

CASE STUDY

Top tips from a school leading the way in the fight against single-use plastic

Georgeham Primary School in Devon became the UK's 1st ever Plastic Free School. An award given to the school by the charity Surfers Against Sewage after months of hard work. The School Councillors did lots of work to almost completely eliminate the use of single-use plastic at school, but they also helped to encourage Devon County Council to massively reduce the use of single-use plastics at County Hall and the work that they do in Devon.

Below are some of the key steps and tasks the school completed as part of their journey:

Identify – Audit

- What plastic pollution is there in the school? ... & litter?
- Get the local council in to speak with pupils and help audit school waste (including that of the kitchen) and also the packed lunch waste for reporting back to parents.
- Get a representative from the Marine Conservation Society UK or Surfers Against Sewage to tell us about how plastic damages the environment and what should be done instead.

Target

- Tell everyone at school
- identify how we can stop litter from escaping into the school grounds
- Carry out a Bioblitz & frequent #2minutebeachclean & organised local beach cleans (or 2 minute Street Cleans if not near the coast)

Tackle and take action

- identify single use plastic in school
- Report and photos tweeted inc. the company names – name & shame(?).
- Boycott single use plastic bottles, snack bars with wrappers and litter! – #TrashMobs
- Boycott Day > assembly and Stop S-U-Ps
- Recycling milk cartons at the kitchen rather than single cartons with straws!
- Yogurt pots reused in Reception for craft activities... changed this to larger pots being served, rather than single servings.

- Ice Cream individual tubs not used. Larger tubs are, and these are used for containing salads, crafts in classes, storage in classrooms and even for next door's greenhouse! (advertised in Newsletter!)
- Organise local Beach Cleans as well as #2minutebeachcleans and #trashmobs on local trips or school residential
- Write to your local MP
- Take the School Council to your local County Hall and meet with Council Cabinet – meeting in November 2017 where they agreed to push through the motion – the first at County level
- Share your knowledge - Tell the Newspapers
- Identify 3 offenders of litter, not just on your school grounds
- Milk Cartons littering our playground! We thought they were for inside only too! Sad to think that we see the carton, but not where the little plastic sleeve could have got to!
- Producers and Wholesalers – get items delivered in boxes and unwrapped. Any plastic wrappings now get collected and picked up next delivery for en-masse recycling from the distributor.
- Evidence of beach cleans to SAS (using the hashtag #sascampaigns) We took photos of lots of things and sent them on to the manufacturer. Like a single-use shampoo sachet from pre-1970 (costing 4d).
- Children and staff to boycott 3 SUPs from daily life
 - cling film – done in our kitchens and encouraged parents.
 - school packed lunches, staff' own too and encouraged parents.
 - milk cartons
- School will boycott 3 SUPs from school
- sauce sachets – now use pump action large containers.
- ice cream and fruit pots – purchase large volume instead
- milk cartons with straws – large containers recycled. Some parents have told us they've returned to using a milkman.
- soap dispensers in toilets swapped out for soap bars
- recycled printer cartridges (were disposable and not collected!)
- a very recent audit suggested suncream bottles – wouldn't work :-(
- hand stamps for "I've received 1st Aid Today" rather than stickers with plastic backing.
- Eco-glitter used instead of standard plastic products
- Terracycle pen recycling – even though we're not registered, a parent takes them to a larger school's deposit box.
- Laminated items will be stored for re-use... easier for displays. (We ask, why laminate?)
- #TrashMob twice a year & litter survey

For more information about the amazing work being carried out at Georgeham Primary School visit <https://www.georgeham-primary.devon.sch.uk>