

# LAUNCH for Long Beach Toolkit: Lunchtime Sorting

**Stop! Don't just toss your lunch tray in the garbage – learn how to sort your trash instead!**

Do you ever wonder where your leftover lunch items go? You've just finished your lunch and all that is left on your tray is an empty milk carton, a plastic wrapper, a plastic container, and other trash items. Use this Lunchtime Sorting toolkit to separate recyclables, food, and rubbish and decide the fate of your waste!

Within this toolkit, you'll find various downloadable resources. For your convenience, you can access them all in one place by scanning the Toolkit Resources QR code on the last page to view them in a Google Drive folder.

This toolkit was created in partnership with the City of Long Beach Utilities.



**Have you registered?**



Want to use this toolkit in español? Scan this QR code!

## Toolkit Details

The card is titled "LAUNCH Eco-Toolkit Lunchtime Sorting" and includes an illustration of a child sorting trash into bins. It lists the following details:

Skill Level	Climate Crisis Topic	Project Time	What You'll Need
Grades K-5, led by a teacher, parent or school administrator	Waste	Three weeks, up to a full school year	Trash cans, buckets, boxes and/or art materials

**Versión en español:**



## Why It's Important

Our landfills and the Long Beach SERRF (Southeast Resource Recovery Facility) are filling up at an alarming rate often with resources that can be recycled or upcycled and used again. In order to reduce the amount of waste in landfills, it is important to sort out recyclables to get them to the right place. This reduces the amount of trash in the environment and allows us to reuse valuable resources.

## What You Will Accomplish

Lunchtime sorting inspires students to take action by creating and using stations that will help your schoolmates recycle some of their waste.

## What is Long Beach Doing to Reduce Plastic and Solid Waste?

Long Beach is very focused on recycling correctly and reducing contamination in your waste bins. Be sure to recycle the following items in your purple bin: plastic bags, jugs, and tubs/containers, aluminum and metal cans, paper and cardboard, and glass bottles and jars (full guidelines below). A common misconception, the City does **not** follow the numbers and triangular rotating arrows you usually find on single-use plastics, known as Resin Identification Codes. These numbers were not created to tell you whether or not the plastic is recyclable, which is why going by plastic-type (bottle, jugs, and tubs) is more effective in recycling properly. By starting or continuing your lunchtime sorting stations, you will be helping your city maintain their goals for a less trashy/messy future!

### Long Beach SERRF:



### Long Beach Recycling Guidelines:



## NGSS

This toolkit address the following Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) within the Performance Expectations of NGSS for Grades K-2 and 3-5:

- Asking Questions and Defining a Problem
- Planning and Carrying out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

## Learning Objectives

### Analysis

- Students will analyze their campus to determine the best areas to place lunchtime sorting stations
- Students will track and evaluate the impact of their project

### Project Management

- Students will set goals on how much waste they want to divert from landfills (ex. bags of trash, weight, trash cans, etc.)
- Students will identify routines to accomplish their goal
- Students will practice leadership skills by delegating tasks to each other

### Evaluation and Assessment

- Students will track and evaluate the impact of their project

# Educator Project Plan

**Follow the steps below to set up a successful Lunchtime Sorting Station at your school!  
Need help? Email us at [info@gradesofgreen.org](mailto:info@gradesofgreen.org)!**

Track your metrics and submit your impact after implementing this toolkit. Your feedback helps keep our programs free for all across the globe.

## Determine Participants

Use our Lunchtime Sorting Sign-Up Sheet Template to create your team!

- A Student Group (such as a club, before/after school program, non-school organization)
- A whole class
- The whole school

### Lunchtime Sorting Sign-Up Sheet:



### Pro Tip:

- Working with a small group of students? Set up one sorting station with fewer options.
- Working with a bigger team? Set up a large sorting station with many options.
- Is your whole school involved? Set up multiple sorting stations with every option possible.

## Where Does Your Trash Go?

The resources provided can be shown as a slideshow (see the QR code on the next page) or printed out as individual worksheets for students to learn.



