



## School-wide Environmental Initiatives

### School litter meter

Design a school litter meter and delegate students to monitor the amount of litter in the playground and record it on your litter meter for all to see.



### School litter audit

Divide into groups and allocate each group a section of the playground. After lunch each day, students count how many items of litter are found in their section of the playground. Students record items under different classifications of the type of litter it is. In the classroom, each group's results are tallied. After the first week, hold an assembly and give the results of the survey. Encourage students to put litter in the bin, as they will continue to be assessed over the following week. After a fortnight, hold another assembly and tell the students how they are going compared with the previous week. After 3 weeks results are graphed and presented to the school with recommendations for continued improvement.

### School house litter competition

Divide the playground into as many areas as you have school houses. Designate a certain area for the students of each house to keep litter-free. Give points to the house that keeps its area the cleanest each week. The house that gains the most points in the term or year is announced at an awards ceremony.

### Recycle your canteen and staff room hard plastics, glass and cartons

Many staff rooms and canteens produce a large amount of recyclable waste but do not have co-mingled recycling systems in place. Approach your local council to see if a yellow recycling bin can be allocated to your school and recycle your staffroom and canteen waste, just as you would at home! A school worm farm or compost can also take your teabags and paper towel. Staff can be rostered on to place waste in the correct receptacle each week, or the task can be allocated to the General Assistant or Cleaners.

**Start a worm farm or compost**

A worm farm or compost is a great way to keep food scraps out of landfill where it can create methane gas. A worm farm or compost can be easily built or purchased, along with worms. You may like to ask the students who has a worm farm at home, and they can provide some worms. Ensure the worm farm is located in a shady spot protected from the Sun and rain. Perhaps one class can be in charge of collecting scraps, and ensuring students know the right thing to put into the worm farm. Fertilizer produced can be put onto school gardens or taken home by students.

**Waste Free Lunch**

Choose one day a week (or term) as a designated waste free lunch day. Encourage students to pack their food in reusable containers and choose foods that don't use extra packaging, no plastic wrap or food packets! Students can also measure the amount of rubbish collected before and after, so show the effect of a waste free lunch in the amount going to landfill.

**Swap Box or Reverse Garbage**

Have a swap box for students and teachers to deposit unwanted items that are not broken or damaged. It may be toys, clothing, books or craft materials for other teachers and students to use. You may even make it available for families and community members.

**Community Recycling Drop-off**

Establish a school recycling centre for students and families to deposit recyclable items. It may be printer cartridges as part of 'Mobile Muster' or other recyclables that may be collected in a kerbside collection by council.

**Stormwater Drain Painting**

Design and then paint signs near stormwater drain locations around the school to remind students and parents about the effects of littering and stormwater pollution. Captions such as 'The drain is just for rain' or fish and bird images, capture attention and teach others about appropriate behaviour.

**Environment Expo**

Hold an environmental expo to teach the community about sustainability and caring for the local environment. You might like to partner with the local high school, or incorporate it into your annual fete. Contact the local council for assistance.

**Energy Audit**

Complete an energy audit of the school and identify ways you can save energy. Develop an action plan and measure your progress over the years. Involve students in being 'energy watchers' to ensure lights and computers are switched off. Switch to energy saving light globes and appliances.

**Sustainability News**

Publish a regular column, story or helpful tip in the newsletter to teach families about ways they can be living sustainably at home. Promote the environmental education

program of the school, so all members of the school community can learn about caring for the local environment.

### **Win an Award**

Contact Keep Australia Beautiful NSW to find out about entering the Tidy Towns (regional) or Sustainable Cities (Metropolitan Sydney) awards programs to gain recognition and share with others the sustainable initiatives and programs you have implemented in your school or local community.

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