



Buckinghamshire
Council

 Buckinghamshire
recycles



**AWARD SCHEME FOR
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS**

SECONDARY SCHOOL RESOURCE PACK

recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk
Content kindly shared by Norfolk Recycles

WELCOME

WELCOME TO OUR REDUCE SINGLE-USE RESOURCE PACK!

Containing lots of information and support materials, this pack is designed to help you to reduce the amount of single-use products, particularly plastics, that your school uses.

This is an ideal project for an existing school or eco-council to lead, or you could form a new group of committed students who are particularly interested in environmental issues. We provide a 'Reduce Single-Use Charter' with action targets that will help to guide you through the positive changes you can make to become increasingly single-use free.

HOW IT WORKS

STEP 1



Identify which charter targets you are already achieving.

STEP 2



Decide which targets you would like to address and draw up an action plan to help you with this.

STEP 3



Make changes to eliminate single-use plastics (and products) in your school.

As you work your way through the actions, you will be rewarded for your commitment by achieving increasingly prestigious levels of our award, from bronze through to gold.

Thank you for taking the first step towards becoming a single-use free school/college and good luck on your journey!

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4-7

Background information 4

Problems with plastic 5-6

What can we do to help? 7

REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT 8-17

Step 1 8-11

Identifying current achievements 8

School charter 9

Audit 10-11

Step 2 12-15

Compiling an action plan 12-14

Example action plan 15

Step 3 16-17

Implementing the action plan 16

Earning awards 17

REDUCE SINGLE-USE AWARDS 18

Applying for an award 18

REDUCE SINGLE-USE 19

Next steps 19

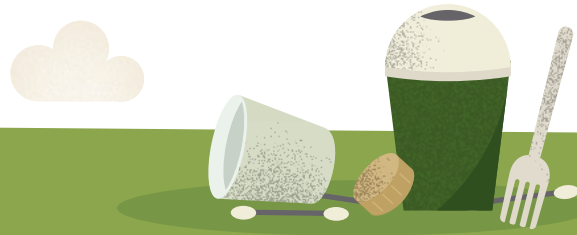


INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Single-use (or disposable) plastics are only used once before they are thrown away or recycled. Some of the biggest 'plastic polluters' are takeaway cups and lids, bottles, bags, plastic stirrers and cutlery.

Of the 300 million+ tonnes of plastic we produce every year, around 50% is intended for single-use purposes. This means that the majority of the plastic pollution that ends up in our oceans and environment is single-use and, although likely to only have been used for a few moments, it will have a long-lasting impact on our planet!



A LITTLE HISTORY

The invention of plastic in 1907 was considered a breakthrough. This revolutionary material, that was relatively cheap to produce, lightweight, versatile, strong, colourful and didn't break easily, opened the door to a whole host of new possibilities. It offered improved hygiene and safety in areas of medicine, a safe, versatile material for making toys and other equipment for babies and children, as well as better packaging for food, and therefore a reduction in food waste.

For many years only the benefits of this material were perceived, with little knowledge of the potentially damaging consequences for natural eco-systems, the climate and human health.

Plastic production has increased from 2 million tonnes per year in 1950 to over 300 million tonnes per year now. A total of over 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been created since it was invented, with around 80% of it no longer in use and now circling the environment.

*"I created Bake-lite,
the first synthetic
plastic, in 1907"*

Leo Baekeland



INTRODUCTION

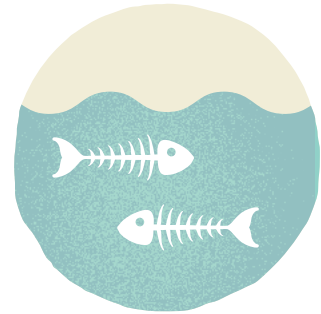
PROBLEMS WITH PLASTIC



Plastic is made from fossil fuels (a non-renewable and finite resource) – 8% of the world's crude oil is used for producing plastic.



Around 50% of the plastic items produced are designed to be single-use and get thrown away almost immediately.



Plastic destroys marine habitats.



Sea creatures and birds can get caught in plastic waste or be injured by it.



Only about 9% of the plastic that has been produced since its invention has been recycled. In addition to this, plastic can only be recycled 3 or 4 times before it reaches the end of its life.



It is predicted that, if nothing changes in our plastic consumption habits, by 2050 there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish.

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEMS WITH PLASTIC



Around 8 million tonnes of plastic flows into the sea every year.



Fish and marine creatures ingest plastic.

This can cause them harm or to choke.

The plastic they eat could get into the human food chain.



663 species of animals and birds around the world are harmed by plastic every year.

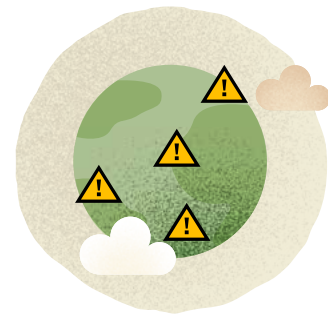


Plastic doesn't degrade in a natural way - it breaks down into increasingly smaller pieces called micro-plastics.

