



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
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Set up a school recycling centre

Making progress possible. Together.

Setting up a school recycling centre has various benefits for the environment and a school's learning outcomes. Learners should be encouraged to think creatively and should be given credit and further recycling learning opportunities in the classroom. The model below has been developed by the City on how to set up recycling centres at your school. We also advise that you conduct a school waste audit.



1. Identify recycling points

Set up recycling points at your school using the following guidelines:

- Position recycling points as close to a source of waste as possible e.g. place a paper recycling bin next to the photo copier/printer
- Label all recycling points correctly
- Put recycling points next to rubbish bins
- Collectors might provide you with recycling containers or you can decide what type, size and quantity of recycling bins will best suit your school

There are also outside sources of waste near your school:

- Learners' homes (organic waste, plastics, glass, cans and paper)
- Restaurants (glass, cans, and organic waste)
- Shops (cardboard, boxes that merchandise is delivered in)
- Businesses (high quality white paper etc.)
- Nearby schools that don't have their own recycling programme

2. Collecting from recycling points

Decide who will empty materials from your recycling containers and deliver them to recycling centres.

When working out your collection schedule, consider:

- the distance between your school centre and the various waste sources;
- the cost of getting the waste to your recycling centre (accessing a vehicle, fuel etc.);
- what type of waste each collector will pick up (collectors usually only recycle one type of waste);
- which collectors will give you the best price for the waste that you have collected and sorted? The more you sort your waste, the more the collector tends to offer you for it; and
- the amount of storage space you have in your centre. Most plastic collectors want you to have 5 – 6 bale bags available before they collect. Glass, paper and can recyclers prefer to collect once your containers are full.

3. Infrastructure required for a recycling centre:

Complete a waste audit to see how much waste is coming into your recycling centre each week; this will tell you how often you will need to sort your recycling and how many people you will need to do the sorting.

Location is important when setting up a recycling centre. Take note of the following tips:

- Accessibility is important, people should not have to travel very far to and from the centre to collect or drop off waste.
- Make sure your recycling centre has enough space to accept waste that is being delivered, sorted, and stored. You will need space to store the bins that recycling companies deliver to your site for paper, glass and cans. The ideal space will be as large as a double garage.
- It should be easy for people to deliver and collect waste from your centre. The ideal place will have a parking area big enough to turn a small truck.
- Consider the odour that the waste might generate (especially if you are dealing with organic waste and composting). Insects and flies may be attracted to your centre, and this could be a health hazard or become very unpleasant if it is not controlled.
- Your centre should be placed away from high-traffic areas within the school, and away from neighbouring buildings or public spaces.
- If paper is one of your waste streams, consider fire risks, ban smoking near the area, and have a fire extinguisher available.

You will need to build your recycling centre with the following in mind:

- The centre should be reasonably sized, at least as large as a double garage.
- The structure should have four walls, a roof, a window (to let in light and fresh air when required), large double doors for delivery and collection of large amounts of waste, and extra height for storage.
- To prevent vandalism and illegal dumping and to minimise the risk of your sorted waste being stolen, the structure itself should be lockable and you should have a fence with a lockable gate
- You will need to provide water for staff to wash their hands after working with the waste and electricity to keep a light on at night, which will also serve as a security measure.
- A telephone, and (ideally) a fax machine or email is required to arrange agreements with waste suppliers and collectors, and to notify collectors once your waste is ready to be collected.

Your centre should contain the following waste equipment:

- Sorting tables that are big enough to sort the amount of waste coming into your centre
- Bail bags for your plastic waste
- Containers for glass, cans and paper — your recycler should provide the necessary containers
- One or two wheelie bins to dispose of non-recyclable waste

The safety of the staff at the centre is also an important feature:

- Consider the vehicles coming to and from the centre and make sure that school children and people working in the centre can enter and exit the premises safely.
- All recycling centre staff and volunteers should wear protective gloves and a plastic jacket or overalls when they are sorting waste – ensure the centre remains hygienic and people are protected from any possible contamination.

- Look out for sharp objects, sorters should be informed that they are working with potentially harmful waste and advised to take caution. It is important to teach staff how to dispose of all kinds of waste safely and correctly.



4. Financing your recycling centre

A well-run recycling centre could generate revenue for the school. Are there specific projects that the school needs to raise funds for? Or can the profits be used to improve the recycling centre? You could hire more people in your community to work in it, expand your recycling centre, or use the profits to buy a vehicle or a trailer for the transportation of your waste.

5. Managing your recycling centre

With staff:

- Explain the role everyone needs to play in ensuring the initiative is a success.
- Run a staff training session to train your staff. Explain your school recycling centres waste management plan and how it is managed, it is a good idea to educate your staff about the importance of recycling and how waste affects the environment.

With pupils:

- Students that are members of the waste management committee can present the waste management plan during assembly.
- Announce updates during assembly to inform the students about how the programme is progressing.
- Showcase key milestones and accomplishments on school notice boards and the school's website.
- Organise social activities based on waste minimisation such as community clean up days.
- Give students branded bibs or hats to wear on the days that they are collecting waste from school recycling points.
- Arrange a visit from a member of your local authority's waste management department to talk to students about waste and recycling.

With parents:

- Send home a “How to Recycle” guide for all parents, this guide should include what parents can and cannot send to the school recycling centre and how recyclables should be delivered (e.g. washed and rid of all excess water).
- Include the waste management programme as an item on the agenda during parent/teacher meetings.
- Include a regular waste management update in the school newsletter, inform parents about all recent achievements as well as current or future initiatives and plans.
- Ask parents for input on how to improve the programme or generate sponsorship money for the initiative, encourage parents to contact the waste management committee with their suggestions.

Contact us

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