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**Use this guide to**

* assess your school’s **waste reduction and recycling (WRR)** practices
* learn about and help plan actions your school can take to reduce waste and recycle more

**Assistance:** Ask for help from the King County Green Schools Program. For participating schools, the program provides hands-on assistance, site visits, tools, and step-by-step guidance.

**Resources:** [Waste Reduction and Recycling](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/waste-reduction.asp) resources on our program website.

**Recognition:** To be recognized as a Level One King County Green School, complete the steps listed on the last page of this guide.

**School name:**

**School district:**

**Date:**

**Name of district resource conservation (RCM) or facilities manager:**

**Contact information for district RCM or facilities manager:**

**Name of person completing this guide:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[ ]** Teacher | **[ ]** Principal | **[ ]** Custodian | **[ ]** Student | **[ ]** Parent | **[ ]** Other       |

**A. Form your team**

**Complete the following 2 REQUIRED actions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | 1. Form a Green Schools team comprised of two or more staff members, along with any interested students, student group(s), or parent volunteers. Include on the team at least two staff members such as teachers, principal, other administrators and custodial staff. Helpful tips: In many schools, one staff member oversees school-wide WRR education and outreach, and another staff member oversees the placement and emptying of recycling containers throughout the school, including classrooms, offices, cafeteria and other common areas. Student involvement is important – and these two staff members can advise or lead student efforts.List the names and titles of staff members here:      Optional: Register your student Green Team so that students can receive recognition and prizes at the end of the year.  |
| [ ]  | 2. Announce your school’s participation in the King County Green Schools Program, and invite students and staff to participate in a Green Team. Briefly note when and how you completed this action item:        |

Notes:

**B. Assess and monitor**

**Complete the following 2 REQUIRED actions**:

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| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | 1. Use this guide to assess your school’s waste reduction and recycling (WRR) practices and to decide which items in your school’s garbage can be reduced, reused, and recycled. *King County can assist with this activity.*  Notes:         |
| [ ]  | 2. Calculate your school’s recycling rate at least twice during each school year. *Your* *King County Green Schools Program representative can help your school to calculate its recycling rate.*Date:       Beginning recycling rate:      percent Date:       Ending recycling rate:      percentNotes:         |
| [ ]  | 3. OPTIONALAs garbage and recycling volumes change, adjust your collection service (i.e., less or more frequent collection, larger or smaller outdoor containers)*. Public schools typically ask school district staff to make these adjustments with the district’s contracted hauler.* Note any collection service changes:       Check this box if changes were not needed: [ ]  |

**C. Education and outreach**

**Teachers**

See [King County Programs for Educators Guide](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/education/index.asp) for a list of classroom programs, workshops, curricula, field trips, videos, and more.

**Climate change connections**

Wasting less, reusing what you can, and recycling are important solutions to global warming and climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions (which are the primary cause of recent climate change) are generated when products are manufactured and transported, and when materials, especially organic waste such as food, decompose in landfills. See #10 below.

*Resources:* King County’s [Climate Change and Solid Waste](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/climate/index.asp), [Waste Reduction Resources](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/waste-reduction-resources.asp), [Recycling Resources](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/recycling-resources.asp), and Washington State Recycling Association [fact sheet](https://www.wsra.net/assets/docs/Resources/Fact_Sheets/hot_topic_energyfuel_final.pdf).

**Complete the following 3 REQUIRED actions**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Introduce all students and staff, including custodians, to the school’s WRR policies and procedures at the start of each school year *(or have a plan to do this)* and whenever you make changes or improvements. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       |
| [ ]  | Regularly (*at least once per month)* promote WRR practices, including why they are important and how everyone in the school community can participate. Briefly describe how and when you did this:      *Resources:* Use announcements and other tools in the King County [Recycling Toolkit](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/recycling-toolkit.asp). *Note: Methods may include classroom presentations, bulletin board displays, school website, articles in school newsletters and newspapers, periodic e-mails to staff, PA announcements or assembly, staff meeting, and cafeteria announcements.* |
|  |  |
| [ ]  | Share your waste reduction and recycling successes with the school community. Briefly describe how and when you did this.       |

**Students and classrooms**

Learn about waste reduction and recycling, and take action to reduce waste and recycle more! See the first **nine** action items below.