**We Create A LOT of Trash!**

How much do you weigh? Each school year, the average American student creates close to 67 pounds of lunch packaging waste. That’s more than 18,000 pounds of plastic, paper, and other non-food materials for just one normal sized elementary school. Additionally, citizens and businesses in the City of Long Beach alone generate about 368,000 tons of residential, commercial, and industrial waste each year. Reducing trash in landfills is important because it reduces the amount of resources used by landfills and incinerators. [1]

**Waste Causes Greenhouse Gas Emissions!**

Fossil fuels are mainly used for both the international production of our packaging and disposal of our waste. These fossil fuels give off greenhouse gasses that make Earth hotter and lead to climate change. In 2019, landfills alone produced 91 million metric tons of CO2 in the United States. That’s the same weight as 455,000 blue whales! [2]

**Landfills HURT Our Environment**

Landfills have a lot of negative effects on our environment including releasing greenhouse gas emissions in the air, making our groundwater dirty, cutting down trees, and reducing the health of soil. Furthermore, biodiversity often decreases with 30-300 species being displaced for every hectare used for landfills. [3]

**Lunchtime Sorting Slideshow:**



**[1] – How Addressing School Lunches Could Reduce Waste**



**[2] – Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program**



**[3] – Can the Effects of Pollution be Reversed?**



## Why Waste is an Environmental Justice Issue

Waste is often classified as an environmental justice issue due to the inequalities that exist between low and high income communities. Wealthy neighborhoods are often given more resources to manage waste while disenfranchised communities are frequently left without enough resources to have a clean living environment. The same communities with lower incomes are usually placed close to waste management facilities where additional pollution is harmful to people. Long Beach, like other Southern California communities, had historically trucked its solid waste to neighborhoods outside the City for burial in landfills; however, a closure of a nearby landfill in 1980 led the City to realize they could no longer rely on exporting their solid waste to other neighborhoods. [SERRF (longbeach.gov)]

## Watch these short videos to learn why it's important to have less trash



'Recycling in Long Beach Explained | City of Long Beach'



Let's Talk Recycling Q&A | City of Long Beach

## Think About It!

### Pre-Activity Questions

- Describe places in your school or community where you can put lunchtime sorting stations.
- What kind of trash do you see? What type of sorting bins should you make?
- Why do you think some people don't sort their trash?
- Why is sorting trash important for the environment?
- Do you have a trash bin sorting station at home?

# Take Action: How to LAUNCH Lunchtime Sorting Stations

Lead students through the “Lunchtime Sorting” activity with guided instructions. Check out “Pro Tips” with each step for useful help:

## 1. Assign Roles

- Determine who and how many students/staff/volunteers are participating.
- Invite participants to take part in managing lunch sorting responsibilities.
- Use the Lunchtime Sorting Sign-Up Sheet to track additional participants.

## 2. Conduct a Pre-Audit

To understand how waste is managed at your school, it is important to conduct a pre-audit; this can be completed with the Lunchtime Sorting Pre-Project Audit worksheet. Keep note of what you analyze and compare them with your final statistics at the end of the campaign.

## 3. Design Your Sorting Station Plan

- Think about what type of sorting stations you would like to create. Examples of sorting station elements include:
  - Recycle (purple bin) (learn what can be recycled in Long Beach by scanning the two QR codes to the right)
    - Plastic bottles, clean plastic containers, metal cans, glass, clean cardboard
    - Use the LB Recycles Guide to make sure the right items are going in the bin
  - Liquids bucket
    - For leftover milk, water, juice, etc. so the empty container can be recycled (all liquids can be dumped down a custodial drain)
  - Stack trays
    - Stacking trays greatly reduces the amount of space used in a landfill and the amount of trash bags used
    - Place the trays in the landfill bin after being stacked
  - Food donation
    - Uneaten/unopened food and whole fruit (see our Food Rescue Toolkit)

Lunchtime Sorting Sign-up Sheet:



Lunchtime Sorting Pre-Project Audit Worksheet:



What Can Be Recycled in Long Beach?



