

Litter Free Lunch

Tweed Shire Council



A Litter Free Lunch program is a process of educating students, parents and school staff about where our waste ends up and how we as individuals, can reduce the amount of waste we generate and send to landfill.

Why have a litter free lunch?

A Litter Free Lunch program not only makes good environmental sense but it makes good economic sense too. While you reduce your impact on the environment by reducing what you send to landfill, a Litter Free Lunch is also cheaper and in most cases a lot healthier too!

Litter Free Lunches encourage the first step in the waste hierarchy - AVOIDING waste. Choosing products that have less or no packaging results in less waste that you have to dispose of.

Litter Free Lunch programs favour the use of re-usable food and drink containers, utensils and organic waste.

They discourage the use of disposable packaging that needs to be sent to landfill, such as pre-packaged / individual servings of food, plastic bags, disposable utensils, plastic straws, food wrapped in cling wrap and foil and other single-use items.

Try to run the program on a regular basis to make it part of the school environment, you will eventually reduce the amount of waste you need to throw away, in turn reducing the amount you



The Waste Hierarchy

spend on waste collection - which is more expensive than recycling services! Most of the waste generated from a Litter Free Lunch is compostable and can either be placed into compost bins at your school, or a worm farm.



Litter Free Lunch

A comparison

Litter Free Lunches - RE-USE

- Use re-useable containers that can be washed.
- Use a re-usable drink bottle which can be used many times.
- Use compostable or recyclable packaging over disposable (e.g. plastic wrap) packaging.
- Cheese and biscuits or yoghurts which are taken from larger containers and repacked into a re-useable smaller container will avoid extra packaging waste and ensure that your child can reseal the food if needed, again leading to less waste.
- Litter Free Lunches are often much healthier. You can ensure your child is eating fresh food packed in suitable quantities and not eating 'gimmicky' snack foods.

A Litter Free Lunch may include things like ...

- Sandwich (in cloth serviette or re-useable container)
- Yoghurt (from larger tub in re-useable container)
- Nuts (from larger packet in re-useable container)
- Piece of fruit (skins or core can be put in compost or worm farm)
- Cheese and crackers (in re-useable container)
- Juice or water (in a re-useable drink bottle)
- What you throw out = Nothing! All containers are taken home, washed and re-used.



Lunchbox 1: Litter Free Lunch

Litter Free Lunches - AVOID

- Plastic wrap, plastic bags and foil
- Disposable items like plastic plates, knives and forks
- Individually packaged items e.g. chips, poppers, small yoghurts, individually wrapped serves of food



Lunchbox 2: Wasteful Lunch

The following is a wasteful lunch:

- Sandwich (wrapped in plastic wrap)
- Yoghurt (60g disposable container)
- Sultanas (15g disposable box)
- Cheese and crackers (individual serve in disposable container)
- Popper style drink (125ml disposable pack)
- What you throw out = plastic wrap, yoghurt container, plastic cheese and cracker packaging, popper pack, sultana packet. (**please note** - although some of these items are recyclable, they still need to be processed and many of our recyclables are sent overseas for processing. While it is good to recycle, it is even better to 'reduce' - buying items with less or no packaging)

Litter Free Lunch

How to run it!

Step 1

Before your Litter Free Lunch Day, you need to review a normal day's waste. This can be done by either having students keep their waste after lunch and do a waste audit of lunch boxes, or by emptying the school-yard bins and doing a bin audit. Refer to the enclosed 'Waste Audit' form and instructions on how to conduct a waste audit.



Step 2

Record findings and discuss the three 'R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and the environmental impact of waste. Contact Council for activity sheets that the students can do in the classroom or at home.

Step 3

Send a letter home to parents informing them of the Litter Free Lunch Day and what it entails. Ensure that you give parents enough time to get lunches organised. Your school newsletter may be another place to promote what you plan to do.

Step 4

Arrange your Litter Free Lunch Day and promote it around the school with posters. Ensure students know what a Litter Free Lunch is and what types of items produce litter - a good idea is to set up an example of a litter free lunch box and wasteful lunch box in the classroom, so children understand what they are doing and why.

Step 5

Hold the Litter Free Lunch Day. Ensure children have somewhere to return their containers if the lunch area is away from their school bag. Eg. a tidy tray or basket per classroom for them to return their containers before they head off to play. Do a second waste audit of lunch boxes or bins using the same method as your previous audit.