**Complete at least 4 of the following recommended actions**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | 1. Start a student Green Team or recruit new members. Briefly note the number of students in the team and the type of group (examples: fifth grade class, after school club, ASB students, Leadership class):        |
| [ ]  | 2. Register your student Green Team as a King County Green Team to receive support and recognition for student teams*.* *Resources --* [Elementary schools](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/greenteams.asp); [Secondary schools](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/secondaryschool/gtworkshops.asp):[Grants for Green Team projects](https://kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/elementary-school/documents/GreenTeamGrant.ashx?la=en).  |
| [ ]  | 3. Do a waste audit to see what materials are routinely thrown out (instead of recycled or reused) in your school. Share results and recommendations with your school. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       *Resource:* [Let’s Talk Trash waste audit](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/secondaryschool/documents/lets-talk-trash-home-classroom-audit.pdf)   |
| [ ]  | 4. Conduct a contest to see which classroom, grade level, or lunch period generates the least amount of garbage per day or week. Briefly note how and when you did this:       |
| [ ] [ ]  | 5. Conduct a Quiz Show about recycling and waste reduction (WRR) during lunch, at an assembly, or in classrooms. Briefly note how and when you did this.       *Resources*: [Quiz Show questions](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/quiz-show-questions.pdf) and [Green Team Quiz Show Guide](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/secondaryschool/documents/GT-Quiz-Show.pdf) 6. Create posters about recycling or waste reduction. Many schools create a 3-dimensional display of recyclable materials to show what can and can’t be recycled. Place displays or signs in common areas such as cafeteria, hallways, library, and main office. Briefly note how and when you did this:       *Resource*: Ask your King County Green Schools Program representative for sample photos of three-dimensional signs.  |
| [ ]  | 7. Create a skit or short video about recycling or waste reduction practices (such as using both sides of each piece of paper or using durable bottles), and share it at an assembly, in classrooms, in the cafeteria, or at a staff meeting. Briefly note how and when you did this:       *Resources*: Ask your King County Green Schools representative for tips, and see [Fast Facts about Waste Reduction and Recycling](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/fast-facts-wrr.pdf). |
| [ ]  | 8. Present a short training about WRR to teachers, other staff, or PTA members. Students can lead or help. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       *Resource*: [Staff Meeting Presentations: How to present about Waste Reduction and Recycling](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/staff-meeting-presentations.pdf) |
| [ ] [ ]  | 9. Train students or parent volunteers to monitor cafeteria recycling stations, and schedule monitors to remind students what items can be recycled and to encourage waste reduction. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       *Resources:* Ask your King County Green Schools representative to lead the training.10. Include climate change messages in education and outreach about your school’s WRR practices. Educate students and staff about how WRR practices reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       *Resources:* King County’s [Climate Change and Solid Waste](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/climate/index.asp), [Waste Reduction Resources](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/waste-reduction-resources.asp), [Recycling Resources](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/recycling-resources.asp), Washington State Recycling Association [fact sheet](https://www.wsra.net/assets/docs/Resources/Fact_Sheets/hot_topic_energyfuel_final.pdf).  |
| [ ]  | 11. Include WRR lessons in one or more of these subject areas: Science, math, reading, writing, history, social studies. Consider guest speakers, field trips, classroom resources. Briefly describe how and when your school did this:       *Resources:* [King County’s program guide](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/education/index.asp); [King County elementary school assembly program and classroom workshops](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/index.asp); [King County middle and high school classroom workshops](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/secondaryschool/workshops.asp); [Elementary school activity guides](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/guides.asp); [Recycling resources](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/recycling-resources.asp) |
| [ ]  | 12. Mentor younger students in your school or nearby school. Students needing service learning or community service hours can mentor other students or schools in the King County Green Schools Program. Examples: Present about WRR, train students to monitor cafeteria recycling stations, or help students build classroom reuse paper boxes. Briefly describe how and when you did this:       *Resources: Ask your King County Green Schools Program representative for resources.*  |

[ ]  13. Other:       (What other WRR education or outreach was completed?)

