

King County Green Schools Program

Litter Reduction

Best Practices Guide for Schools



Use this guide to

- Assess, plan, and initiate or improve litter reduction practices.
- Learn about and help plan actions your school can take to reduce litter.

Assistance: Ask for help from the King County Green Schools Program. For participating schools, the program provides assistance and guidance.

Recognition: If your school is working on reaching the Sustaining Green School level, see [Sustaining Green School](#) for the steps to recognition. One requirement for recognition as a Sustaining Green School is to complete one additional action or educational strategy each year – and to fulfill that requirement, your school may select any action from any Green Schools Best Practices guide, including this guide.

By **maintaining Level One (waste reduction and recycling) practices**, your school is already helping to reduce litter. Continue the following two actions.

- Color-coded garbage and recycling bins are placed **next to each other** in convenient locations and are **emptied regularly**.

Note: Garbage bins typically are gray or black. Recycling bins should be blue. Bins for collection of food scraps and other compostable materials should be green or yellow.

- Recycling containers are clearly labeled.



Additional best practices are divided into

- Education and outreach
- Litter clean-up
- Policies
- Illegal dumping

Climate change connections

Recycling has a big impact beyond cleaning up litter. When you recycle, you are providing raw materials to businesses that can turn them into new products. By recycling, you are helping to reduce mining or logging of new resources. Recycling can also help decrease your impact on climate change by reducing the energy needed to make new products. See #4 below.

Resources: King County's [Climate Change and Solid Waste](#), [Waste Reduction Resources](#) and [Recycling Resources](#)

Students and classrooms

Help educate your school community about reducing litter. Complete an education or outreach project from the list below or select a project from the "Litter clean-up" section on page 3.



A. Education and outreach

- 1. Conduct an anti-litter campaign to inform students and staff about the importance of proper disposal of garbage and recyclable materials.
 - Involve students, student groups such as a leadership team, and parent volunteers in education and outreach efforts.
 - Use both verbal and visual reminders, including school reader boards, PA announcements, assembly announcements, guest speakers, posters, school newsletters, school newspapers, and other communication methods.
 - Consider holding a competition for anti-litter posters that can be placed on, next to, or above garbage receptacles.
 - Provide feedback: Announce the results of education, outreach, and litter clean-up campaigns.
- 2. Inventory the amounts and types of litter before and after an anti-litter campaign or clean-up activity. To show your progress, create and share a visual exhibit or representation with your school community.
- 3. Recognize students, parents, and staff who helped with education, outreach, or litter clean-up efforts.
- 4. Incorporate climate change messages into your anti-litter campaign. Educate students and staff about actions -- such as reusing and recycling materials -- that they can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.
- 5. Other: An educational or outreach strategy to inform your school community about why and how to reduce litter.

B. Litter clean-up

- 1. Conduct regular litter clean-up patrols (including illegal dumping patrols) both inside and outside the school facility. Broadcast results to the school community, along with reminders to place trash in the appropriate garbage and recycling containers.
 - Consider setting a goal (e.g., reduce litter by 50 percent).
 - Consider involving students, student groups, and parent and staff volunteers.
 - Consider offering community service credits for secondary school students who participate in school litter patrols.
- 2. Adopt a location to keep litter-free. Consider [Adopt a Park or Trail](#). Regularly share results of the clean-up efforts to the school community.



C. Policies

- Establish and promote a written anti-litter policy. Promote the anti-litter policy through PA and assembly announcements, reader boards, school website, school newsletters and newspapers, presentations to classrooms, posters, or other communication methods. Share a copy of the anti-litter policy with your King County Green School representative.
 - Consider including in the policy: (1) a rule for students against eating outside the school cafeteria; (2) a rule for students against bringing take out/fast food to campus.

D. Illegal dumping

If your school is experiencing illegal dumping problems:

- 1. Report incidences to King County's [illegal dumping hot-line](#) at 206-296-7483
- 2. Work with your district and hauler to place locks on your outdoor garbage and recycling containers.
- 3. Erect enclosures or screening around outdoor containers.
- 4. Post "No Dumping" signs.
- 5. Install cameras if necessary.

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