mean replacing all bins. It could involve replacing just the bin lids or simply ensuring signage is printed in the correct colours.

The Australian standard bin colours are:

- General waste (landfill) – **red**
- Paper and/or cardboard recycling – **blue**
- FO (food organics), GO (garden organics), FOGO (food and garden organics) – **lime green**
- Co-mingled recycling – **yellow**
- Containers for Change – no Australian standard colour, however, it is important that the colour you choose is not red, blue, yellow or lime green. You may like to use the Containers for Change brand colour for consistency with community.

Many schools find that having the same configuration of bins in each area can also improve waste-sorting behaviours. The size and type of bins you choose to use will depend on what works best for your school context. Keep in mind that if students will be involved in emptying the bins, such as paper recycling from classrooms or organics from eating areas, the bins must be a suitable size for students to carry when full.



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Label your bins

Clear, easy-to-read and consistent signage is one of the key factors for success when setting up your waste stations. Ensure all bins are labelled, even those that have been in use for a long time.

WasteSorted Schools posters are easy to download and can be used to label the different waste streams you have available for student and staff use.

Some schools choose to edit the posters to create messaging customised for an individual school context.

COLIN CONTAINERS



FREDDY FOOD SCRAPS



LAURA LANDFILL



Educate your school community

Before introducing your new waste stations, it is important to educate staff and students about correct bin use. Explicitly teach which items go in which bin and address the most common contaminants, for example tissues DO NOT go in the paper bin but can go in FOGO. Modelling this at a whole school event, such as an assembly or sports carnival, is a great way to ensure the message is consistent. Revisit the topic at regular intervals, such as the start of each new year or when changes are made to the current system, to keep the information current and present in peoples' minds. Student green teams love to help deliver the message!

Studies have shown that having bin monitors decreases bin contamination. Consider using your green team or a group of student volunteers to monitor the bins, especially during the first couple of weeks. They could offer positive reinforcements for students making the right choice, such as high fives, house points or raffle tickets, and educate those students who are unsure where their rubbish should go.

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