



How to recycle at school

Having reduced and reused as much as possible, it's time to think about the last of the 3Rs: RECYCLE. This guide focuses on 'dry' recycling; for information on composting see: zone.recycledevon.org/composting.

Recycling systems

All Devon district councils offer schools a recycling collection for paper and other 'dry' materials, and some also provide internal collection containers. Many district councils have officers who help schools set up new recycling systems, and some offer schools a food waste collection service. Contact your local district council to find out what is available in your area - for contact details see: zone.recycledevon.org/contact-us



Containers

A bit of thought about recycling containers will help to optimise the amount pupils and staff recycle in your school. Points to consider include:

Location: if possible, put a recycling container in every classroom and office. Make sure they are clearly visible and easily accessible - if adults and pupils have to hunt to find the recycling container they may resort to using the bin instead. Most schools locate recycling containers next to rubbish bins; however some find that this leads to contamination of the recycling and choose to separate them.

Type: make sure that recycling containers cannot be confused with rubbish bins. With younger pupils use a box or other container that is very definitely not a bin. Older pupils will benefit from clear colour coding e.g., green bins for recycling, red for rubbish. Don't rely only on written labels to distinguish between recycling and rubbish bins – busy staff and pupils may not stop to read them.

Consistency: it helps all users of the school building if the same recycling containers are used in all rooms. A blue recycling box in one classroom and a yellow recycling bucket in another can lead

to confusion. If possible, adopt a whole-school approach to location as well. This is particularly important for younger children and those with special educational needs.

Size: some schools have boxes or bins in large rooms that generate a lot of recycling, and recycling trays for smaller rooms. It can be a positive message if recycling bins are larger than the rubbish bins – this creates the expectation that a lot will be recycled and very little binned.



Labelling

Clear labelling for recycling containers is essential. Don't rely on people knowing what can be recycled at school, even if your recycling system is similar to that of nearby homes. Ask pupils to design their own labels, perhaps holding a competition for the best design to promote ownership of the collection scheme.



Collection

If possible, involve pupils in collecting the recycling from around the school and taking it to a central location, ready to be put out for the collection crew.

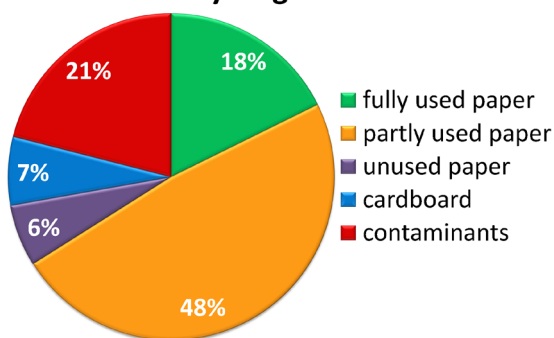
Some schools have a designated recycling monitor in each class / tutor group, while others have a recycling team or give this responsibility to their Eco Committee. Be sure to discuss any health and safety considerations with pupils.



Contamination

However well you set up your recycling system, you may experience occasional problems with pupils or staff putting the wrong materials into your recycling containers. The pupils collecting the recycling can be asked to keep an eye out for contamination issues, and to leave feedback (positive and negative) for teachers and pupils.

Results of recycling audit



A yearly recycling audit will monitor contamination levels, as well as the amount of paper that has been used on both sides. The audit provides excellent opportunities for data handling in a real-life context, and is the perfect activity for an Eco Committee or class to address the Eco-Schools 'Waste' topic.

For resources to conduct an audit with your pupils see: zone.recycledevon.org/3rs-monitoring-activities.

Bin checks

As well as keeping an eye on the contents of the recycling containers, pupil monitors can do regular visual checks of the rubbish bins to ensure they do not contain materials that should be recycled.

A weekly or monthly check, with feedback of the results to the rest of the school (e.g., in assembly or on the Eco-Schools noticeboard) will be a useful reminder of the importance of recycling the correct materials. To download a 'bin check' recording sheet and spreadsheet see: zone.recycledevon.org/3rs-monitoring-activities.

Waste audits

A full waste audit once a year will provide a detailed picture of the contents of your rubbish bins, and identify any opportunities to reduce your waste further.

Devon's Waste Education Officers visit schools to conduct waste audits (and other workshops) with pupils. For more information see:

zone.recycledevon.org/visits-and-workshops



Hands-on recycling

Pupils of all ages enjoy making their own recycled paper, which helps them understand the circular nature of recycling and motivates them to recycle as much as possible.

For easy-to-follow instructions and clear videos explaining how to make hand-made recycled paper at school see:

zone.recycledevon.org/paper-making

The RecycleDevon.org website also includes short videos showing the journey taken by other materials after they have been collected from schools and homes. See:

www.recycledevon.org/content/what-happens-to-your-recycling-0



Assemblies and competitions

Even in schools where recycling is firmly embedded in daily life, it is still important to use assemblies and whole-school competitions to keep the profile of waste issues high. Younger pupils who start school and readily adopt the good recycling habits expected of them, may not know why recycling is important to preserve natural resources and prevent our landfill sites filling up. As pupils get older they will be able to understand more complex issues, such as how the energy saved by recycling helps to reduce our carbon footprint and combat climate change.

Campaigns and the curriculum

Local and national campaigns, such as Recycle Week in June (organised by WRAP, see www.recyclenow.com), and Waste Week in March (organised by the Pod, see www.jointhepod.org) provide a way to refresh your approach to waste education, as well as the challenge of competing with other schools to reduce a particular type of waste.

The Pod website also includes a wide range of downloadable teaching resources to help embed sustainability into the curriculum, and is closely linked to the Eco-Schools programme.



Recycling and Eco-Schools

Engage staff and pupils and gain a nationally recognised award for your hard work on waste by participating in the **Eco-Schools** programme. Start your 'Waste' topic by reviewing and improving your recycling, then move up the 'waste hierarchy' by focusing on reducing and reusing. For 'how to' guides with practical ideas for reducing and reusing see: zone.recycledevon.org/3Rs-practical-information

The waste audit, recycling audit and bin checks described on pages 2 and 3 are great ways to integrate your Eco-Schools work into the **curriculum**. They also generate data to show that you are making a measurable **impact**. Don't forget to include messages about how and why to recycle in your **Eco Code** to give them a high profile.

Your 'recycling' ideas

If you have examples of how your school has recycled waste we would love to include them in the next version of this leaflet. Please email recycle@devon.gov.uk.

For further guidance, or to subscribe to the **Devon Schools Sustainability Bulletin**, which is emailed every half term with information on free resources, funding opportunities and training, please email recycle@devon.gov.uk.

There are many resources to support your school's waste reduction work at:

zone.recycledevon.org/teachers



Don't let Devon go to waste