Long Beach Recycles Guide



**Pro Tip: Use your Long Beach Resources**

Check out this activity booklet provided by the City of Long Beach:



Long Beach schools receive recycling services from the City at no extra cost.

- Compost (if using a compost bin on campus)
  - Fruits and vegetables (see our Composting Toolkit)
- OR food scraps (if getting picked up by Long Beach Waste Hauler)
  - All food scraps, including leftover fruit, veggies, meat, bread, etc.
- Landfill/Trash
  - All other items, including those contaminated with food, flimsy plastic wrappers, chip bags, plastic bags
- Determine the location of your sorting station(s)
  - Look at a map of your school. Determine where sorting stations should be placed.

**Pro Tip: Separate the Elements**

Add a pair of trash grabbers or tongs to each bin in case items were tossed in the wrong bins

Add a strainer to your liquids bucket/bin to filter out any accidental solids dropped into the liquids bucket. Remind kids to pour out liquids close to the top of the bucket so it doesn't splash on them or their friends!

**Pro Tip: "Tray"d Them In**

Contact your school's tray manufacturer to see if they collect used trays for recycling.

**Campus Food Rescue Toolkit:**



**Composting at School Toolkit:**



## 4. Present Your Plan

Present your sorting station plan to the right administration/staff members and educate them about why sorting stations are important for waste reduction. Also, ask individuals like your principal, vice principal, or head custodian for materials to make your plan happen! This can include trash cans, buckets, boxes, and trash bags.

## 5. Prepare Your Materials

Gather your sorting station supplies. This can include:

- Paper
- Writing utensils/art supplies
- Tape
- Glue
- Trash cans
- Trash bags
- Buckets
- Boxes

**Sorting Station Examples:**



**Lunchtime Sorting Signs:**



Start making your sorting stations! Scan the QR codes to the right for some examples as well as signs you can print out!

## 6. Let People Know

Let people know about your sorting project! You can do this by conducting a walking assembly and presenting the provided Lunchtime Sorting Walking Assembly Script to your classmates.

## 7. Set a Schedule

Use our Lunchtime Sorting Team Organizer worksheet to set up a schedule for participants to monitor the sorting stations. If you have multiple stations, have a schedule for each station.

## 8: Sort It Out

Now it's time to put all your hard work into practice! Set up your lunchtime sorting stations and start your campus sorting. Use our Lunchtime Sorting Post-Project Audit worksheet to track your group's progress. Collect sheets weekly to keep track of your impact.

### Lunchtime Sorting Walking Assembly Script:



### Lunchtime Sorting Team Organizer:



### Lunchtime Sorting Post-Project Audit Worksheet:



## Reflection Questions

### How'd It Go?

#### Student Reflection

- What were some great things that happened during your project?
- What could you do to get more people involved next time?
- What other ways could you keep trash away from landfills?
- Which sorting station was used the most? In other words, what was the most commonly sorted item?
- Would you like to set up your own waste sorting station at home?

## Report Students' Impact

Congratulations!! You've implemented Lunchtime Sorting! Don't let all that hard work go unnoticed. **Submit your results by scanning the QR code below.**





Project ongoing? No problem! Let us know what you've done so far.

By reporting your impact, Grades of Green can:

- CELEBRATE and elevate your students' hard work and success.
- Offer our programs FREE for all students across the globe.
- AWARD stipends and certificates to hard-working educators and students.

Please take a few minutes to submit your results. Thank you!

## Provided Resources

Lunchtime Sorting Sign-up Sheet:



Lunchtime Sorting Pre-Project Audit Worksheet:



Lunchtime Sorting Post-Project Audit Worksheet:



Lunchtime Sorting Walking Assembly Script:



Lunchtime Sorting Team Organizer:



Lunchtime Sorting Slides:



Lunchtime Sorting Wrap Up Form:



Sorting Station Examples:



Printable Signs:



Toolkit Resources – Google Drive Folder:



**Congrats on completing the Lunchtime Sorting Eco-Toolkit!**

**Did you enjoy this toolkit? Find your next project below!**

