

ADVOCACY PACKETS

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN

How to transition away from single-use plastic at your school

As young individuals, we see environmental issues in our community and on the news and want to take action to protect our future. It can be difficult to know where to start or how to enact lasting change when it comes to single-use plastics, but students around the globe are working to transform the world one step at a time - and so can you.

This series of advocacy packets, created by students for students, provides introductory knowledge on these ideas and concepts and walks you through steps to begin implementing change in your classroom, home or community. By using our voices and gathering support for these sustainable initiatives, we will change the world.

This specific packet on implementing a single-use plastic ban outlines a simple process of transitioning away from single-use plastic at your school. This packet will enable you to present your idea to important stakeholders and explain the importance of implementing a single-use plastic ban, which provides an environmentally-friendly and economically-efficient way to combat plastic pollution.

Additional resources can be found [here](#).

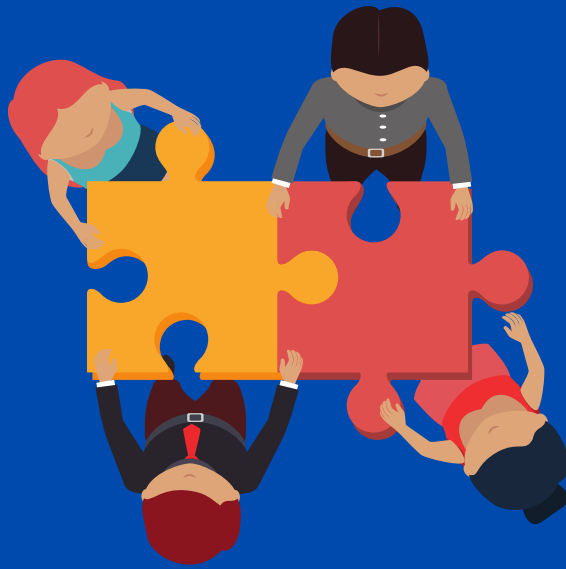
IMPORTANCE

Plastic pollution is piling up all over the world, both on land and in water. This is unsurprising considering that humans buy about a million plastic bottles every minute and use around five trillion plastic bags each year. Additionally, by 2050 scientists estimate that there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. A plastic bag that is used for around 12 minutes will remain on Earth for hundreds of years longer than the person who used it, and once discarded or placed in a landfill, it will slowly break down into microplastics that pollute our water, land and air. Plastic pollution disproportionately harms marginalized communities and causes extreme damage to ecosystems all over the world.

Banning single-use plastics in your school can seem like a very daunting task. To address this issue, start by identifying the most prevalent single-use plastics in your school, or start by tackling different parts of your school at a time (ex, classroom, cafeteria, etc). Start small, such as investing in reusable decorations for school events as an alternative to single-use balloons, confetti, and streamers. Then, gradually increase your sustainable changes until your school has achieved a total ban on single-use plastic.

By implementing a plastic ban at your school, you can make a direct positive impact on the environment by significantly reducing the amount of plastic pollution in your community and around the world on a daily basis. It will also promote a greater understanding of your local ecosystem and instill stewardship, responsibility, and teamwork skills. To make a difference this Earth Day, implement a single-use plastic ban at your school!

STAKEHOLDERS



Students

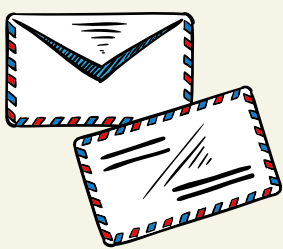
Talking with your peers is a great way to gain support to implement a single-use plastic ban. Distribute a petition among your peers and teachers to illustrate your support for the initiative to your school's administration.



Clubs and Organizations

Collaborating with clubs and organizations around your school is a great way to spread your message. Explaining your idea to students who write for your school's newsletter or newspaper is an efficient way to raise awareness and gain support. Talk with them about printing an article on the environmental and financial benefits of a single-use plastic ban at your school. If your school has a recycling club, reach out to club leaders about working with you to establish a single-use plastic ban at your school. If your club doesn't already have a sustainability chair, learn how to form one!

School Administrators and PTA



Reaching out to your school's parent teacher association and principal is very important when implementing change at your school. After gathering information and gaining support from students and faculty, hold a letter writing campaign to directly advocate for this program.

Community Members

Finding members within your community with expertise in this area will be extremely helpful for implementing your single-use plastic ban. Talking with your town's environmental department and local officials can help to finance your project and even expand your ban further throughout your community.



Financial Supporters



Discussing your initiative with local businesses can build support within your community and provide financial assistance to assist in transitioning your school away from single-use plastic.

