

# Waste Management Programs in Peel Schools – Teacher Guide

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## 1. Introduction

This guide was created to support teachers with the Region of Peel's waste management programs for schools and provide a refresher on how to properly sort waste.

## 2. Waste Management Overview for Schools

### 2.1. Region of Peel Roles

The Region of Peel is responsible for collecting recycling from schools. In addition, the Region offers waste education programs for schools including waste workshops, virtual tours of Regional waste management facilities, and resources and lessons plans to explore waste management in Peel. Details can be found at <https://www.peelregion.ca/environmental-education/waste.asp>.

### 2.2. School and School Board Roles

The school is responsible for collecting garbage and recycling within schools, including classrooms, staff rooms and common areas such as the library and cafeteria. Depending on the school, the custodians and/or students are involved with the collection of garbage and recycling from within the school. Custodians are also responsible for transporting garbage and recycling outdoors for collection (also referred to as "setting out"), either in carts or front-end bins.

Students and staff are responsible for properly sorting their waste and preventing contamination of the recycling containers by ensuring non-recyclable items are placed in the garbage and/or removed from the recycling containers.

The school board is responsible for coordinating and covering the cost of garbage collection (the Region only provides recycling collection at no cost). The school board is also responsible for providing garbage and recycling containers (i.e., blue boxes) to sort waste within the school.

Schools can order recycling containers for classrooms (i.e., blue boxes) from their school board. Schools looking to order additional recycling containers should contact:

- **PDSB:** Tracy Appleton, Sustainability Specialist  
905-890-1010 ext. 2168  
[Tracy.appleton@peelsb.com](mailto:Tracy.appleton@peelsb.com)
- **DPCDSB:** Contact School Administration

## 2.3. School Lunches

The Region of Peel encourages students and staff to dispose of their garbage and recycling at school to learn how to properly sort their waste. To support this, the Region provides schools with free waste sorting posters and offer waste education programs (see below).

Schools can promote food waste reduction and diversion by encouraging students to:

- **Take food waste back home** – This allows parents to see what food was not eaten, helping families to modify lunch planning and reduce food waste.
- **Dispose of food waste at home** – If the student lives in a household that receives curbside organics collection, encourage the student to dispose of inedible food scraps in the green organic cart.

Teachers interested in collecting food and organic waste in their classroom and bringing it home for disposal should discuss with their principal before implementing. If approved, teachers would be responsible for monitoring the food and organic waste for contamination and following their municipal organic waste collection guidelines for proper disposal.

## 3. Waste Management Resources for Schools

### 3.1. Waste Sorting Posters

Public and private schools that receive recycling collection from the Region of Peel are eligible to receive a set of waste sorting posters (one set per classroom, plus additional sets for common areas). Posters can be ordered at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfea-Z6aF7xOHSIbaNA8GSqnt\\_E1MILCnvmiSY5DR6KbgMftw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfea-Z6aF7xOHSIbaNA8GSqnt_E1MILCnvmiSY5DR6KbgMftw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1).



PDF versions of the posters are also available at <https://www.peelregion.ca/environmental-education/waste.asp>.

### 3.2. Waste Education Programs

The Region offers waste education programs for schools including waste workshops, virtual tours of Regional waste management facilities, and resources and lesson plans.

These programs and resources are interactive, curriculum-connected, and are appropriate for teaching in-class and online learning. Most programs and resources can be completed within a class period and help support EcoSchools certification.

These resources can be accessed online at <https://www.peelregion.ca/environmental-education/waste.asp> and include:

- Waste lesson plans – Kindergarten to Grade 1 and Grades 9 to 12
- Virtual waste workshops – Grades 2 to 8
- Waste sorting online games – All grades
- Activity sheets and videos

### 3.3. Waste Sorting Engine and FAQ

If you are unsure if an item belongs in the garbage or recycling, check the Region’s waste sorting engine at [www.peelregion.ca/waste](http://www.peelregion.ca/waste). Please note this information was developed for residents and should be interpreted accordingly for schools:

- **Recycling:** The search engine accurately tells schools whether an item belongs in the recycling.
- **Organics:** If an item belongs in the organics, students can either place it in the garbage or bring it home for proper disposal in their green organic cart (if applicable).
- **Garbage:** If the item is not packaging, school staff should contact their board to confirm whether a diversion program is in place for this item.
- **Community Recycling Centre:** If the search engine recommends taking an item to a Community Recycling Centre for disposal, school staff should contact their board to confirm whether a diversion program is in place for this item.

The Region also created a fact sheet to answer commonly asked questions about sorting waste in Peel. See Appendix I below, “Answers to FAQ about Waste in Peel”.

In addition, the Creative Zone (<https://familydaycare.com/about-us/the-creative-zone>) receives and provides school donation of office and art supplies.

