



When pupils sort their school's packed lunch waste, and count the numbers of pieces of rubbish made from different materials, most find that at least 50% of the waste is PLASTIC packaging.

Points to consider:

- Most plastic is made from oil, a resource which will one day run out. Using less plastic, by avoiding items like cling film and sandwich bags, will help to conserve this valuable natural resource.
- Buying in bulk, then placing portions of snacks/yoghurt in reusable containers will help reduce the amount of plastic packaging generated by packed lunches.
- Plastic can be a light material, which is easily blown from one area to another. Plastic causes problems for a wide range of wildlife, and is a particular problem for marine life. More than 1 million birds and 100,000 marine mammals die each year from getting tangled in, or eating, marine litter. (www.kimointernational.org/MarineLitter.aspx)



In many schools food waste from packed lunches is also an issue.

Points to consider:

- UK households generate over 7 million tonnes of food waste per year, costing the average household with children £680, about £50 a month. (For more information on food waste see: <http://england.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>)
- Pupils who do not eat enough food at lunchtime may be hungry during the afternoon. This could affect their concentration or behaviour during lessons.

The financial cost of packed lunch waste

Reducing the waste from packed lunches will help the environment and can also **save money**. The table below shows prices for common packed lunch items, and the savings that can be made over the course of a year by choosing the waste free option.*

Typical packed lunch	Cost per day	Cost per year	Waste free packed lunch	Cost per day	Cost per year	Yearly saving
Drink pouch	26p	£49.40	Reusable bottle filled with water	0	£1	£48.40
Cheese strings (20g)	25p	£47.50	Portion of cheese (20g) cut from a large block of cheese	12p	£22.80	£24.70
Yogurt in a tube (40g)	22p	£41.80	Portion of yogurt (40g) taken from a large tub	8p	£15.20	£26.60
Cheese biscuits individually wrapped pack (25g)	26p	£49.40	Portion of cheese biscuits from large pack (25g)	17p	£32.30	£17.10
Sandwich bag	2.6p	£4.94	Sandwich box	0	£1	£3.94
Prepared apple, shop bought (80g)	48p	£91.20	Small apple	19p	£36.10	£55.10
Paper napkin (each)	2p	£3.80	Washable cloth napkin	0	£1	£2.80

* Costs from the Asda website, October 2014, based on a 190 day school year



**TOTAL
SAVING**

£178.64