Zero Waste Schools

Quick Guide for Administration

Making a difference...together

Why Zero Waste?

Schools play a central role in shaping sustainable communities. Working toward zero waste lowers their environmental footprint and teaches students how collective action creates lasting change.

First Steps for Administration

- Start the year with faculty training on waste reduction, bin sorting and which items to send home for recycling. Learn more about what goes where: www.crd.bc/whatgoeswhere
- Assign a green team each year to run monthly visual waste audits in faculty areas, note sorting errors and provide reminders.
- Label reusable cafeteria containers and utensils, set up collection and washing and adjust food types or volumes to minimize waste.
- Set up a faculty swap station for trading unused items.
- Give after-hours groups clear recycling guidelines and resources.
- At year end, host classroom clean-outs to recycle and reuse supplies. Provide labeled bins.

Zero Waste School Maintenance

- Use assemblies, posters and announcements to explain recycling and give reminders.
- Host school-wide teacher-led classroom waste audit competitions throughout the year to track progress and establish waste reduction and sorting habits.
- Apply for up to $5000 to reduce school waste: CRD Rethink Waste Community Grant Program
- Become a certified EcoSchool. EcoSchools Canada's free program tracks and rewards environmental actions in publicly funded schools.
- Buy recycled and low-packaging products. Choose durable, high-quality items to reduce replacements. Adjust office workflows to cut waste, like default double-sided printing.

Recognize Progress with No-Cost, Zero Waste Rewards

- Reward classrooms that reduce their waste and sort properly with no-cost, zero waste ideas like extra time for recess or favourite activities.
- Acknowledge the efforts of classrooms and faculty in front of the entire school community such as at an assembly, over morning announcements or in the school newsletter.

Celebrate progress, not perfection. Small, consistent changes add up to zero waste culture!