

WasteSorted Schools checklist

This checklist is designed as a planning tool for WasteSorted Schools. It will assist you to identify current practices within the school and potential areas for development.



Infrastructure and facilities

Research

- Conduct a waste audit at school
- Review your billing data and waste contract
- Contact current waste management service provider for collection information and data
- Complete a school waste assessment
- Conduct a visual bin audit
- Enter baseline data into WasteSorted accreditation survey

Policy and planning

- Professional development for staff on WasteSorted practices and waste education
- Form a committee with other staff, students and parents
- Write a school waste policy or include waste in your sustainability policy
- Write a whole school waste reduction plan
- Have your policy and plan approved and signed by the school principal
- Apply for a WasteSorted Schools grant
- Set up systems for monitoring waste and recording data
- Use interpretive signage on bins to show correct use
- Create a school sustainable events guide targeting zero waste
- Run ongoing waste audits to monitor progress
- Regularly conduct a school waste assessment to maximise cost savings
- Regularly conduct a visual bin audit to ensure correct use of bins

Purchasing

- Buy supplies in bulk
- Implement a green purchasing policy, including buying recycled products when available for example paper, plastic containers, toilet paper and hand towels
- Choose photocopiers/printers that use recycled paper and print double-sided
- Include recycled items on school booklists
- Involve cleaning staff in the policies of buying recycled products and reusing items

Paper and cardboard

- Organise separate paper and cardboard recycling bins through your waste contractor
- Set targets to reduce the amount of paper
- Implement a photocopier policy including restrictions on photocopying, double-sided printing, and regular photocopy-free days
- Replace paper copies with digital versions for example newsletters, reports, assignments and in class
- Have a 'reuse paper' collection box in offices, classrooms, staffroom, library and so on
- Reuse single-sided paper in photocopiers and printers
- Put signage next to photocopiers and printers to remind staff to reuse single-sided paper
- Have separate paper and cardboard recycling containers in offices, classrooms, staffroom, library, canteen and so on
- Reduce the amount of paper coming into the school for example newspapers, promotional material and unnecessary subscriptions

Food waste

- Encourage students to use reusable drink bottles and lunch containers, for example add these to student equipment lists
- Run regular waste free lunch days, for example once per week or term
- Encourage students to take uneaten food home or run in conjunction with waste free days, for example 'take home Tuesday' and 'waste free Wednesday'
- Set up compost and worm farms for fruit and vegetable scraps
- Collect fruit and vegetable scraps from classrooms, staffroom, playground and the canteen to use in compost, worm farms or to feed to chickens
- Organise a system for collecting food scraps and distribution
- Create rosters for the use and maintenance of compost and worm farms
- Have a process for collecting the worm farm leachate for bottling and selling
- Have students design a label and market the worm farm leachate

Set a target for zero food scraps going to landfill

Consider a lunchtime play-eat swap to reduce lunch food waste, such as students play first then sit to eat

Encourage staff to bring waste free lunches and make the staffroom a 'waste free zone'

Make excursions waste smart by taking bags to separate waste and bring back to school for disposal, for example one for food waste, recyclables and general waste

Canteen

Provide lunch orders in reusable containers, either supplied by the school or that students bring from home

Use reusable items instead of single-use plastic/disposable items, for example cups/glasses/drink containers, sandwich wraps, cutlery, metal/bamboo straws and icy pole moulds

Install a commercial dishwasher for cleaning reusable items

Purchase items in bulk to minimise packaging, that is food, drinks, stationery, cleaning products

Purchase recycled items

Remove plastic straws

Use food produced in school vegetable garden

Sell homemade foods that are wholesome, nutritious and free from packaging

Put fruit and vegetable scraps in school compost or worm farm

Establish co-mingled recycling for bottles, cans, tins, jars, plastic containers and cardboard