### 3.4. EcoSchools

There are many waste related actions in the EcoSchools Certification program that can be completed to support your school's waste diversion initiatives. All EcoSchools Canada actions are connected to the curriculum and the UN SDGs.

Schools can explore and track all of the actions by registering your school and logging into the EcoSchools Certification Application at <https://app.ecoschools.ca/>.

Waste related actions include:

- **Sort Your Waste:** Establish a waste sorting program at your school.
- **Conduct a Waste Audit:** Collect and measure the types of waste that is generated at your school and use your findings to identify waste actions that may be appropriate for your school.
- **Waste-free Lunch:** Challenge your school to bring waste-free lunches weekly or monthly.
- **Scrap Your Food Waste:** Develop an awareness campaign on avoidable food waste and encourage a school-wide pledge.

Schools looking for more information should contact:

- **Peggy Cheng**, Coordinator Peel EcoSchools  
[peggy.cheng@trca.ca](mailto:peggy.cheng@trca.ca)  
(437) 488-9042

## 4. Waste Management Regulations and Policy

### 4.1. Recycling Collection in Schools - Provincial Mandate (O. Reg. 103/94)

Under Ontario Regulation 103/94, educational institutions (schools) with at least 350 students enrolled are required to implement a source separation program for the waste generated by the operation of the institution. A "source separation program" refers to a reuse or recycling program.

The reuse or recycling program must include the following items:

- Aluminum food or beverage cans,
- Cardboard,
- Fine paper,
- Glass bottles and jars for food and beverages,
- Newspaper, and
- Steel food or beverage cans.

Both the PDSB and DPCDSB expect schools to follow this regulation by implementing a recycling program within schools. Further details about this regulation can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/940103>.

If your school does not have a recycling program, or your school is only recycling certain items (e.g., paper only), please work with the school board (see contacts below) to implement or improve the recycling program within your school.

## 4.2. Food and Organics Collection – Provincial Mandate (Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement)

Ontario's Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement (the Policy Statement) was issued in 2018 to provide direction to municipalities and industrial, commercial, and institutional establishments to increase waste reduction and recovery of food and organic waste. The Policy Statement supports the provincial vision of a circular economy and is an important tool to help move towards the province's goals of zero waste and zero greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

Under the Policy Statement, educational institutions subject to Ontario Regulation 103/94 (see above) that generate 150 kilograms or more of food and organic waste per week shall implement a source separation program and achieve a 70% waste reduction and diversion target of food and organic waste generated in the facility by 2025.

The organic collection program must include the following items:

- Food waste,
- Organic waste (e.g., leaf and yard waste, compostable products and packaging, diapers, and pet waste),
- Soiled paper (e.g., napkins and paper towels).

Further details about the Policy Statement can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/food-and-organic-waste-policy-statement>.

Currently there isn't an organic collection program for schools in Peel, however both the PDSB and DPCDSB are working towards implementing a program by 2025, beginning with a pilot at select schools in 2022.

## Appendix I: Answers to FAQ about Waste in Peel

### **I can't find an item on the poster... Is it recyclable?**

Look it up at [www.peelregion.ca/waste](http://www.peelregion.ca/waste). If the item is not recyclable, talk to your facilities manager to learn whether your school board has a diversion program for that type of waste.

If an item belongs in the organics, students can either place it in the garbage or bring it home for proper disposal in their organic cart (if applicable).



### **Can takeout beverage cups from Tim Hortons, Starbucks, or Second Cup be recycled?**

Disposable coffee cups are not recyclable in Peel and must go in the garbage. Bringing a reusable mug for coffee is a great strategy to reduce waste.



### **Why do lids and straws need to be removed from bottles and juice boxes before recycling?**

Straws and lids are not made from the same type of material as the juice box or bottle, and therefore constitute contamination. If contamination levels are too high, the Region of Peel cannot sell the recyclables to companies who recycle them. Lids also constitute a safety hazard in our facility, as they can become a projectile when bottles are compressed. It is okay to leave the plastic ring and wrapper on plastic bottles.



### **Why do all recyclable items need to be emptied before going in the blue box?**

Sealed items containing liquids, like water bottles, cannot properly be sorted by our machines at the recycling sorting facility and therefore end up in the landfill. Items that are contaminated with food, such as paper and cardboard, are not recyclable. It's worth it to take the time to empty liquids and wipe or rinse off food.

### **Can all plastic materials be recycled?**

Unfortunately, certain types of plastics are not recyclable in Peel. Examples of non-recyclable plastic include lamination scraps, KoolAid Jammer™ pouches, Saran™ wrap, plastic cutlery, and wrappers from cookies and snacks. Please ensure these items are not placed in the Blue Box.