Micro-plastics can never be properly cleaned up.



Synthetic items of clothing release plastic microfibres every time they're washed, hence adding to water pollution.



No ocean on Earth is unaffected by plastic pollution.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

The subject of single-use plastic is a very high-profile topic, with the government, local authorities, major organisations and businesses all working to find alternatives and solutions.

We can all play our part in reducing single-use plastics by making some small changes to our lifestyles:

- ✓ **Carry a refillable water bottle**
- ✓ **Take your own reusable shopping bags**
- ✓ **Invest in a reusable cup for takeaway coffees**
- ✓ **Pack your lunch in reusable tubs or food wraps**
- ✓ **Take your own reusable cutlery**
- ✓ **Choose plastic free snack items like homemade cakes/biscuits or veg sticks in a reusable tub**
- ✓ **Buy loose fruit and veg and pop it in a reusable bag**
- ✓ **Take your own tubs to the deli, meat or fish counter**
- ✓ **Buy clothes made from natural fibres as synthetics shed plastic micro-fibres**
- ✓ **Try bunting, streamers or other reusable decorations for parties instead of balloons**

By taking part in the **Reduce Single-Use Project**, your school will be making a huge difference too!



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT**STEP 1****IDENTIFY WHICH CHARTER TARGETS YOU ARE ALREADY ACHIEVING.**

The school charter (page 9) is made up of a set of targets which, once achieved, will help your school to reduce their use of single-use plastics and products as much as possible.

Begin by involving the students in ticking off any targets that you feel your school is already achieving. (If this totals more than four, you can apply for your first award. Please see page 17 for further details).

You may wish to carry out an audit to help you to identify what the current situation is (please see page 10).



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT**AUDIT**

Ask students to spend some time visiting different areas of the school at different times of day and taking notes about any single-use plastics that they can see in use.

When it comes to thinking about the packaging that comes into school on office and stationery supplies, cleaning products or food delivered to the kitchen, several key members of staff will need to be involved and asked to keep a record of any products that arrive in school in single-use packaging.

Similarly, students may need to set up a meeting with catering staff to establish what single-use plastics are used during food preparation and storage and to discuss viable alternatives.



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT

AUDIT

Some things to look out for:

Lunchtime

- Any packaging associated with school provided lunches, including school packed lunches and hot meals. For example, plastic wrap on sandwiches, individual sauce sachets or disposable plastic cups or spoons
- Homemade packed lunches. For example, plastic wrap on sandwiches, drink pouches and biscuit/snack wrappers
- Any single-use plastics that are used to wrap/store food in the school kitchen
- Supplies for the school kitchen. What foods/ingredients arrive pre-packaged?



Breaktime

- Packaging on breaktime snacks provided by the school or sold in a school tuck shop
- Snacks brought in from home that are packaged in single-use plastic



Other

- Any other single-use plastic products that are used in general areas of the school, for example, laminated displays that are only used once or disposable plastic cups
- Are disposable cups, plates or cutlery used in the staffroom? How are their tea and coffee supplies packaged?
- Office supplies, such as reams of paper and other stationery supplies, are sometimes wrapped in plastic
- What sorts of cleaning items are used? Are disposable wipes etc used and is the packaging single-use?



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT**STEP 2****DECIDE WHICH TARGETS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS
AND DRAW UP AN ACTION PLAN TO HELP YOU WITH THIS.**

Now you know what you're already doing, it's time to decide what to focus on next. Revisit the charter and select the targets you are going to work on. Once the new targets have been chosen, you will need to put together an action plan outlining how you will tackle them.

Remember, you do not need to try to tackle everything at once – you will achieve an award for every four targets you complete. We therefore recommend working on a set of just four targets at a time.



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT

COMPILING THE ACTION PLAN

Discuss with the students the charter targets you plan to work on - ask them to use their observations from the audit to start to draw out exactly what the problems are that they need to address in relation to each chosen target. For example:

- For the lunchtime target 'use reusable plates, bowls and cups for all hot meals', they may have found that disposable cups are used for drinks in the canteen or that desserts are served in single-use bowls
- Or for the breaktime target 'eliminate single-use plastic packaging from snacks sold at school', it might be that the tuck shop sells water in single-use plastic bottles or flapjacks that are wrapped in clingfilm

Once the problems have been identified, decide what action needs to be taken in order to address these issues, what alternatives could be used instead of the single-use items and who will need to be involved in either actioning or approving it.



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT

COMPILING THE ACTION PLAN

Remember – it is always better to replace single-use plastic items with something reusable if possible, rather than simply substituting with another single-use item made from a different material.

You may want to record your ideas in a similar format to the example action plan included on page 15.