Step 6

Send both waste audits, your feedback form and any photos from the day to:

Sascha Piotrkowski
Environmental Education Officer
Tweed Shire Council
PO Box 816
Murwillumbah NSW 2484
fax: (02) 6670 2557
email: education@tweed.nsw.gov.au

We will review your results and report back to you with suggestions on how to keep your program going. Please take the time to fill out your evaluation form so we can further improve this program.

Step 7

Litter Free Lunch Legend certificates are included with this information pack. These can be presented to children or classes that have done a great job at bringing a litter free lunch.

Aim to run a Litter Free Lunch as a regular event (monthly or even weekly) until it becomes the norm for students. Follow on with the Waste-Wise Schools Program - contact Tweed Shire Council's Environmental Education Officer on the above details for your information kit and advice on how to set up a waste management plan for your school.



Your school's waste audit

How to run it!

Run a waste audit before your Litter Free Lunch Day and straight after your Litter Free Lunch to compare the results. If you are unsure of whether something might be recyclable, compostable or garbage, please give us a call on (02) 6670 2523.

Option 1: Lunchbox audit

Get children to keep all of their waste (packaging and food) in their lunchbox once they have finished eating. Help the children decide which category their items fit into on the waste audit sheet, and tally your results.



Good litter free lunches ideally have no waste to dispose of, or only compostable waste and very little recyclable waste (if any) to dispose of. As you can see in this photo the containers are all reusable and get taken home every day. The food in the containers is not wrapped in plastic film and there are no plastic straws or cutlery to dispose of.



Non litter free lunches have garbage to dispose of. As you can see in this photo some of the food was wrapped in plastic film. The popper is recyclable, however the remaining wrappers would need to go into the garbage where they are disposed of in landfill.

Option 2: Bin audit

Materials:

- Gloves - enough for each person who will handle the waste. (Do not handle waste with bare hands).
- Plastic sheet - large enough to tip the contents of one bin onto.
- tongs



- Step 1.** Collect a good sample size of your bins eg. for larger schools between 6-10 bins at random or smaller schools may wish to do all bins.
- Step 2.** Pour contents of each bin onto the plastic sheet
- Step 3.** Using gloves and tongs, count the number of items that are recyclable, garbage and compostable. For food scraps that are pieces of a larger item (eg. sandwich crusts) count one handful as one item. Record your results for each bin on a separate audit sheet. (eg. if you have 6 bins, use 6 audit sheets).
- Step 4.** Tip the contents back into the bin and start again with another bin
- Step 5.** Run a Litter Free Lunch & repeat audit process straight after lunch.
- Step 6.** Compare your results. Send all audit sheets for both audits (before and after your Litter Free Lunch) to Tweed Shire Council for suggestions on how to continue your waste management program & to be in the running for a Litter Free Lunch program prize.

An alternative to tipping out the bin contents is to do a visual inspection of each bin (by looking into the top and moving some items around with long tongs) to estimate the proportions of garbage, compost and recyclables.



Waste Audit Sheet


School: _____

Audit completed by (student name): _____

Class or bin number: _____ No. of students: _____

Date of audit: _____ 1st audit or 2nd audit (please circle)

Please fill out an audit sheet before and after your Litter Free Lunch Day so that you have a comparison. See photos over the page for examples of what you might find.

| | # of items | Total | % of total | Origin (where did this rubbish come from—eg. canteen, home) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| ORGANIC / COMPOSTABLE | | | | |
| Food scraps (organic) - paddle pop sticks, apple core, banana peel , bread / sandwiches. | | | | |
| Compostable packaging - cardboard cups, paper towels, paper bags, cupcake wrappers, any other paper or cardboard with food stuck to it. | | | | |
| RECYCLABLE | | | | |
| Recyclable plastic - plastic bottles, containers and lids - yoghurt tubs, cheese/cracker (eg. Le-Snack) bottoms, water / juice / softdrink bottles, takeaway containers. (The main rule is: no 'scrunchy plastics' = if you can scrunch a plastic into a ball in your hand it CANNOT be recycled as this becomes caught in the sorting machinery). | | | | |
| Metal: aluminium & steel cans – tuna cans, spaghetti / baked bean cans, softdrink cans, metal bottle lids. | | | | |
| Glass bottles and jars | | | | |
| Clean paper and cardboard - drink poppers, longlife juice cartons (empty & without plastic straw or straw casing). *Put any paper with food or grease on it into the organics pile. | | | | |
| GARBAGE | | | | |
| Non recyclable plastic - Scrunchy plastics - flimsy plastic that can be scrunched into a ball in your hand and any Polysterene which is sometimes marked with:  Examples include: chip or noodle packets, cling wrap, any plastic bags (including re-sealable ones), straws, wrappers. | | | | |
| OTHER | | | | |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | |

