



ACTION FOR NATURE

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School Recycling Program Guide





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ABOUT ACTION FOR NATURE

[Action for Nature](#) (AFN) is an environmental non-profit that focuses on young people. We encourage youth to gain awareness and respect for the natural world, and in particular, to take personal action to protect the environment and to educate others. AFN believes that the long-term health of the planet and all who live on it depends upon reaching young people with this message.

Mission: Encouraging young people to take personal action to nurture and protect a healthy environment on which all life depends.

Personal action is a powerful weapon in the battle to keep our planet alive and well. When taken, it can slow down a river's pollution; help preserve the ancient growth of trees threatened by cutters; and increase the survival of songbirds.



GOALS OF THE RECYCLING PROGRAM

Did you know that recycling is currently **NOT** required in schools in the USA nationwide? This means that the responsibility falls into our hands. AFN has therefore developed a guide that provides students with the tools and support to lead the effort to promote recycling in their own schools. With the information included this packet, you will have the building blocks you need to start your own program.

The purpose of this recycling guide is to increase awareness about the negative impact of human consumption on the environment, and to inspire young people to start recycling programs within their schools.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM:

- To reduce landfill waste produced by schools
- To increase awareness of waste creation
- To educate students about responsible consumption and the importance of recycling
- To encourage youth to develop a life-long habit of recycling

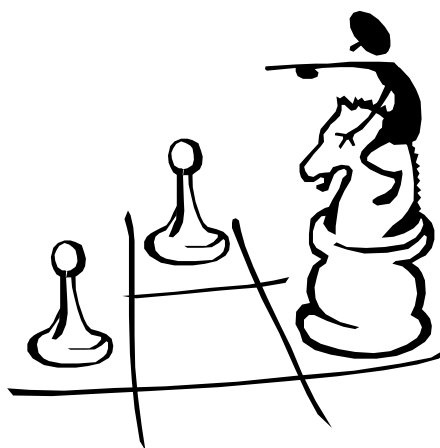




STEP 1: Make a Plan

In order to start this program, you will need to obtain approval from your school. The information below will help you create a game plan so that you can get started. This is a very important part of the recycling program process. Here you and your adult school sponsor/ advisor will work together to define your goals, your timeline, decide who will help you and how it will all get done. Once this is completed, you will have a strong, organized plan to present to an advisor, principal, or school board for their approval.

1. Find an adult school sponsor / advisor for your recycling program.
2. Develop a plan outline to start your program.
 - a. Use the [Action Plan Guide](#) located in the Templates section to brainstorm and build your plan
 - b. Consider each of the areas and how you will address them
3. Recruit volunteers and consider starting or coordinating with the environmental club at your school.





STEP 2: Get Started

1. Present your plan to your school principal and get approval. (Templates and resources available: [Proposal template](#), [Letter to Principal](#))
2. Determine what materials can and cannot be recycled
 - a. What materials do you want your program to focus on?
 - b. Find out if your state offers refunds for recycled bottles and cans
 - i. <http://earth911.com/recycling/plastic/explaining-the-bottle-bill/>
3. Gather bins to collect recyclable materials
 - a. Contact local companies to donate and deliver recycling bins to your school
 - b. Write to companies to ask for sponsors to help purchase recycling bins
 - c. More ideas located in the [Action Plan Guide](#)
4. Develop system for sorting and removing materials.
 - a. Contact the local trash collectors to see if they can pick up the materials.
 - b. Recruit an adult volunteer to help take materials to a recycling center.
 - c. More ideas located in the [Action Plan Guide](#)



STEP 3: Put your Plan to Work

1. Start collecting
 - a. Arrange bin placement location(s) with your school
 - b. Make signs as to what goes in which bin
2. Spread the word! Promote your program to other students. Be creative
 - a. Make flyers and posters to hang around school
 - b. Make an announcement to the student body
 - c. Give a speech or presentation during a school assembly
 - d. Write an article for your school newspaper
 - e. Sponsor a recycling contest and offer a prize to those who collect the most
 - f. Talk to relevant clubs at your school (service or environmental)





STEP 4: Collect, Measure your Progress, and RECYCLE!



Congratulations!

Upon successful completion of the program, you will have made great strides in helping us all secure a healthier and better future. If you have any questions or if you want to tell us about your efforts and achievements, email AFN at mail@actionfornature.org.



Recycling Action Plan Template

Use the guide below as an outline to develop your own recycling program. Consider each of the points and address how you will handle these areas in your proposal to the school principal or board.

- **Organize a team, Gather support**
 - Are there other students or teachers who are willing to help?
 - Look to student leadership, Key Club, Earth Club, Environment Club or Science Club
- **Determine what materials you want to recycle**
 - What kind of materials do you notice students frequently throwing away?
 - Paper? Cans? Bottles?
 - Start small. Begin the program recycling only one or two things like paper and cans, and work your way up to other items such as glass, ink cartridges and batteries.
 - If you decide to recycle more than one item, will you need to source separate. Source separating is when you put different recyclables (i.e. paper, plastic, cardboard, etc.) into separate containers.
- **Determine the size of your program**
 - How many student or classrooms would you like to involve?
 - Classroom? Grade level? School-wide?
 - Specific class? Specific club or organization?
- **Find a company to handle the recycling**
 - Contact local recycling facilities to see what materials they collect and what services they provide
 - Find out how recyclables should be separated and which items can be combined
 - <http://earth911.com/> as an example of a resource to locate local facilities
- **Work out a budget for the recycling program**
 - How will you finance your program?
 - Donations
 - Fundraising
 - PTA support
 - Club seed money
 - Obtain money from the school budget. Recycling reduces the school's waste stream, so look into reducing the frequency of



