PLANET ARK'S SCHOOLS RECYCLE RIGHT

Recycling Right at School

Involve your class, year group, whole school or ELC in recycling on campus while learning about the environmental and social benefits of joining the cycle.

30 YEARS

NATIONAL RECYCLING WEEK

PLANET ARK

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Recycling right at school

RECYCLING BASICS

There are some important considerations to take into account when evaluating the feasibility of a recycling hub in your school. A quick assessment of your school's current capabilities using the steps below can help determine where you're at in your recycling journey. You can always build your capabilities as systems become more ingrained.

Know what can be recycled

Most recyclers provide co-mingled recycling bins, making it easy to recycle items we usually recycle at home. However, some recycling options and services may not be available in remote locations, checking with your council is an important first step.

Conventional materials you may be able to start recycling include:

Paper & Cardboard

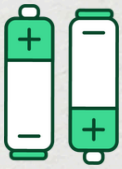
Plastic bottles & containers

Glass bottles & jars

Aluminium & steel cans

Milk & juice cartons

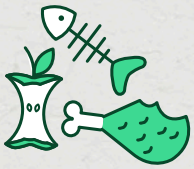
In addition to the above, you may also recycle these materials through dedicated collection systems:



Batteries

Mobile phones & accessories

Printer cartridges



Food scraps

Use Recycling Near You to find local recyclers in your area, at home or at work

Search Now

RECYCLING NEAR YOU
Search. Click. Recycle.
PLANET ARK

Preparing your school

SETTING UP A RECYCLING HUB

Be realistic with your expectations and create a collection system only for items your school is likely to collect in reasonable quantities.
Conducting a waste audit can help you estimate the types and amounts of materials you're likely to generate. You may choose to start by recycling just one or two materials, then review and expand to other materials over time.

Find resources to help you with a waste audit at the end of this guide.

Find a recycler

- Talk to your school administration or green team to understand what the current waste management contractors are capable of collecting and if any other recycling schemes may already be happening.
- If needed, ask whether the current recycling system can be expanded and review any additional costs with your current waste contractors. Some councils provide services for schools too, so check out any offerings there.
- Search **recyclingnearyou.com.au** to find local recycling services for your school.
- To make sure you're choosing an environmentally and legally reputable recycler, refer to the questions in our **Choose the Right Recycler Checklist and Factsheet.**

Collecting Materials

- **Location, location.** Place co-mingled recycling bins next to general waste bins so people don't have to make an extra trip to recycle. For additional recycling schemes, make sure the collection points are placed in locations easily accessible to everyone who may use them - including students, staff and parents.
- **Type of collection receptacle.** Choose bins that are easy to spot, use and empty for collection.
- **Responsibility.** Ensure everyone is clear on who is responsible for collecting the recycling! For some schemes, collection services will be included regularly or can be organised when needed. In other cases, responsibility may fall into the school cleaning service, groundskeeper, students or volunteer staff.
- Assess any **health and safety issues** and make the right choice for your school.

Setting up a Recycling Hub

START WITH THESE

Start your recycling journey with one of these recycling programs. These are set up to make access to recycling easier for those just starting out.

PRINTER CARTRIDGES

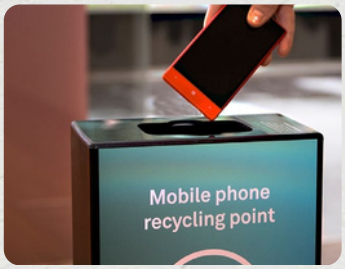
Cartridges 4 Planet Ark (C4PA) is a **free** scheme that recycles used printer cartridges with zero waste.

Find out more

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones and accessories can be recycled through **free** programs like MobileMuster.

Find out more



DRINK CONTAINERS

Schools can connect with a Container Deposit Scheme to fundraise through recycling.

Find out more

Why recycling matters

Recycling provides students with an interdisciplinary lesson that educates students about the environment, personal responsibility, community action, sustainability and natural resource management.

