

So you're starting a Waste Wise Team? Ready Steady GO!



It really is as simple as just getting started!

Here's a quick kick-off checklist:

- ☐ Set the date for the first meeting, let the whole school know!

- ☐ Open the door to volunteers throughout the school, choose class teams for specific tasks such as a Paper 4 trees team.

- ☐ Personally reach out to peers with the same passion as you to lead your team, you need more than one teacher to keep up motivation!

- ☐ Agree on practical matters first: how often do you want to meet and when? Do you need a team name?

- ☐ Decide what you want to do, when, and how do you think you can do it. Choose easy wins first, like paper recycling!

- ☐ Ask your team members why they have joined!

- ☐ Make a regular date! Waste Wise teams usually meet monthly.

- ☐ Share news of the Waste Wise Team launch with staff and students!

- ☐ Regularly let everyone know when you meet, what you do, and why you are doing; perhaps a regular spot in assembly or school newsletter will help folks know what they can do to be good kaitiaiki for the school.

Tips on culture change



Everyone has a role to play in creating a more sustainable school, involve people from all levels; don't forget the cleaners and caretakers, they can make or break your systems.

Reward involvement and allow input.

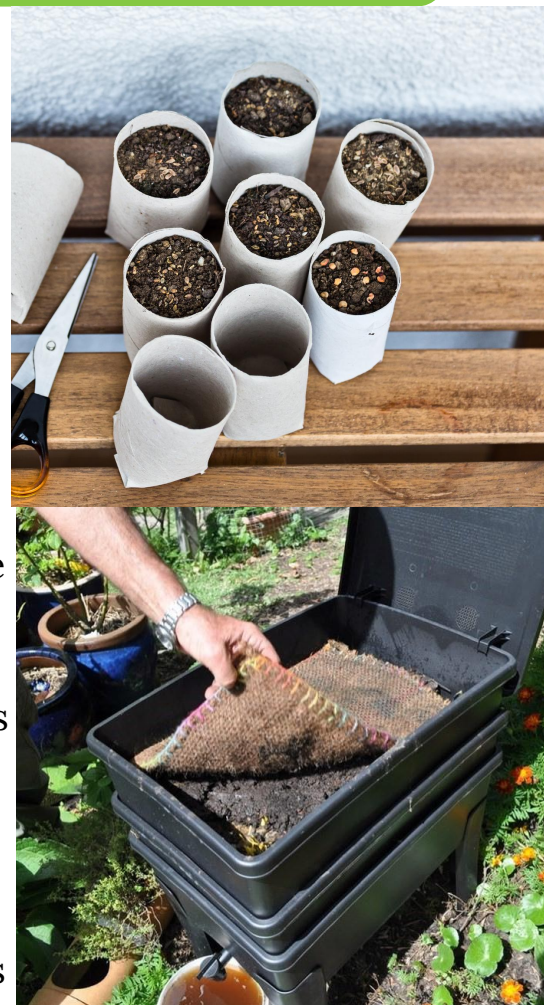
Start small and build up to bigger projects so the folks won't feel overwhelmed.

Provide tools and systems; Telling people to recycle doesn't work without providing recycling bins and signs! Run zero waste classes and bring in external experts, like us!

Make things practical and positive. Focusing on wins will help create a feel good factor, it makes staff and students feel good about being involved.

Reflect and celebrate improvements, while staying focused on the road ahead, keep aiming for greater impact and change.

Creating a Waste Wise Team will drive change and focus



Running Waste Wise team

If you have the support of your colleagues, you could select a WWT from a mix of students e.g. selected from each year level. At some schools, students write a letter of application to become members of the WWT. This process has the added benefit of attracting students who are enthusiastic and really want to be involved.

Some ideas to consider:

- Select an entire class if you do not have the immediate support of your colleagues
- have these students buddy up with younger students from other classes
- Choose two representative students from each year level
- Speak about the WWT at assembly
- Organise a meeting time, as well as task times, WasteWise Teams often meet at lunchtimes or briefly after school to carry out their tasks and discuss future action.

Vision: where do you want to go?

Creating a group vision is really helpful in finding your groups direction so that you can work towards it. After all if you don't know where to go, how will you get there?

Figure out what everyone everyone's interests are: What they would like to achieve; why have they joined?

Which areas would different people like to focus on.

Sustainability can mean different things for different people and most people will have their specific passions for example waste reduction, carbon offsetting, water, electricity etc.

Identify 'Warriors' for your different focus areas. e.g. Paper 4 trees Warriors, 'Energy Warriors', 'Water Warriors', 'Printing Warriors', 'Waste & recycling Warriors', 'Compost and garden Warriors'

Which areas could yield some immediate results?

A waste audit can serve as an important base line and creates an understanding of issues at hand



Strategy: how do we get there?

If Vision is the why...

Strategy is the what and how!

Identifying the Waste Wise team focus areas and priorities and how to achieve those goals.

