

Zero Waste Teacher Support Activities

This pack is designed to support the Measuring Change Waste Audit by offering activities to prepare students for the audit process and scaffold their learning. These activities supplement those offered in the Zero Waste Theme Area (part of the Enviroschools Kit).

Waste is a human invention. There is no waste in nature and there was very little waste in early societies. As our society has developed, we have created sophisticated industrial processes to service our needs and the more we consume, the more waste we produce. The school environment can produce large volumes of waste.

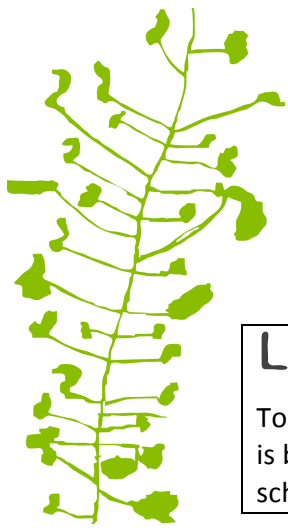
Waste is a term applied to things we no longer want or things that are surplus to what we can use, usually requiring disposal.

Through the Zero Waste theme, students are encouraged to take a closer look at this definition and to challenge the whole concept of “waste”. Everyone produces waste and everyone has a part to play in reducing it.

Aiming for Zero Waste at home, at school, at work and in the community is part of Tiaki i a Papatūānuku, or looking after the Earth. While recycling is a positive step we need other strategies to achieve Zero Waste.

Students can assess their school’s and their own purchases and question what they are made of, how long they will last, how they are packaged and whether they are really even needed in the first place. The waste hierarchy, or three R’s of waste management - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - offers a starting point for exploring solutions and making changes.





Pre Audit Activity Waste Walk Through

Learning Intention

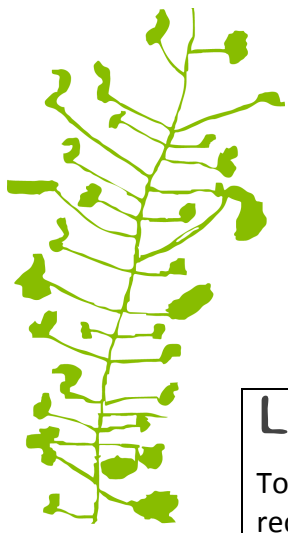
To find out about the waste and recycling systems in your school or centre - where waste is being generated, what kinds of waste are going into bins in different areas of the school/centre, where this waste is then transported for storage and who finally collects it.

Activity

1. Conduct a walk-through of the school/centre, to find out where all waste and recycling bins are located.
2. Draw a map of the school/centre, and mark the location of each waste, recycling and compost bin on the map. Number each bin on the map. You could also draw up a WALK-THROUGH SHEET to help record your findings.
3. Look in each bin and assess what kind of waste is being disposed of in that bin.
4. Find out who empties the bins, how often, and where the bins are emptied.
5. Ask the caretaker what happens to green waste (grass clippings, pruning, weeds etc.).
6. Find out which organisation collects each waste stream (landfill, recycling, green waste etc.) and how often it is collected.

WALK-THROUGH SHEET

Bin number	Type of bin (waste/ recycling/ composting)	Describe the kinds of materials in the bin	Who empties? How often? Emptied to where?
Waste Stream		Collected by	How Often?



Pre Audit Activity Sorting Our Waste

Learning Intention

To become familiar with the different categories of solid waste. This will help us recognise recyclable items and to sort efficiently when auditing.

You will need

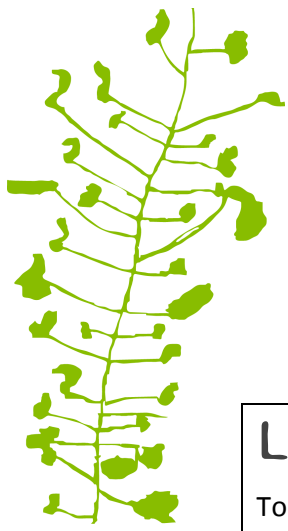
- Multiple examples of paper, plastics, metals, batteries, glass, textiles and pictures of food and garden waste.
- Labels for the classification of waste.
- The six most common plastics and the Plastic Identification Code, www.plastics.org.nz.
- The Waste Audit Data Sheet and Recycling and Composting Audit Data Sheet that will be used on waste data collection day.