STEPS TO TAKE ACTION



1) RESEARCH



- Examine your school's consumption of single-use plastics and note which plastics your school is most reliant on.
- Come up with a list of potential solutions and substitutes for single-use plastic in your school. Be sure to list possible costs associated with these substitutions.

2) RAISE AWARENESS AND GAIN SUPPORT

- Talk with your peers about single-use plastics in your school, and what you can do to reduce your school's plastic consumption. Distribute a petition to illustrate the support in your community behind a single-use plastic ban.
- Organize plastic collection week to demonstrate to your community how much is thrown away every week.
- Talk with administrators about shifting your school away from single-use plastics. Write a letter to your principal and reach out to your parent teacher association to include them with this initiative.
- Speak with community members about this project and how they can help. Including your town or city's environmental department will be a great addition to this project.



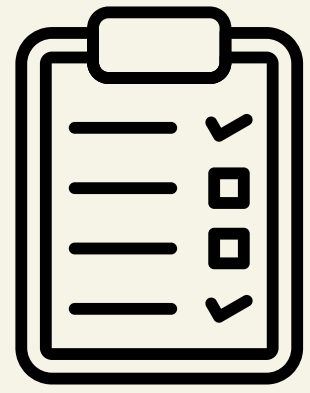
3) ORGANIZE A CLEANUP



- Tackle existing plastic pollution on your school's campus by organizing a cleanup. Sort the litter and recycle what you can.



4) PROGRESS TOWARD YOUR GOAL



Implementing a single-use plastic ban at your school isn't going to happen overnight. Start off small and gradually expand your work. One of the best places to begin is in your school's cafeteria.

Check out these ideas to help transition your school away from single-use plastics:

1. Confirm that there is access to recycling bins all over your school.

2. Make a pledge for students and staff to commit to avoiding single-use plastic such as water bottles and straws.

3. Avoid the use of balloons and confetti for school celebrations. Instead invest in reusable decorations and compostable confetti and streamers.

4. End the sale of plastic water bottles in your cafeteria and install a refill station where students can refill their reusable water bottles.

5. Remove all plastic utensils from your cafeteria and replace them with compostable or reusable utensils. Additionally, swap out single-use plastic trays or containers with compostable or paper ones.

6. Request that the suppliers who deliver food to your school go plastic free.

7. Encourage students to use pencils instead of plastic pens for all assignments.

8. Avoid laminating and instead make your school's displays plastic free.

9. Share your success to encourage other schools to do the same.

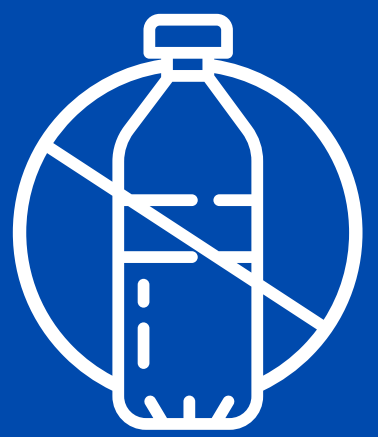
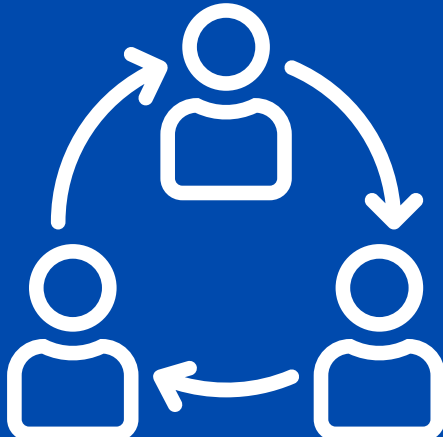
SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN ADVOCACY PACKET:



Expanded Learning Opportunities

In order to successfully implement your single-use plastic ban, it is essential to educate and raise awareness on why it is important to transition away from single-use plastics:

- Collaborate with your teachers to plan lessons or community programs to educate others about the harmful effects of plastic pollution and how it affects the climate crisis
- Host a Teach-In to educate your community on the importance and benefits of a single-use plastic ban
- Hold a movie night to watch and discuss a film on plastic pollution
- Build a school garden and establish a composting system at your school to further advance your school's efforts to tackle the climate crisis



Additional Resources

- Check out these Sustainable Swaps for plastic in schools
- Learn more about the harmful effects of plastic in our environment and how you can make a difference with the End Plastic Pollution Campaign
- Test your knowledge with this Oceans and Plastic Pollution Quiz
- Join our The Great Global Cleanup Campaign to organize and register your cleanup