- You can reduce up to 42% of the organic food waste in your bins by starting a compost.
- Over 95% of the resources in mobile phones can be recovered and recycled.
- Through Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, 100% of materials are recycled into art supplies and even roads.
- Container deposit schemes can be connected to schools to raise thousands of dollars in donations.

Keep the momentum going

Goals, record keeping and reporting

Communicating the success of your recycling program to students and staff will show that their actions are leading to worthwhile results and can bolster efforts.

- Set a recycling goal based on your original waste audit results. Ensure your goals are measurable, achievable and time-bound.

- Keep records of any of the costs incurred by your recycling program and review the frequency of collections/drop-off trips to help determine if your existing recycling system is appropriate for the amount you recycle.

- Evaluate your achievements in relation to your goals and review the effectiveness of your program.

Building awareness and participation

School assemblies, day sheets, newsletters and signage will all help communicating your recycling initiatives to the wider school community. Where possible, encourage your students to participate in these reporting mechanisms! We have a variety of free signage available to download for all recycling types and materials accepted. Check them out below!

HOT TIP

Including signage indicating what **not** to put in to a recycling bin is more effective in reducing contamination than only using signs indicating what should go in the recycling bin. Luckily, we have a huge collection of bin signage for every workplace!

Download free signage

More ways to get involved

Use National Recycling Week to kick start your sustainability journey in your school. The following resources will help educate and inspire your students.

START A COMPOST

Nature's best recyclers - and a great way to teach young students about food webs! Older students can take the lead and develop a sense of responsibility on the way.

Find out more

LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

Check out our free interactive lessons, lesson plans and printable activities for all stages of learning from EL to Stage 4. You can also register your school as a Recycle Right School 2025!

Find out more

SOCIALS

Share your recycling initiatives with us by tagging @planetark and using the hashtag #NationalRecyclingWeek

Through Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, 100% of printer cartridges are recycled into art supplies, eWood and even roads.

CARTRIDGES 4 PLANET ARK

Conducting a waste audit

UNDERSTAND YOUR WASTE

A waste audit is a great way to find out what type of waste your school is generating, where you might want to focus your efforts and provide a baseline to measure future improvements.

Option 1:

- Get a rough estimate of how much waste vs recycling is leaving the campus in total by assessing the skip or wheelie bins the day before collection days.
- The bins should have a litre capacity on them. Roughly estimate how full the bins are and add the total bin estimates together for that week. Make sure you categorise them into general waste, paper recycling etc.
- You can then multiply this figure by working weeks in the year to understand approximately how much waste your workplace produces in one year and where it goes.

Option 2:

This option is messier and more time consuming, but great for both students and teachers to actually see how much waste is being produced:

- Choose a quieter day of the week to conduct the audit and let all staff know when, where and who will be involved. It is best to conduct the audit after lunch or when the bins are at their fullest.
- Collect either all the bins from the workplace, or a representative sample and take them to an outdoor area with a large tarp and several large, empty bins or buckets.
- Sort the waste into different streams. At a minimum: organics, recyclable paper, soft plastics, hard (recyclable plastics), aluminium cans, steel cans and waste to landfill. You may also like to add other items you would like to recycle such as printer cartridges, but remember these aren't every day items.
- Weigh each sorted waste group (subtracting the bucket's weight) to estimate how much waste your school produces weekly, monthly or yearly. This helps you identify the amount of each type of waste you produce, which will let you know which recycling initiatives have the biggest impact. Keep in mind that some items like e-waste may be low in volume but have a big difference when recycled! Remember to refer to **recyclingnearyou.com.au** to understand what can be recycled in your area.

“

What you do makes a difference. And you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

30 YEARS

DR JANE GOODALL

Scientist and conservationist

PLANET ARK

PLANET ARK
ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION
Suite 3.16
22–36 Mountain Street
Ultimo NSW 2007
E: info@planetark.com

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