Waste Audit Sheet

What you might find

plastic container
= **recyclable**

paper with food
residue = **compost or
worm farm**

Food scraps =
**compost / worm
farm or chickens**

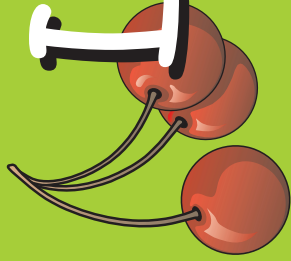
Drink popper
= **recyclable**

Scrunchy plastic and
chip packets
= **garbage**



School audit done before a Litter Free Lunch Day

Litter free Lunch



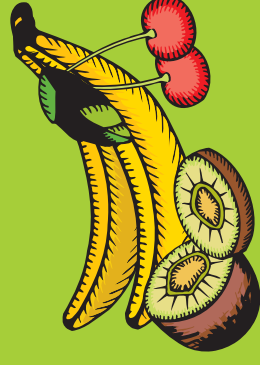
Legend ★

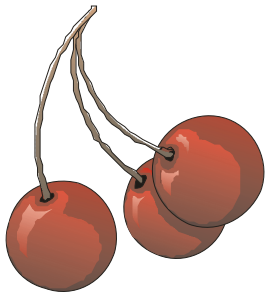


THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

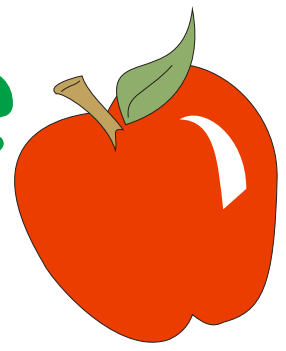
For having a fantastic litter free Lunch. You are helping
the environment by cutting down on packaging and
sending less waste to landfill.

WELL DONE!!





Litter Free Lunch



Dear Parents,

Our primary school will be holding a Litter Free Lunch Day on:

On our Litter Free Lunch Day, students will be asked to bring lunches that have only items that can be eaten, re-used, composted or recycled. The idea is to have as little waste as possible sent to landfill.

Your cooperation is required in assisting your child to pack a Litter Free Lunch by packing food that you know will be eaten, using re-usable containers instead of plastic wrap or cling film, and by purchasing non-perishables in bulk, rather than individual portions. Attached is a sheet which outlines some suggestions for a Litter Free Lunch.

Some tips for packing a Litter Free Lunch:

- ✓ pack sandwiches in a re-usable container or paper bag rather than cling-wrap / plastic bags
- ✓ whole fruits or pieces in a re-usable container
- ✓ send drinks in re-usable containers as opposed to poppers

Items to avoid are:

- ✗ individually wrapped items
- ✗ plastic wrap, bags or cling film
- ✗ disposable cutlery
- ✗ straws



Minimising the waste we send to school encourages students to be waste conscious and reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill. It doesn't have to stop here - why not make every day a Litter Free Lunch day!

We thank you for your support in this initiative. Should you have any enquiries please contact

_____ on phone: _____

Kind regards

Litter Free Lunch Program

Evaluation Sheet

Thank you for participating in the Litter Free Lunch day, your feedback on the program is much appreciated and will ensure the program is reviewed and further developed to help more schools in our area. If you are interested in finding out more information on Tweed Shire Council's Environmental Education Program, visit www.tweed.nsw.gov.au and click on 'Your Environment', 'Educational Resources' and Environmental Education Program (Early stage 1-3). Alternatively, contact Council's Environmental Education Officer, Sascha Piotrkowski on:

Post: PO Box 816
Murwillumbah NSW 2484
Phone: (02) 6670 2523
Fax: (02) 6670 2557
email: education@tweed.nsw.gov.au

School: _____ **Completed by:** _____

Date: _____ **Contact ph/email:** _____

Did you find the resources supplied to you useful and easy to understand? Yes / No. If No please let us know why:

Did you run any of the activity sheets supplied to by Council? Yes / No. If Yes, please let us know which ones were most helpful:

Did you run your own activities and were they successful? Yes / No. Let us know what you did to promote a Litter Free Lunch in your school:

During the waste audit were there any items which were difficult to sort into the correct pile?

Are there any school processes or systems which make running a Litter Free Lunch difficult?



Litter Free Lunch Program

Evaluation Sheet

What feedback did you receive from other staff or parents?

Would you like more information and resources on how to continue with this program and improve your results? Yes / No

Would you like any information about the Waste-wise Schools Program, or recycling services for your school? Yes / No

Thank you for participating. Your time and assistance is greatly appreciated.

