**Reducing Materials from the Waste Stream**

Source reduction is a simple, common sense approach to waste management. Source reduction decreases the amount of waste created, therefore there is less waste to be disposed of in a landfill, incinerator or through recycling! For schools to reduce their waste stream they must be creative and open to new ideas. A great way to start on the road to source reduction is to “Precycle”! Precycling is environmentally friendly shopping of any kind, with the purpose of purchasing products that will have minimal impact on the environment in production, use and disposal.

Activities and points

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RD1 | Implement school wide policy on double sided copies: Have the principal make a school wide policy that everybody using the copy machine makes double sided copies when applicable. This not only reduces the amount of paper that is used but it also saves the school money! As part of this activity estimate the amount of paper saved (also calculating the number of trees not cut!) through implementing double sided copying. | 6 |
| RD2 | Make paper pads from used paper: Take paper which has only been used on one side and make recycled paper pads from it – thus using both sides of the paper! You can find easy directions on how to make paper pads online! | 6 |
| RD3 | Use e-mail and e-files: If you haven’t already, have the principal institute a school wide policy for using e-mail rather than paper memos. E-files eliminate the need to print on paper. Estimate the reduction of paper waste through implementing this policy. | 6 |
| RD4 | Save paper: Post notices on a bulletin board, use the PA System, or use interoffice envelopes (10” x 13” manila envelopes with 40-56 name blocks on the front can be purchased at office supply stores. Each time it's re-used, simply cross out the old name and put new name in the next block). | 4 |
| RD5 | Use Coffee mugs: Encourage teachers to use refillable mugs in the faculty rooms.  | 2 |
| RD6 | Educate your school about precycling: Make a display poster which explains what precycling is and how that can help reduce waste. The heading could say: Shop Smart, Precycle! A link to help you out: www.planetpals.com/precycle.html | 4 |
| RD7 | Conduct a Locker Clean-Out Party: Lots and lots of paper can be found in the depths of a locker by the end of the school year. Be prepared to salvage this “waste” by offering to recycle it and save resources as well as school dollars. Remember, an item recycled is a disposal fee avoided!  | 10 |

**Reusing Materials from the Waste Stream**

The practice of reusing materials is not new; it’s been around for centuries! Unfortunately, society has lost its reuse focus and moved toward the "Age of Disposables." At one time, throwing away an item after one use was considered wasteful, now it’s too often second nature. By reusing an item, its useful life is extended, thus demanding fewer new products to be made from natural resources. As with source reduction, schools must be creative and imaginative to reuse items from the waste stream.

 Activities and points

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RE1 | Reuse Small Jars or Bottles to Hold Art Supplies, such as Paint | 2 |
| RE2 | Reuse Metal Cans to Store Classrooms Supplies | 2 |
| RE3 | Reuse Empty Milk Cartons for plant Seedlings | 2 |
| RE4 | Reuse your old greeting/birthday cards: You can make new cards, ornaments, tags for next year’s gifts or decorate gift bags. Here are some websites for ideas: www.makingfriends.com/readers\_cards.htm http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/christmas-cardsrecycling-ideas-and-christmas-card-crafts Show us what you have done so we can share it with others. | 6 |
| RE5 | Have a Book Exchange: For example: Class Book Exchange: Each student should bring a favorite book to class that they no longer want. Place all the books in a box and randomly hand them out to the class students until each person has a book that is new to them. School Wide Book Exchange: Have students bring in books from home that are in good condition and they no longer want. These might be books the students have outgrown. The students get credit for the number of books they bring in. Once the event starts the students can take out at least as many books as they have credits. Any leftover books can go to the students who had not attended the event, as well as to the teachers for their classrooms.  | 10 |
| RE6 | Hold a WASTE-FREE lunch day: Promote a day that each student brings lunch in a reusable bag with washable napkin, silverware and containers. For ideas, check out some of these websites: www.wastefreelunches.org/ http://www.epa.gov/wastes/education/pdfs/lunch.pdf [http://www.ecoliteracy.org/downloads/rethinking-school-lunchguide 10](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/downloads/rethinking-school-lunchguide%2010)  | 10 |
| RE7 | Hold a Swap Shop: Provide a Swap Shop Area for Students to Swap Their Unwanted Items. Publicize the event by making a poster. You might be able to open it to the students during lunchtime! Items to swap can include clothes, books, toys, book bags, video games, DVD’s, cd’s, etc. Any leftover goods can be donated to your local Goodwill, CDC, thrift store, etc | 4 |
| RE8 | Design Earth Day grocery bags: One of the many ways to celebrate Earth Day is to design your own grocery bag. There is a special website dedicated to this project www.earthdaybags.org. | 6 |
| RE9 | Conduct an Inventor Fair: Hold an inventor fair in science class where the machines and contraptions must be made from reused materials. Try this resource: [www.ehow.com/how\_7543562\_make-inventionusing-recycled-materials.html 10](http://www.ehow.com/how_7543562_make-inventionusing-recycled-materials.html%2010) | 10 |
| RE10 | Make a bird feeder or birdhouse: A fun way to reuse items, such as milk jugs, soda bottles, etc. is to make a birdfeeder or birdhouse. There are many resources on the web to choose from; here’s one we found: https://inhabitat.com/how-to-make-a-bird-feeder-from-recycled-materials/ Points are earned if you complete this project as a class/group, not per student. | 10 |

**Recycling Recyclables**

It is estimated that every American throws away four pounds of trash per day, that’s almost one ton per year! Society has three disposal options for the trash it creates at home, school, work, and play: it can be buried in a landfill, burned in an incinerator, or reused through recycling!

