



Beldon Primary School Waste Audit Report

Auditor: Aoife McCabe

Date: Monday 22 June 2026

Highlights

- On the day of the incursion, we audited 100% of a day's worth of waste collected from the outdoor general waste bins. Overall, we found very low amounts of waste which indicates that waste avoidance and resource recovery are already imbedded practices at Beldon Primary School.
- It was great to learn that there are a number of projects already in place at your school, including Containers for Change, worm farms and paper recycling. These actions help avoid waste going to landfill.
- The students had good ideas to share about projects to further reduce waste.

Lunchbox waste

During our waste audit we counted 73 snack wrappers, and 7 zip-lock bags and glad wrap, which works out to be approximately 14,880 soft plastic items being sent to landfill each year, which is significantly less than we would expect to find in a similar sized school. Unfortunately, there are no recycling options for these items, so avoidance is the best option.

Some ideas to reduce lunch box waste include encouraging students to bring snacks and sandwiches to school in reusable containers or reusing snack bags multiple times. Another way to reduce lunchbox waste is by buying snacks in bulk where possible. Some of the benefits of this include receiving more of the snack, saving money, and reducing the amount of soft plastics being sent to landfill.



Food Waste



From the waste audited, there was 0.604kg of fruit and vegetable scraps, which accumulates to 112kg a year. This is a very small amount of waste, as schools tend to have lots of fruit peels in the bin. This indicates that most of your students are using the worm farm bins for their fruit and vegetable scraps.

From the audit we counted 1.3kg of food scraps, 1 whole piece of fruit and 1 whole, packaged, unopened item. Overall, this means that 242kg of food scraps and 372 whole food items are wasted across a school year.

Recycling



From the audit we collected 0.334kg of recyclable paper and cardboard. Much of this waste appeared to be from a classroom or staff area. Given the school currently has paper and cardboard recycling bins, this waste could be diverted from landfill.

Research has found that having all available bin option beside each other in waste stations is one of the most effective ways to ensure correct waste sorting behaviours. Where possible, all bin types should be a consistent colour, and they should be clearly labelled. This provides a visual reminder and makes it easier for the students to separate their waste. There is information on [setting up waste stations](#) available on our website. You could apply for funding to purchase any new bins or waste infrastructure needed for classroom waste stations through a [WasteSorted Schools grant](#).

We found 0.19kg of plastic containers and 0.052kg of aluminium foil. There were other recyclable materials and containers that we had to put in the general waste as these items were all contaminated with food waste and therefore ineligible for recycling. Due to the high amounts of clean, dry paper and cardboard founds in classrooms, and the low amounts of eligible recycling in students' lunchboxes, we recommend schools keep recycling bins in the classrooms and away from eating areas.

Containers for Change



It's great that you have started a Containers for Change collection to raise funds while recycling eligible containers. From the waste we audited, we counted 16 eligible containers. This means approximately 2,976 containers a year that could be recycled are going to landfill. These containers could raise an additional \$290 for your school.

When we discussed why we thought these containers were ending up in general waste, the students suggested that some of the younger students may have been unsure about which bin they should put their containers in. Adding some visual prompts or reminders to the bins may help some of the students with their waste sorting behaviours.

General Waste



From the waste we audited, 38% of it was general waste. Much of this waste was made up of single use items from the canteen including soiled paper bags, plastic containers and bamboo cutelry.