It is important to describe each focus area so that folks are on the same page.

Focus areas include, but are not limited to, waste minimisation.

We also support minimising a school's carbon footprint, reducing energy wastage, and exploring procurement policies which stop waste being created.

Set some goals

Once identified, display a Waste Wise Strategy and a Waste Plan, outlining your Waste Wise Team vision and focus areas, plus goals and targets for each area; it's a great way to communicate what behaviour is expected and makes sure priorities are transparent. Create KPI's (key performance indicators) for team members and the school.

This could be displayed on a notice board, a poster or sent out on a school-wide email.

Being public about your direction helps everyone stay accountable and helps to engage everyone on your journey.

Check that any Waste Wise team projects align with your School Charter.



Track It



To track progress it is necessary to collect data. For the first milestone in Waste Wise Schools the initial data is based on the waste audit. From here progress can be measured by regular checks as well as the follow up audit. This will help to visualise the changes and trends. Discuss as a team which data is important for different focus areas and how it will be tracked.

Make sure the data is reliable and not subject to individual interpretation so actual change is measured.

Collect Feedback

It is important to listen to feedback, and give everyone an opportunity for input.

Sometimes the best ideas come from unexpected corners. Giving people an opportunity to have some input will also help with getting them on board. Some quick and easy ways to collect feedback are:

- creating a suggestion box so it's easy for people to put forward some ideas.
- send out an online survey for feedback ideas
- encourage people to pop in during team meetings to put forward ideas.
- Remember to listen and analyse feedback and always thank them for their contribution.



Run With It

On completion of the waste audit, the WWT decides on future projects and activities.

The WasteWise Schools Programme primarily supports waste minimisation and diversion of solid waste from landfill.

Projects don't need to be limited to waste and can focus on many of the sustainability issues. Ideas to consider when running a WasteWise Team:

- Allow students to make decisions and guide the project
- Conduct a waste audit; highlight to the rest of the school the most significant types of waste and develop a strategy to deal with it. This could mean implementing a system to collect fruit and vegetable scraps for the compost, worm farm or to feed to the chickens for example.
- Work towards a shift in control from teacher to students and allow students increased levels of decision making.
- Provide encouragement and offer support with project ideas Start out with a small project and don't be overly ambitious, like installing our Paper4Trees bins!
- Consider tackling local issues such as water quality monitoring and re-vegetation at nearby waterways and wetlands.

(EcoSolutions can assist in this area.)

Keeping it Going

Many teachers question how to maintain student interest and embed projects and activities in the school culture. There are no rules but rather a combination of factors that appear to be integral to successful projects and longevity.

- Highlight your sustainability focus in meetings and assemblies.
- Reward the WWT regularly, with privileges, extracurricular activities, and public praise.
- Engage other teachers to re inforce the zero waste message in the curriculum; refer to the Paptuanuku Kit for ideas.
- Revisit your checklist and run student led whole school zero waste activities in lunchtimes, like t shirt bag making or beeswax lunchwrap making sessions.

Reach Out

It is important to communicate with your team when they are working on different projects especially if you are a large school.

Have regular meetings and having a communication platform is essential to keep track of where everyone is at. This could be over email, social media, notices and messenger groups. Having a slot in assembly is useful too.

Make sure to advertise your projects and progresses to the rest of the school. This makes everyone feel informed and helps with buy-in.

A summary of actions should flow up to management and also flow down to everyone else.

Open communication is a key tool for sharing new ideas, challenges and solutions.

Highlight your sustainability focus in meetings.

Reward sustainability advocates who are aligning themselves with your strategic goals with zero waste treats, activities or privileges.

Present workshops tailored for your school.

What are people interested in, which areas need focusing on? e.g. composting, litterless lunches, upcycling, zero waste living, making zero waste cleaning products, water saving, how to ferment food or are they more interested in knowledge sharing with other school groups?

We can help with this!



Ten ideas for change



- 1** Celebrate your launch.

You are changing group behaviours and this needs to be broadcast loud and clear, not just what you are doing, but why.
None of us like doing something when we don't know the reason.
But everyone loves the whenua, and wants to be able to eat Kaimoana in their future
- 2** Keep it fun and positive; we care for our whenua with love!
- 3** Keep it regular; consistent re focusing and gentle reminders make new habits stick.
- 4** Engage leadership; this sometimes requires different angle to how the story is told.
- 5** Streamline your requests, make it easy to get on board!
- 6** Conduct innovation workshops; blue sky thinking, you'll be amazed by the wild ideas that come up!
- 7** 'What gets measured gets managed'; where possible collect data for trends and clarity.
- 8** Always have a takeaway action, this empowers people to make change.
- 9** Keep communicating (the good the bad and the ugly!) but remember, its a zero waste path not a struggle!
- 10** Be (a bit) patient. Change takes time. Rinse and repeat if it doesn't stick the first time!