Activities and points

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RR1 | Maintain a worm composting bin: Start and maintain for at least one month a worm composting bin in your classroom.  | 10 |
| RR2 | Buy recycled products: Have the school start a policy to purchase recycled paper. Many products schools use on a regular basis, including copy paper and notepads, are available with recycled content from your regular office supply vendors. For every 20 cases of recycled paper substituted for non-recycled paper, you save 17 trees, 390 gallons of oil, 7,000 gallons of water, and 4,100 kWh of energy. In addition, you eliminate 60 pounds of air polluting emissions. That’s a BIG benefit from using a product that is as good as the product you use now! An essential part of recycling is buying products made from recycled materials, better known as "closing the loop." Look for products with the highest post-consumer content which are products made from recyclables used by the consumer rather than the manufacturer (pre-consumer waste). | 10 |

**Keeping Records of the School’s Recycling Efforts**

 As students and staff become more familiar with and committed to the school’s recycling program, more recyclable materials will leave the waste stream. Keeping track of these changes is a great way to blend a school’s recycling program into classroom activities, as well as provide the rest of the school with the visual progress of the recycling program. Students can apply math skills by tracking waste generation and recycling efforts with the use of charts, tables, graphs, percentages, etc.

Activities and points

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| KR1 | Weigh your recyclables: Use a scale to weigh the recyclable material your school has collected for at least 4 weeks. Graph the weekly changes if possible. | 10 |
| KR2 | Determine your school’s recycling rate: Calculate and graph the amount of waste materials generated and recycled; then calculate the resulting recycling rate for the school. | 10 |
| KR3 | Calculate how many trees your school saved: Calculate the number of trees saved as a result of the school’s recycling efforts (2,000 Pounds of Recycled Paper = 17 Trees Saved). Make a poster of your findings so that the entire school can see the important environmental impact their recycling program is having | 4 |

**Promote Recycling Within the School**

For a school recycling program to be successful, there must be a commitment from all parties involved -- from the students to the custodial staff. Continuing education and promotion is necessary for the longevity of any school recycling program! Oftentimes, a school recycling program is started with great fanfare and is a booming success, and then, unfortunately, the promotion stops. Without constant reminders, participation rates can drop and the program can begin to fade away. To help combat this problem, many schools have reinforced their initial promotion of a school recycling program through periodic fun and entertaining activities!

Activities and points

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PR1 | Have our educator, Mindy Gleason, present one of our district’s lessons to your classroom or grade-level. Email her at educator.nwiswd.org | 10 |
| PR2 | Develop a Recycling Bulletin Board: Create a bulletin board in the school to inform students and faculty about recycling-related issues like what can be recycled, how can it be recycled and why it should be recycled. | 6 |
| PR3 | Have regular School Recycling/Conservation Announcements: Add a “Recycling Tip of the Week" to the daily announcements of the school. Some Examples: • Recycle your plastic grocery/shopping bags at your local supermarket. • Make book covers out of paper grocery bags. • Share the message “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” with others • Recycle cans, bottles and plastics. • Reuse your greeting cards by cutting out pictures and gluing them onto new cards. • Don’t throw away old crayons. Recycle them with the Crazy Crayon program - http://www.crazycrayons.com  | 6 |
| PR4 | Produce a School Recycling Newsletter: Create a newsletter twice a year that contains information about the school’s recycling program. Some ideas of what to include in your newsletter: • A column with tips about recycling for the school. • What parents and kids can do at school. • A description of a new recycling program at the school. • Charts and graphs about how much the school has recycled and how many trees and/or money the schools saved. | 8 |
| PR5 | Write letters to the government: Write at least two letters to government officials and world leaders about the importance of recycling | 8 |
| PR6 | Create a Recycling Poster Series: Create six posters displaying what materials can be recycled and reasons to recycle them | 8 |
| PR7 | Organize a Recycling Logo Contest: Have a fun and rewarding contest between classrooms to design a new logo for your school Recycling Club. You could give the students a slogan that would fit the logo, for example: • Continue the cycle. Recycle. • Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. • Don’t Trash Our Future. • Trash, you can’t hide from it. Once the logo has been finalized use it on T-shirts, posters, etc. to promote and expand your recycling program. | 10 |
| PR8 | Institute “Students Teaching Students:” A great way to promote recycling in general is to have older students make a presentation to the younger students on recycling! | 10 |
| PR9 | Educate the public: Develop a program to educate the public about their local recycling program. For example: • Make a poster showing everything that can be recycled in your town and display it at your library. • Have a display at a local event (i.e. Town Meeting) where you talk about recycling and what’s available in your town. • Send out six different monthly press releases to the local press. • Develop and hand out “How To Recycle” educational flyers to residents | 4 |
| PR10 | Celebrate Earth Day: There are many resources with ideas to celebrate and have fun! | 10 |