Educate users about changes to the canteen

Garden waste

Compost or mulch garden waste

Use composted material in school gardens, for example the vegetable garden

Use mulch produced from the school's green waste

Establish a vegetable garden and use worm farm and compost products on the garden

Other recycling and reuse

Set up a reuse centre where you collect items from the school community that can be used in class activities, for example bottle tops, fabric, offcuts from businesses

Organise co-mingled recycling bins through your waste contractor

Have bins or containers around the school for collecting co-mingled recycling

Set up collection points for recyclable materials, such as batteries, mobile phones, printer cartridges, oral hygiene products, beauty care, stationery, soft plastics, e-waste

Collect materials for social or charity support, for example Soap Aid, bread tags for wheelchairs, ring pulls for Rotary, bottle tops for Envision Hands, eyeglasses for Lions Institute

Place clear signage on recycling bins or containers to prevent contamination

Have a system for regularly emptying the recycling containers

Education

Embed waste into the school curriculum

Form a whole school curriculum plan for waste topics

Conduct lessons on waste, 3Rs, plastic, worms, composting

Use waste data collected to integrate into curriculum activities, for example maths

Use WasteSorted curriculum documents to plan in-class lessons, for example message in a plastic bottle

Link classroom learning on waste to the WA curriculum cross-curriculum priority of sustainability

Use the Sustainable Schools WA framework to include waste in the school's long-term plans for sustainability

Link school learning to home-based projects and behaviour change in waste

Allow students to innovate and take responsibility for classroom activities and learning on waste

Take students on excursions to landfill sites, recycling facilities and waste education centres

Invite visitors to the school to share knowledge on waste and motivate students and staff

Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning perspectives in developing curriculum on waste

Whole school and community

Communication

- Share results of your waste audit with the school community – assembly, newsletter, public displays
- Give spot prizes for waste free practices, for example waste free lunch, placing waste in the correct bin
- Present WasteSorted messages at whole school assemblies
- Students design posters to display around the school
- Share WasteSorted tips and messages in newsletters
- Educate parents about waste free lunches and example containers
- Keep parents informed of any changes, for example waste free lunches
- Provide regular feedback about successes and progress to the school community

Recognition

- Awards for classes, such as the most waste free lunches
- Individual awards or certificates to recognise student effort
- Share your success stories with local media or departmental publications
- Enter into environmental awards and competitions, for example Plastic Free July competitions and Waste Authority Infinity Awards

Student leadership

- Involve students on the WasteSorted Committee
- Invite students to create solutions for waste management at school
- Establish a student leadership team to lead WasteSorted activities at school, for example Green Team
- Student leadership team present WasteSorted messages at whole school assemblies
- Student leadership team wear badges or vests to be easily identified around school
- Create a roster to allocate responsibilities to different classes
- Use buddy classes to engage younger students
- Invent a school mascot for waste

School community involvement

- Invite parents to take part in home surveys
- Sell worm leachate and garden produce to the school community
- Plan for school events to be waste free
- Set up opportunities for sale or exchange of unwanted uniforms
- Set up recycling stalls at school fetes/fairs, for example a 'trash or treasure' stall
- Hold waste free lunch mornings for parents to share good recipes and ideas, for example homemade muesli bars or how to make your own beeswax sandwich wraps
- Invite parents and members of the school community to assist in planning and implementing actions of the waste plan

Community partnerships

- Liaise with local or regional waste education officers to implement projects in your school or local community
- Invite local and regional waste education officers to run incursions at school
- Invite the local media to attend and report on your WasteSorted events
- Staff and/or students attend local environmental network meetings, for example Sustainable Schools WA
- Staff and/or students mentor or present to other schools
- Participate in local waste events, for example Clean Up Australia Day or the Garage Sale Trail
- Participate in national and global waste initiatives, for example Plastic Free July, Outdoor Classroom Day, National Recycling Week, Keep Australia Beautiful Week
- Liaise with political representatives from local, state and federal governments, local business and local 'friends of' groups for support of projects