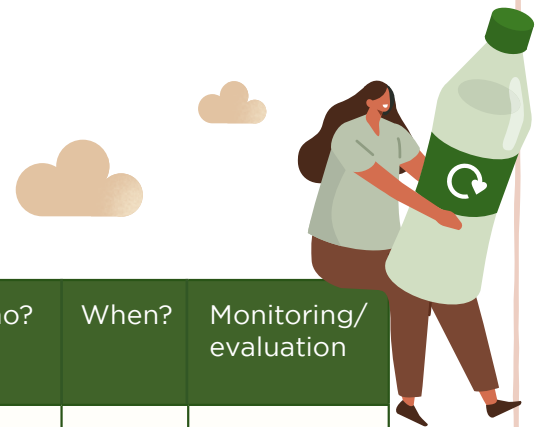
Although the project should be led by a designated group of students and the associated key staff members, it will be important to inform and involve all staff, students and parents of your plans to ensure the success of the project.

Engaging with suppliers will also be key as many items arrive in school wrapped in single-use plastic. Suppliers, however, may be able to offer alternative reusable packaging (or no packaging) if you contact them. Alternatively, you may be able to switch to equivalent products that are packaged in a more eco-friendly way or, if completely plastic free isn't an option for certain products, there may be scope for buying larger packs to reduce the overall plastic wastage.



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT

EXAMPLE ACTION PLAN



Targets from Charter	How?	Who?	When?	Monitoring/evaluation
<p>Lunchtime: Use alternatives to single-use plastic packaging in all school provided lunches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy large refillable pump dispensers to replace individual sauce sachets • Offer whole pieces of fruit in place of bagged prepared fruit • Serve cakes etc on reusable plates instead of in plastic wrap 			
<p>Lunchtime: Ask kitchen staff to use reusable containers/ single-use plastic alternatives for covering food during storage and preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen staff to find ways of using lidded reusable tubs where possible • Buy suitable reusable tubs 			
<p>Lunchtime: Reduce the amount of single-use plastic packaging suppliers use on food being delivered to schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to suppliers about packaging alternatives/ take back schemes • Investigate alternative suppliers 			
<p>Other: Stop using any unnecessary single-use plastics/ products in the staffroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy reusable cups/ glasses for staffroom • Buy reusable cutlery for staffroom • Remove disposable cups from water dispenser 			

REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT**STEP 3****IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN**

Once drawn up, the action plan should be a working document. As you begin working through it you may need to change or add things according to what happens - that is fine, it is important that it works for you.

There is no time limit to complete your targets, again it is down to what fits in best for your school. Tackle it one step at a time and you will soon start to see things progressing and all your hard work and commitment paying off.



REDUCE SINGLE-USE PROJECT



EARNING AWARDS

As you work your way through your targets you will achieve increasingly prestigious levels of the award:



Bronze Award

Complete a total of **4 actions** from the charter.



Silver Award

Complete a total of **8 actions** from the charter.



Gold Award

Complete a total of **12 actions** from the charter and achieve single-use free status!



You will self-assess as you work through the project so, in order to receive your certificate, you will need to send us details of the targets you've met from the charter and evidence of the changes you've made to achieve this. Please see page 18 for further details.

If your school had already taken steps to reduce single-use items before you signed up to this scheme, and you have fulfilled one or more charter targets as a result, these achievements will also count towards your award!

REDUCE SINGLE-USE AWARDS

APPLYING FOR AN AWARD

Congratulations on taking another step towards becoming a single-use free school!

In order to apply for an award please email us at:
waste_strategy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
with the following information:

- School name and address
- Contact name and email address
- The award level(s) being applied for:
 - **Bronze** (total of 4 targets on the charter completed)
 - **Silver** (total of 8 targets on the charter completed)
 - **Gold** (total of 12 targets on the charter completed)
- Details of the charter targets you have completed and what actions you took to achieve them

Please remember - if you had already achieved some of the targets before beginning this project, they will still count towards your award. Simply include brief details about what you did/do to meet them along with the information about any new targets you've met. If applying for your Silver or Gold award, you do not need to resend details of the work completed that you've previously sent to us (we will have this on record).



We would love to see photos showing the work you've completed and the changes you've made. If you're happy to share them with us, and for us to share them via our social media channels or on our website, please let us know.

REDUCE SINGLE-USE

NEXT STEPS

Now you have started your journey towards becoming a single-use plastic free school, you may wish to take things a step further...



Spread the word

Help your family, friends and neighbours to reduce single-use plastics and products at home. Waste free lunches and refillable water bottles for everyone are a great place to start! What other swaps could they make?

Take on another challenge

For further actions and accreditation, why not get involved with the Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) plastic free schools programme? The work you've completed so far can contribute to this, plus you will be provided with further challenges.

For further information, visit: plasticfreeschools.org.uk

The work you complete for this project can also help you to work towards Eco-schools awards.

For further details, please visit the Eco-schools website: eco-schools.org.uk

