

Don't let Devon go to waste

at school



How to reduce at school

REDUCE is the first, and most important, of the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). By buying and using less, we reduce our demands on the world's resources, generate less 'rubbish', and often save money as well.

Plastic packaging

Packaging can be useful, but many items that we buy are wrapped in lots of plastic and other materials which end up in the bin. To reduce your school's packaging waste you could:

Encourage families to **avoid single-use packaging** in packed lunches. Emphasise the financial benefits of reusable boxes and bottles compared with throw-away sandwich bags, cling-film and packaging. You could even try making some of your own beeswax wraps!

By talking to the catering staff, reconsider the snacks you sell to pupils. Try choosing ones with **the least packaging as possible**. For example, swap small bags of dried fruit to larger packets divided into portions, or fresh fruit. Consider serving yogurt from a large pot into small washable bowls, instead of individual throw-away plastic pots?

Don't forget breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. Encourage the staff running these sessions to consider the packaging of the food and drinks they serve and avoid disposable items.

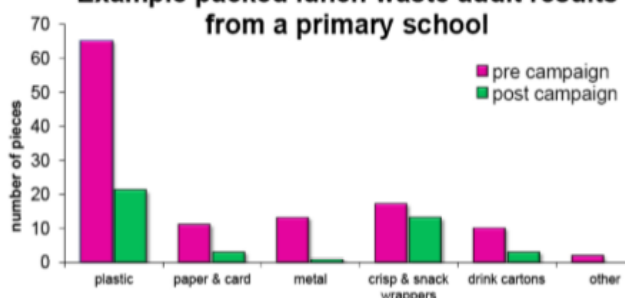


Visit our website for some zero-waste lunch inspiration:
zone.recycledevon.org/zero-waste-lunches/#audit-lunchtime-waste

Waste Audits

Conduct a packed lunch waste audit with a class or your Eco Committee. Try asking to use their persuasive writing skills to tell parents how they can help to reduce packaging waste. After plenty of whole-school publicity, repeat the audit to assess the success of your campaign. The graph shows example data from a primary school audit in Devon.

Example packed lunch waste audit results from a primary school



Download audit instructions, and materials for a packed lunch waste reduction campaign:
zone.recycledevon.org/waste-audit-activities/

Alternatively, ask Resource Futures to carry out the audit and an action planning session as part of the Devon Waste Education project.

See how conducting a waste audit may help you achieve your Eco-School's Green Flag on our website:
zone.recycledevon.org/eco-schools

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Plastic-Free Schools

Georgeham CofE Primary School has become the first to achieve the **Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Schools Status!** They have swapped cling film with foil in the school canteen, replacing sauce sachets with larger sauce bottles with pumps. Milk is now delivered in 2L recyclable bottles and served in washable beakers. This avoids 3,900 waste cartons, straws and straw wrappers every year.

These measures have not cost any extra and are actually saving the school money!

Paper

Most schools spend thousands of pounds each year on paper (see right.) Even if you are confident that all your used paper gets recycled, significant financial savings can be made by reducing the amount of paper your school uses. As well as the cost of the paper itself, reducing the use of printers will also save money on energy, toner and ink cartridges.

How much do you spend?

Real examples of annual spend on printer and photocopy paper:

- Primary school of 374 pupils
= £4,200 per year
- Secondary school of 1344 pupils
= £5,670 per year

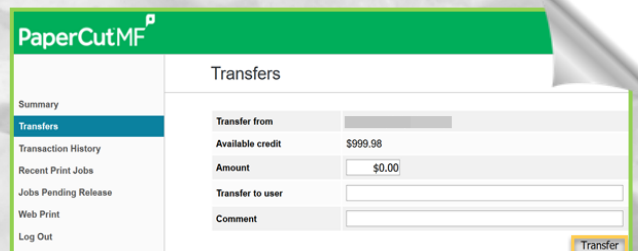
How much could you save?

Find out how much your school spends on paper and set a target to **reduce it**.

- 1) Offer **electronic newsletters** for parents instead of printed ones.
- 2) Use **wipe-clean whiteboards** whenever possible, instead of paper.



- 3) Use a **siblings list** when printed letters are essential, so that each family receives only one.
- 4) Create the expectation that adults and pupils will **proof-read their work** on-screen, and only print their final draft.
 - Younger pupils should check with a member of staff before clicking on 'print.'
 - Ask pupils to design slogan signs to stick by computers such as 'Think before you print'.



