



Starting a Recycling Program at Your School

City of San José Go Green Schools Program

The City of San José Go Green Schools Program can provide **free paper and bottle/can recycling containers** and technical assistance in setting up and maintaining your recycling program. San José K-12 public and private schools are eligible for this assistance. San José schools can request recycling containers on-line and pick them up at RAFT, the Resource Area for Teachers.

What can we do to start a program at my school?

1. **Form a team** for your recycling and other green school projects and practices. Ideally the team would include your principal and one or more teachers, parents, students, and custodians. Find team members with enthusiasm for the program. Appoint a coordinator. Plan together what you would like to do and how you will do it. Forming a team will help ensure that the program is sustainable.
2. Obtain the **principal's authorization** and support for the recycling program. Involve him or her throughout the process, and keep him or her informed of your successes. Remind the principal that the school and district can save money by recycling.
3. Conduct a **waste audit** to identify the kinds of waste the school generates, the volume of materials, and how much could be recycled, re-used, reduced or eliminated in future. Contact us if you need assistance with this step. We can help!
4. **Start small and simple**, and build on your successes. It's better to start small and grow than to start big and get overwhelmed and give up. Many schools start with recycling paper first, then when they feel confident add bottles and cans. At a more advanced level, you might even want to consider composting lunch and other food waste. Also, a number of schools recycle cell phones and ink cartridges as fundraisers.

What are my options for collection?

1. Find out which **hauler company** removes the school's trash. The hauler contract will probably be managed at the school district office. Contact that company and find out what they accept in the recycling bins at your school. It may be necessary to speak with the district about the details of the contract they have with the hauler to determine what can be collected. Contact us for technical assistance if you have problems. We can help!
2. You may also arrange to have the **San Jose Conservation Corps** pick up your recycling bottles and cans, and your paper recycling if you are also recycling bottles/cans. They have a government grant to provide this service for free to public schools. They can be reached at: 408-283-7171 or at www.sjcccharterschool.org

What if we want to redeem our bottles and cans for money?

If you wish to keep the bottle and can redemption monies for school use, you may take them to **redemption recycling centers** that will pay you for aluminum, glass, and plastic. Recruit a few parents and teachers who are willing to transport the recyclables on a regular basis to the center. Contact the Santa Clara County Recycling Hotline at 1-800-533-8414 or visit www.recyclestuff.org to find a location near you.

How do we organize a campus wide collection program?

To organize your **collection process** you will need to coordinate with the custodian and involve him/her in the process. Creating a student collection team may reduce the amount of work for custodians. Recruit volunteers from the campus Environmental or Science Club, or have it be part of a service learning project or curriculum.

1. For **paper**, determine where the recyclables will be stored before they are picked up by the hauler or volunteers. The student collection team would take the paper boxes to this central collection point on a routine basis, twice weekly or more often as needed.
2. For **bottles and cans**, decide where the recyclables will be stored before they are either picked up or taken to a redemption center. Safeguard against attracting insects and rodents by keeping them in an enclosed area and by arranging to have them picked up on a weekly or more frequent basis. Line the individual bottle and can recycling bins with reusable liner bags to help keep the bins clean. The student collection team would take the bottles and cans to the central collection point on a routine basis, daily or at least twice weekly as needed.
3. If you have a sufficient quantity of paper, there are **paper recycling companies** that will buy the paper from you and maybe even pick it up. Contact Santa Clara County Recycling Hotline for information on local companies: 1-800-533-8414 or visit www.recyclestuff.org.

Where should we place our recycling containers?

Always **put the recycling containers right next to the garbage cans**. Make sure they are clearly **marked as recycling**, and describe what can be recycled in them. Have the students decorate them— you could even have a school-wide contest!

How do we promote our recycling program at school?

Hold a **school-wide recycling kickoff or assembly**. Create your own presentation, involving the students in creative ways to promote recycling. Also, there are a number of affordable local entertainers who specialize in promoting recycling and other green practices and who could appear at a school-wide recycling kickoff or assembly: the Banana Slug String Band and Zun-Zun are two. Visit the Go Green Schools website for more resources: www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen

For further assistance in **obtaining free recycling containers or help** in starting a school recycling program, or for information on other environmental resources for schools, please contact:

San José Go Green Schools Program
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