Activity

1. Set up display of waste examples and discuss.
2. Use the focus question. ***“Waste needs to be identified correctly in an audit – what could we do to make sure we sort it correctly?”***
3. Introduce labels and the information on plastics.
4. Practice sorting.

Reflection

1. How has this activity helped my understanding of recycling?
2. What difference will this make to my daily practice?
3. How can I show others my learning?



Activity Non-recyclable Food Packaging

This activity could be done as part of your measuring change waste audit or as a stand-alone activity.

Learning Intention

To investigate non-recyclable food packaging. To explore why it is considered a sustainability issue when non-renewable resources are used to create packaging that is thrown away after one use.

Non-recyclable packaging in schools and centres can include chip packets, plastic wrap, muesli bar wrappers, yoghurt pots and juice cartons.

Activity

Discuss with students:

1. Do you think non-recyclable packaging is an issue in our school/ centre or not?
2. Why should we be concerned? Why is packaging considered to be a sustainability issue?
3. How could we find out if it is a problem?

One way to determine if this is a problem in your school or centre is to separate and count the non-recyclable packaging during your waste audit. You could use the NON-RECYCLABLE PACKAGING TALLY SHEET on the next page.

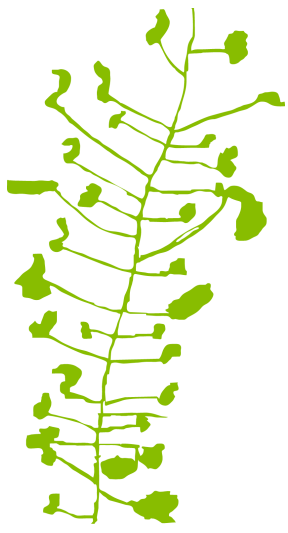
You could also collect all non-recyclable packing from one day (or a longer period) to get an understanding of how much of it there is. Some schools and centres have focused on particular type of packaging and then collected it to develop an educational display.

(Queenstown Primary students display their plastic wrap snail)



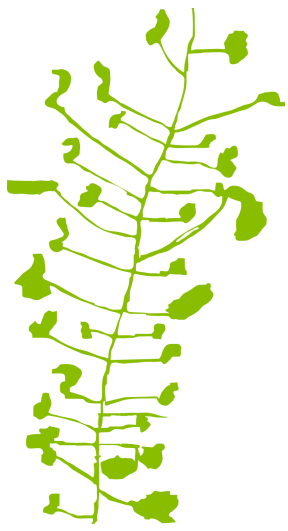
Reflection

1. What barriers would stop individuals from making better choices about packaging?
2. Are there sustainable packaging options?
3. What could we do differently?
4. How can we educate our school community to be more sustainable with their consumer choices i.e. reduce their use of non-recyclable packaging?
5. Could we create an action plan to reduce the use of non-recyclable packaging in your class/ syndicate/ school/ centre.



NON-RECYCLABLE PACKAGING TALLY SHEET

Plastic Wrap		Non-Recyclable Packets	
Count and tally every piece of plastic wrap.		Count and tally every packet (eg. chip packet, muesli wrapper, juice carton, yoghurt pot, takeaway cup).	
TOTAL pieces		TOTAL pieces	
COMBINED TOTAL pieces			



Post Audit Activity

Where Does Our Waste Go?

Learning Intention

To understand the bigger picture of what happens to the waste that we generate as a society: to help with this we are constructing flow charts showing the journey of solid waste.

Activity

1. Identify the different streams of waste disposed of by the school or centre, either through recycling or by sending to landfill. Use your waste audit report to help you with this.
2. Investigate the journey of each category and design flow charts to show the information.
3. Explore what is involved in recycling different types of waste. Find out what resources (energy, water etc.) are used in the recycling process.
4. Present this information to students and adults.

Reflection

1. Reducing and reusing waste should come before recycling. Why?
2. How can your school or centre encourage waste reduction?
3. What could be the possible barriers to waste reduction and how can they be overcome?
4. What information needs to be passed on, and who needs to know it?