- 5) Consider which printers / photocopiers can be set to **double-sided printing**. Make sure that everybody knows when changes have been made, to avoid paper wastage if people print double sided copies when they want single sided!
- 6) Use a **print management system**, such as PaperCut MF, to give members of staff (and students in secondary schools) a quota for printing. The system will quickly pay for itself as people adopt a more considered approach to printing.
 - Ensure you explain the quota during lessons, to engage pupils with the issue of paper use and motivate them to suggest alternatives to their teachers.

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Food Waste

Food waste can be a significant issue in schools. WRAP data* suggests 46% of primary school's waste is food; the figure for secondary schools is 31%. As well as the financial and environmental implications of throwing food in the bin, there are also health and educational impacts, since hungry pupils are less likely to concentrate during lessons.



Lunchtime food waste

1. First find out how much food waste your school produces from school meals and packed lunches. You could:

- ♦ Conduct a packed lunch waste audit (see page 2).
- ♦ Weigh the waste from pupils' plate scrapings each day for a week.
- ♦ Ask staff to weigh any un-served food that is thrown away, ideally for a week.

2. Then find out what the issues are that contribute to this food waste.

Conduct a pupil survey and consult with lunchtime supervisors to find out why pupils are throwing away food rather than eating it. For example, are they rushing their lunch in order to attend clubs or play with friends; do they dislike the noisy dining hall; are there some items on the menu that are less popular than others?

Once you know the issues, make a plan to reduce the food waste, working with meal-time assistants and catering staff, as appropriate.

The Food for Life Partnership has a range of resources to support schools in engaging pupils with healthy food, ways to improve the dining environment and to encourage pupils to eat more and waste less:
www.foodforlife.org.uk



Composting

Composting is great for the environment and it can also save your school money. Traditional composting is popular in schools across the UK; Devon is leading the way with supporting schools to compost their cooked food waste as well as peels and cores.

Do you think a compost bin could work in your school?

View our composting pages and teaching resources on our website: zone.recycledevon.org/composting/



Fruit waste

Schools where pupils receive free fruit sometimes find that children throw away partly eaten fruit.

Discuss amongst staff when and where pupils eat their fruit, and how much time they are given. Younger pupils may eat more of their fruit inside with adult supervision (e.g., listening to a story) than running around at playtime, so consider whether **changes to your routine** could reduce fruit waste.

*The nature and scale of waste produced by schools in England, Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) 2008

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Durable products

Ensure the resources you buy last as long as possible. For example, expecting pupils to put lids on felt tip and white board pens, saves the school money and reduce waste!

Disposable items, designed to be used once then thrown away, may be convenient, but they generate a lot of waste.

Avoid disposables by:

- Investing in **strong plastic plates and cups** for parties and events. They can be used year after year, so you will recoup the initial cost.
- Could you create PTA party packs to rent to other classes for a small fee?
- Asking staff and pupils to bring a **refillable water bottle** instead of single-use cups.

Paper towels

Not only are paper towels **expensive** and one of the biggest causes of blocked drains, they are considered **contaminated waste** therefore have to end up in landfill or burnt in our Energy from Waste plants.

- Encourage pupils to **use less** paper towels, on average 3 are used per dry!
- **YouTube: How to use one paper towel | Joe Smith | TEDx**
- Switch to **energy saving hand dryers**. See table for price and CO₂ comparisons.

(Per 1000 dries)	Cost	Carbon production
Paper towels	£15	22.5 Kg/CO ₂
Hand dryer	39p	1.73 Kg/CO ₂

Furniture

Have you ever found your school filling a skip with used furniture or equipment that could be reused? **Before** paying for a skip, try putting the items out for parents and the local community, saving the skip hire cost and reduce the amount of equipment going to waste.

Reduce and Eco Schools

Gain a nationally recognised award for your hard work on waste, by participating in the Eco-Schools programme. As you progress towards the Green Flag, you should move up the '**waste hierarchy**' by focusing on reduce and reuse, while keeping your recycling and composting systems working efficiently.

Campaigns to reduce packed lunch waste (page 2) and food waste (page 3) are great ways to integrate your Eco-Schools work into the curriculum. They also generate data showing you are making a measurable impact.

For more information on Eco-Schools visit: www.eco-schools.org.uk.



- If your school has been **reducing** waste we would love to hear about it!
- **Email** recycle@devon.gov.uk for guidance or to subscribe to the Devon Schools **Sustainability Bulletin**, with information on free resources, funding and training.
- For further 3Rs 'how to' guides: zone.recycledevon.org/3rs/
- Explore our teaching resources: zone.recycledevon.org/teachers