**D. Waste reduction**

**Complete at least one waste reduction improvement in each of the following three areas (1, 2, and 3).**

**1. Reduce paper use**

**Complete at least 1 of the following actions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | a. Limit use of paper hand-outs – Use the blackboard/whiteboard or document camera, or refer students to books and web sites.         |
| [ ] [ ]  | b. Create teacher web pages on the school website where assignments can be posted rather than printed.      c. Write on both sides -- Use one-sided prints for drafts/scratch pads. Place labeled paper reuse trays in each classroom and office. Regularly promote this practice.         |
| [ ]  | d. Make double-sided copies – Adopt a double-sided photocopying and printing policy, and provide instructions to photocopy machine users. Use signage and reminders to regularly promote double-sided copying and printing.         |
| [ ]  | e. Eliminate unwanted subscriptions and mail – Request removal from vendor mail lists.       *Resource:* [Reduce Junk Mail](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/wasteprevention/junkmail.asp)  |
| [ ]  | f. Use e-mail instead of paper copies for one or more regularly issued staff or parent newsletter, bulletin, or memo.        |
| [ ]  | g. Print only what you need. Reduce print runs based on number of leftover copies. ”Right size” the paper used (e.g., use half sheets). Change the margin default to reduce the amount of paper needed for each print job.        |
| [ ] [ ] [ ]  | h. Promote “paper free” or “no print” or “print only what you need” days two or three times during the school year to encourage the habit of only printing what you need.       i. Create a paper budget for each school staff position, recognizing that different staff positions require different levels of paper use, and assign each staff member a copy machine code. Track paper use and share with staff members their monthly paper use.      j. Hold a staff contest for reducing paper use. Reward staff members that are able to reduce their paper use the most and ask them to share their strategies at a staff meeting.       |
| [ ]  | k. Establish, promote and monitor a reuse station (e.g., a shelf or area) for used office supplies (e.g., file folders and envelopes that can be reused). Office staff can monitor or oversee this reuse area.        |
| [ ]  | l. Conduct a “Zero Waste Locker/Cubby Clean Out” and a “Swap Day” at the end of the school year or prior to all school breaks.       *Resources:* [Guide to Swap Day](https://kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/greenschools/documents/School_Supply_Swap_Day.ashx?la=en) |
| [ ]  | m. Other:       (What other paper waste reduction practice did your school initiate?) See [Options for reducing office paper consumption](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/wasteprevention/office-paper-reduction.asp) |

**2. Reduce organic/compostable waste**

**Complete at least 1 of the following actions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | a. Encourage reduction of wasted food. Promotional messages can include: “Take or bring only what you will eat” and “If you brought a lunch from home, take leftovers home.”  |
| [ ]  | b. Set up a share table where students can place or take unwanted school-provided foods that are unopened (e.g., unopened milk cartons, yogurts, crackers).        |
| [ ]  | c. Donate leftover edible foods and drinks to a food bank (at the end of a school year and other times as needed). Briefly note how and when you did this:       *Note: District and school administrator approval is required. Ask your King County Green Schools Program representative for assistance.* |
| [ ]  | d. Leave grass clippings on the lawn/athletic fields (grass-cycling) or compost leaves and other yard waste on site. Briefly note how and when your school did this:       |
| [ ]  | e. Other:       (What other significant waste reduction practice did the school initiate to reduce organic/compostable waste?) *Note: There are other ways to reduce wasted food! Ask your King County Green Schools Program representative for help.* |

**3. Reuse durable products, use bulk dispensers**

**Complete at least 1 of the following actions**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | a. Replace disposable or compostable trays with durable trays.        |
| [ ]  | b. Eliminate or reduce use of cafeteria trays.        |
| [ ]  | c. Replace disposable or compostable utensils with durable utensils.        |
| [ ]  | d. Replace plastic-wrapped utensils, straws, and napkins with unwrapped utensils, straws, and napkins.       |
| [ ]  | e. Replace disposable or compostable plates, bowls, glasses, and cups with durable products in one or both of the following areas.       Check applicable area(s).[ ]  In the student cafeteria[ ]  In the staff break-room  |
| [ ]  | f. Use bulk dispensers in the student cafeteria.        |
| [ ]  | g. Save and reuse durable supplies - Maintain a storage closet or bin for reusable party/holiday decorations, classroom displays, hall passes, and visitor badges, etc. Note what supplies are reused by your school:       |
| [ ]  | h. Encourage students and their families to pack lunches from home in reusable containers and lunch sacks. Briefly note how and when you did this:      *Resource:* <http://www.wastefreelunches.org/>   |
| [ ]  | i. Other:       (What other significant practice did your school initiate to reuse durable products or eliminate unnecessary products?) |

**E. Recycling**

**Complete the following 9 REQUIRED actions**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | 1. Place a recycling container in every classroom.        |
| [ ]  | 2. Place a recycling container in each office and next to each photocopy machine.        |
| [ ]  | 3. Place a recycling container(s) in one or both of the following areas.       [ ]  In the kitchen for steel cans, plastic jugs and other recyclable materials.[ ]  In the staff lounge or staff break-room for paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and other recyclable materials. |
| [ ]  | 4. Make sure that recycling containers are easily visible and, whenever possible, are located next to trash containers.        |
| [ ]  | 5. On each recycling container, place a recycling sign listing what can and can’t be recycled.       |
|  |  |
| [ ]  | 6. At a minimum, collect the following materials for recycling: |
| [ ]  | Paper |
| [ ]  | Cardboard |
| [ ]  | Aluminum cans |
| [ ]  | Plastic bottles |
| [ ]  | Fluorescent light bulbs and tubes (required by law) |
| [ ]  | Electronic waste (required by law) |

|  |
| --- |
| **Optional** *Schools are encouraged to collect the following materials for recycling or composting.* |
| [ ]  | Food scraps to be composted on-site (in worm bins, Earth Tubs, etc.) |
| [ ]  | Food scraps/food soiled paper collected for off-site composting  |
| [ ]  | Glass bottles and jars |
| [ ]  | Milk cartons |
| [ ]  | Scrap metals+ |
| [ ]  | Steel/tin cans and plastic jugs (kitchen area) |
| [ ]  | Batteries |
| [ ]  | Cell phones\* |
| [ ]  | Ink jets and toner printer cartridges\* |

 Other materials:       Other materials:

+ School districts sometimes receive revenue from recycling companies for scrap metals such as copper, brass, aluminum, and steel from the maintenance shop.