trash pick-ups and allocating the savings towards pick-up of recyclables

- **Locate recycling bins**
 - Purchase recycling bins from your budget
 - Apply for a grant with a local government organization to help fund containers
 - Contact your local beverage (soft drinks or beer) distributor to see if they can provide you with some recycling containers.
 - Look for ways to get containers donated. Examples include:
 - Copy paper boxes from print shops
 - Buckets from a local construction site
 - Barrels from a local manufacturer
- **Establish a system for collecting and storing the recyclables**
 - Place bins in easy accessible areas
 - Consider placing containers next to trash cans otherwise the containers may be used for garbage
 - Attach recycling signs with instructions to each bin
 - Check with the school for storage and collection requirements
 - Where will the materials be stored?
 - How will you have the recyclables removed from your school?
 - Will a private hauler be collecting the recyclables?
 - Will you transport the recyclables yourself?
- **Educate students and teachers**
 - How will you promote the program at your school?
 - Publish an article in the school newspaper?
 - Make announcements at the beginning of classrooms or at an assembly?
 - Design posters and signs?
- **Track your progress**
 - By the volume of recyclables collected?
 - By the reduction of trash?
 - Measure the attitude of the students?
- **What are some goals you would like to accomplish?**
 - Students at lunch to recycle their plastic bottles every day after lunch
 - School to put recycle bins outside during lunch
 - Measured success – amount of cans or paper collected a week



Action Plan Notes

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

List all the different options you have to achieve your goal. Be creative!

-People to talk to:

-Information to research:

-Materials needed:

-Funding sources:

-Recycling resources in my community:

-Ways to educate other students:

-Ways to get others involved:

ACTION

What are the steps you will take to accomplish your goals?

Next Action Steps:

| Step | Date to complete step |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |



Presentation to principal or board

Date: _____

RECYCLING PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Name of School: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Grade Level: _____

Contact Person/Advisor: _____

Title Position: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please briefly describe your project:

How will you bring the materials to be recycled?



How will the Advisor or Recycling Teaching Partner assist in your plan?

How many students will be involved? What age groups? Will parents and/or community members participate? Teachers, administrators, school staff, custodians?

How will the students be engaged in active learning with this project?



Letter to the principal*

DATE

Dear Ms./Mr. (your principal's name),

I thought it would be a great idea if our school could become involved with helping our environment. One way I thought we could begin is to start out by having recycling program at our school.

We could start out slowly by recycling water bottles, and then we could add in cans and later paper. I have researched the cost of recycle bins and the possibility of obtaining bins through the town. If we can't get the bins from the town, maybe we can do fundraising or ask the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) for help.

I am really excited to start the project. I would need your support to help find someone who would like to be a guide (leader/coordinator), and speak to the custodians and teachers for their participation. I have spoken to a few friends and they are interested in helping, and we can all help by taking turns collecting the recyclables and bringing them to a main area where they will be picked up.

I know there is a lot to do and plan, but if could I please meet with you to discuss my ideas that would be great. There are even possibilities for the school to get grants or funding to help with our project. I have ideas about how we can get school support by doing contests, writing articles for the school paper and making posters, and maybe even an assembly about the importance of recycling.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

{Your Name Here}

Template letter written by 2009 Eco-Hero, **Samantha Muscarella*



Tips for creating a recycle bin sign:

- Clearly state that the bin is intended for recyclables only.
- Make sure to put a list of all of the items that may be placed in the bin.
- Including pictures of acceptable items is a helpful reminder.

Recycling

Place in this bin:

Paper, white and colored
Magazines & Newspapers
Notebooks
Plastic & Glass Bottles
Aluminum Cans
Cardboard – broken down



logo ACTIONFORNATURE.org

Sample Bin Sign



Additional Resources

- **Earth 911:** This site is a great resource to find recycling centers in your area. It also features recycling articles and advice.

<http://earth911.com/>

- **National Institute for Health Sciences:** This is a great site for students who want to learn more about the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/explore/reduce/index.htm>

Regional Resources

- **Stop Waste at School (California):** This site provides advice, templates and news about school recycling programs in Alameda County.

<http://schools.stopwaste.org/>

- **Recycle Works (California):** This site provides step-by-step information about starting and maintaining a school recycling program and a guide for conducting a waste audit.

<http://www.recycleworks.org/schools/recycling.html>

- **Eco Cycle (Colorado):** This site provides detailed guides and advice about recycling, reusing and composting at home and school. It also provides resources for schools in Boulder, Colorado.

<http://www.ecocycle.org/recycle-compost-reuse/overview>

- **NYC Recycle More, Waste Less (New York):** This site provides resources about starting recycling programs in school in New York City.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/recycling/schools.shtml>

Do you know about other great websites and resources we may add to this guide?

Email Action For Nature at mail@actionfornature.org.



Your Suggestions

Please email us your suggestions (mail@actionfornature.org) regarding how we can make these guidelines more useful for other students.

Your Stories

Please email your success stories to mail@actionfornature.org. Also, it would be helpful if you told us about any problems you experienced so that others can learn from these.