



## Briefing Note: Recycling and waste minimisation in schools

<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for Education		
<b>Date:</b>	22 January 2019	<b>Priority:</b>	Low
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1174325
<b>Drafter:</b>	Marielle Hawkes	<b>DDI:</b>	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Key Contact:</b>	Pauline Cleaver	<b>DDI:</b>	
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

**Note** that there are a number of different supports for schools in the areas of recycling and waste minimisation.

**Noted**

**Note** that there are further actions the Ministry of Education can take, in line with the Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, to support and encourage schools with recycling and waste minimisation.

**Noted**

**Agree** that this Briefing will be proactively released.

**Agree / Disagree**

### Summary

- Your Office requested a briefing note on what the Ministry of Education is doing to encourage recycling and waste minimisation in schools and ECE services and what more can be done?
- Recycling and waste minimisation in schools are important parts of a holistic approach to sustainability and environmental protection. Education for Sustainability (EfS) can give the opportunity and empower students to take action on these issues in their school and wider community.

- The majority of recycling and waste minimisation support for schools comes from local and regional councils, as well as through the Enviroschools programme.
- There are actions the Ministry of Education can take, in line with the Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, to support and encourage schools with recycling and waste minimisation.

*Release*

Pauline Cleaver  
**Associate Deputy Secretary**  
**Early Learning and Student Achievement**

22/01/2019



Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

31/1/19

## Background

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1. Recycling and waste minimisation in schools are important parts of a holistic approach to sustainability and environmental protection. Education for Sustainability (EfS) can give the opportunity and empower students to take action on these issues in their school and wider community.

### Guidance and support

2. The Ministry of Education website features guidance for boards of trustees on waste management in schools. The guidance states that BoT must find ways to get rid of school waste with the least negative effects on the environment.
3. There is a significant amount of readily accessible recycling and waste management resources and programmes promoted to schools by government agencies, local and regional councils and non-government agencies.
4. The majority of recycling and waste minimisation support for schools comes from local and regional councils. While the specific support varies council to council, most offer:
  - a. Kerbside recycling services.
  - b. Waste reduction grants to support projects that will reduce waste, such as worm farms and classroom recycling bins.
  - c. Free education resources, such as funding access to the Zero Waste Education programme, tours of waste minimisation centres and school visits by environmental educators.
5. In addition to providing direct support for schools, most local and regional councils partner with the Toimata Foundation to deliver the Enviroschools programmes. The Foundation receives part-funding from the Ministry for the Environment, regional councils and community groups. The programme is delivered regionally and in general Enviroschools Regional Coordinators are a council employee.

### Enviroschools

6. Launched nation-wide in 2001, the Enviroschools programme works with children and young people to plan, design and implement sustainability actions that are important to them and their communities. Regional teams deliver Enviroschools programmes to schools and Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres through individual facilitation, staff professional development, sharing and reflection events, and other supports tailored to the region.
7. Over 1100 schools and early learning centres participate in the Enviroschools programme, representing more than a third of schools and 5% of the ECE sector. A range of projects across the schools and ECE centres have relevance to recycling and waste minimisation.
8. For example, the Sustainability Trust is using funding from the Government's Waste Minimisation Fund to partner with Enviroschools to roll out *Your Sustainable School*. *Your Sustainable School* is a programme to reduce the waste produced in primary and intermediate schools and improve school recycling. The programme is available to all primary and intermediate schools in the Wellington region, not just current Enviroschools. It will encourage good recycling and waste behaviour beyond the school, endeavouring to influence whānau behaviour as well.

9. From 2011 to 2013 a survey and pilot project was undertaken with Kindergarten Associations to further develop the Enviroschools programme in ECE. The key findings showed a high level of support for the Enviroschools Programme with 94.2% either 'very supportive' or 'supportive'. As a direct result of participation in the programme 62.9% respondents reported starting to "reduce, reuse and recycle when and where we can." In regards to waste minimisation specifically 79.9% reported packing "litter-less lunches".
10. The Enviroschools programme is designed to work in conjunction with the national curriculum.

### **Recycling and waste minimisation in Te Whāriki and The New Zealand Curriculum**

11. Both *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) provide frameworks through which schools, teachers and young people can learn about and take action on sustainability issues, including recycling and waste minimisation.

#### ***Te Whāriki***

12. Two strands in *Te Whāriki* are well aligned with encouraging recycling and waste minimisation in ECE centres:
  - a. The Belonging | Mana whenua strand helps children become increasingly capable of: "taking part in caring for this place."
  - b. The Exploration | Mana aotūroa strand helps children become increasingly capable of "making sense of their worlds by generating and refining working theories".
13. Examples of good practice to support sustainability and environmental awareness for parents, and early childhood centres are available on the Ministry' website, Te Whariki Online. Resources on Te Whāriki Online showcase what some early learning services are doing to be more sustainable themselves and actively encourage their tamariki, parents and whānau to participate.
14. Te Whāriki Online also reinforces the importance of "Education *for* the environment", which sees tamariki as active citizens and agents of change to advocate for a healthy environment and society. The ECE sector has been particularly successful at engaging tamariki and their community in developing an ethic of care and responsibility for the environment.

#### ***The New Zealand Curriculum***

15. The NZC focuses on 21st century learning, ensuring learners are equipped to participate in and contribute to their own society and the wider world. An important aspect of this is encouraging students to consider significant future-focused issues such as sustainability.
16. It is found in the Vision (young people will be actively involved as contributors to the environmental well-being of New Zealand); as well as the Principles, the Values, the Key Competencies and explicitly through a number of learning areas.

### **Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2021**

17. The Ministry of Education together with Department of Conservation and Ministry for the Environment have committed to a new Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2021, *Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao*.

18. The strategy has three priority areas with agreed actions to guide government agencies efforts to create momentum. These are:
- a. Provide co-ordination and strengthen networks.
  - b. Support the development of guidelines and tools, and initiatives that enable ongoing growth of the EfS sector.
  - c. Strengthen pathways in sustainable practice including opportunities in tertiary education and training.

#### What more can we do?

19. In line with the priority actions under the Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, potential action to support and encourage schools and ECE centres with recycling and waste minimisation include:
- a. Updating the Guidelines for Environmental Education in New Zealand Schools and the EfS section of Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI), much of the content on TKI was developed in the early 2000's and could be refreshed. In the review of resources and content, we could ensure that there is a balance of which areas of EfS (for example, climate change, biodiversity, water quality and waste) are represented.
  - b. Using examples of successful EfS in schools, specifically examples of schools working with their community on recycling waste minimisation, as part of the Ministry's local curriculum best practice spotlighting.

#### Next Steps

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20. The Ministry of Education can further explore any of the actions listed above should you indicate a preference.

#### Proactive Release

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21. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.