\* Schools often receive cash when they return these items to be recycled.

|  |
| --- |
| [ ]  7. Keep contaminants to two percent or less. Contaminants in recycling bins include liquids, food*,* straws, plastic utensils, and bottle caps. See recycling signs. Only accepted recyclable materials should be placed in recycling containers. (In food scrap bins, only place food scraps and other compostable materials. No plastic, metal, glass, or other non-compostable items should be placed in food scrap bins.)   |
| [ ]  8. Regularly empty all indoor recycling containers so that they do not overflow. List who  empties the recycling containers at your school:       |
| [ ]  | 9. Reach a recycling rate of 40 percent (or more) OR improve the school’s recycling rate by at least 15 percentage points. **Our school’s recycling rate is       percent.**  |

**Optional: Purchase recycled content paper and other recycled products**

[ ]  Purchase recycled content paper (i.e., paper made from paper that has been recycled)

 and other recycled products (i.e., products made from recyclable materials).

*Note: The EPA recommends purchasing paper with a minimum of 30 percent recycled content*. *See our* [*environmental purchasing*](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/environmental-purchasing.asp) *website for information and resources:*

Please list the recycled products purchased by your school:       Notes:

**F. Hazardous materials management**

**Complete the following 1 REQUIRED action:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Public schools: Ask your district to send you the **Chemical Hygiene plan** for your school, as well as any related school policies or procedures. Private schools: Ask your school administrator for the school’s Chemical Hygiene plan and any related policies or procedures. Briefly describe how and when you did this.       |

**Complete at least 1 of the following actions**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Review the **Healthy Schools - Best Practices Guide** which can be found on [Healthy Schools](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/hazardous-materials.asp) -- and complete at least one action item. Briefly describe which action item(s) was completed.       |
| [ ]  | **Ceramics art programs**: Art teacher(s) watch the [Chemical Hazards in Ceramics](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Otev9SFXOk&index=1&list=PL4t4e1hb7AcyelXw8BexDLZ4llwzvqBGJ) video (11-minutes in length, from the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County) and select at least one of the best practices discussed in the video to put into place. Briefly describe how and when you did this, and which best practice(s) you put into place or plan to put into place.       |
| [ ]  | **Learn about the chemicals used at your school**: Identify chemical products at your school that require special handling for safe use. For at least two chemical products used at your school, identify the physical hazards, health hazards, environmental hazards and disposal method(s) required. Briefly describe how and when you did this, and list the chemical products you learned about.       |
| [ ]  | **Telephone consultation:** If your school has a specific question, concern or need regarding hazardous materials management and disposal, contact the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County at 206-263-8899 or business.waste@kingcounty.gov.Financial assistance may be available for disposal costs or safer chemical substitution.  Briefly describe your question, when you did this, and the assistance you received.       |

Notes:

**Steps to Recognition as a Level One King County Green School**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [ ]  | **Step 1.**  | Use this guide to assess your school’s waste reduction and recycling practices, and to decide which actions you will complete.*Ask your King County Green Schools representative for help.* |
| [ ]  | **Step 2.**  | Calculate your school’s recycling rate when you begin the program and after you have made improvements. *Ask your King County Green Schools representative for help.* |
| [ ]  | **Step 3.**  | Complete all required actions in the Level One guide. Send completed guide to your King County Green Schools representative.*Ask your King County Green Schools representative for help.* |
| [ ]  | **Step 4.**  | *Optional* – To showcase your efforts, share with King County Green Schools Program a photo(s) and either signed release form(s) or an email stating that your school has parent/guardian permission to use the photo(s) of students that appear in the photo(s). *We’ll include the photo(s) on your school’s success story page!* |
| [ ]  | **Step 5.**  | **Celebrate!** Let your district and community know that your school is a Level One King County Green School. Share your successes at * an assembly
* on your school website
* in a parent newsletter
* at a school board meeting

Visit [Certificates of Recognition](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/certificates-recognition.asp) for forms that you can fill in and print for Green Teams, students, staff, and parents. *Your school will receive a Green School banner, certificate, and online success story, and will be mentioned in a press release.* |
|  |  |  |

September 2018

 