

When carrying out a Waste Audit in your school, the aim is to find out if there are opportunities to reduce your waste even further. The best way to go about this is by actually finding out exactly what type of waste you generate and then to weigh the waste your self. However, this might not always be possible and sometimes you might have to estimate how much waste is in your bin bag or wheelie bin. We have created a handy guide for you so that you can guess how much waste you are generating and, better yet, how much you might reduce your waste by. You can also see that we are sharing a handy check list with you so that you can check what type of waste is generated even before it ends up in the bin or in your lunchbox before you take it home. Good luck with your work!

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T WEIGH YOUR WASTE?

Here are some conversions you can use to input in your application form at the end of the year



Compost or organic waste is heavier, you can apply these conversion rates:



Recyclables are highly variable but here are some general conversion rates you may use:



What if you want to weigh the waste yourself?



Let's get onto the weighing scales! Check how much you weigh yourself first. Then hop off the scales and get your bag of waste and weigh yourself again but now with the bag(s) in your hand. Write down the new weight and subtract your own weight and...voila... now you know how much the waste you collected weighs!

For example, lets assume you weigh in at 45kg and when you get back on the scales with your waste it states that you now weigh 54kg your equation is: $54\text{kg} - 45\text{kg} = 9\text{kg}$ so your waste weighs 9kg. Good Luck!

Now that you have some idea about how much your waste weighs it is time to start finding opportunities to reduce your waste. The best way to do this is by understanding the type of waste you generate. You could have three different bins in your classroom;

recycling bin



landfill/rubbish bin



compost bin



It might be difficult to empty out your bin to look at the type of waste you have in there. Therefore, we have created the checklists you can see on the next few pages to help you with this process. Check off what waste you are putting in the bins and maybe even the waste you have left in your lunchbox. This will give you some idea what type of waste you are generating and will help you find ways to reduce it.



LANDFILL WASTE CHECKLIST

Record what's in your bin without getting your hands dirty! Print this checklist and stick it next to your bin. Colour in one square for every item you put in the bin. This will form a graph so you can see what kind of rubbish you have, and what you can try to cut down on.

Start date for this bin bag: _____ End date for this bin bag: _____

The landfill bin is for waste we can't reuse, recycle or compost. This rubbish ends up in landfills (buried underground) or incinerated (burned at very high temperatures). Soft plastics, products made from "blended materials" (e.g. a disposable cup is made from a blend of paper and plastic which cannot be separated) and soiled tinfoil, all go in the rubbish bin.

Tissue																			
Wrapper																			
Old Markers																			
Crisp/popcorn packet																			
Plastic cutlery																			
Tinfoil (dirty)																			
Cling-film																			
Plastic gloves																			
Disposable mask																			
Straw																			
Disposable cup																			
Empty frubes packet																			

But what about....?

- Clothes and fabric..... send to a clothes bank like Clothes Pod <https://www.clothespod.ie/> , a charity shop, create something new or hold a swap shop.
- Batteries and appliances..... check out WEEE Recycle for their electronics recycling facilities <https://www.weeeireland.ie/>
- Glass..... bring to your nearest bottle bank
- Furniture and other big items..... visit <https://www.mywaste.ie/what-to-do-with-my-large-items/> for lots of tips and information.

RECYCLING WASTE CHECKLIST

Recycling means turning waste into something that can be used again. It's much better than sending waste to landfill but it still uses a lot of energy – so refuse, reuse and repurpose when you can.

Remember recycling must be clean and dry before going in the bin.

Since September 2021 soft plastics like wrappers may also be disposed off in the recycling bin , as long as they are clean, dry and loose.

Plastic bottle																			
Scrap paper																			
Clean yoghurt pot																			
Clean milk carton																			
Clean juice carton																			
Toilet roll core																			
Card/cardboard																			
Plastic cutlery																			
Drinks can																			
Rigid plastic																			
Tins (e.g. tuna tin)																			
Clean tinfoil																			
Clean plastic bag																			



The Deposit Return scheme began on 1 February 2024.

The cost of the deposit is automatically added to the cost of the drink.

You can get your deposit by returning your containers as long as they are displaying the Re-turn logo.

When you buy a drink in a plastic bottle, aluminium or steel can that features the Return logo, you pay a small deposit in addition to the price of the drink.

When you return your empty and undamaged drink container to participating shops and supermarkets, you get your deposit back in full. <https://re-turn.ie/>

COMPOST BIN CHECKLIST

Any plant or animal-based products usually go in the compost bin, where they are broken down by natural processes and can be used to enrich the soil.

Never put plastics, metal or glass in the compost bin.

Apple core																			
Banana skin																			
Orange peel																			
Other fruit/peel																			
Pencil shavings																			
Leftover lunch																			
Egg shells																			
Kitchen roll/tissue																			
Teabags* and coffee																			
Compostable cup**																			
Vegware**																			

- * Many teabags contain a small amount of plastic; to avoid this, choose eco-friendly brands – or most simply, use loose tea leaves instead of teabags.
- ** Compostable cups and Vegware may look like normal disposable cups and cutlery, but they are actually made from corn starch and other plant products. Check the label if you're unsure if it's plastic or vegware. If it is vegware it should go in the compost bin – but only if the compost bin goes to an industrial composter; unfortunately these products still won't break down in your garden compost – which is why reusable is always better for the environment than single-use!