CYPSP
Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

SOUTHERN AREA
School Uniform Recycling TOOLKIT

A Practical Support Guide for a School Uniform Recycling Initiative

WHY CHOOSE TO REUSE?

PLANNING YOUR INITIATIVE

HINTS & TIPS

WHAT NEXT?

Includes a suite of adaptable flyers, checklist templates and evaluation tools

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to members of both the Dungannon and Mid Ulster Locality Planning Groups (LPGs): local partnerships aiming to improve outcomes for children, young people and families across Northern Ireland. Members of both LPG's originally contributed to the Mid Ulster Toolkit in 2022, which has been updated to include all of the Southern Area. Participating organisations are included at the end of the document.

Thanks to the PTA of Magherafelt High School for their support and feedback on the Toolkit and to those participating schools in the pilot programme of 2022; the schools, groups and organisations who used the 2023/24 Toolkits and provided us with valuable feedback which we then presented in infographics; and the authors/owners of the various resources and further reading we have included throughout the Toolkit.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit has been produced as a practical resource for schools in running a School Uniform Recycling Initiative. This includes handy tips, suggested structures for discussion, templates to adapt and use, and links to further reading and resources.

You can print out the Options (Page 6) and Checklist (Pages 8-12) and use as discussion prompts, completing the boxes and keep as a record of discussion. You may wish to increase the copies to A3 size or copy the tables onto a flipchart page. The Discussion Notes at the bottom of the Checklist sections lets you add any further notes of your discussions.

For the templates shown on Page 15 and Page 16 you are able to amend details where relevant to advertise your initiative/event. This includes adding your school logo, name and details of your initiative. These can be done in the indicated areas in brackets.

On the Inventory (Template 5) which accompanies this resource, you can add any details in the relevant headings in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

All words or phrases which are in grey and underlined can be clicked on to take you to the relevant resource, further reading or e-mail. We have also included a link for further resources which is on Page 20. This includes many articles and evaluations of other School Uniform Recycling Initiatives.

The Timeline on Page 21 can be printed/used as a reference guide for all involved.

For any clarification or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk

BACKGROUND TO THE TOOLKIT

This is an update of our Mid Ulster School Uniform Recycling Toolkit which was originally produced in 2022, in partnership, by member organisations and services of the Dungannon and Mid Ulster Locality Planning Groups (LPG's). Members of both LPG's identified poverty as a critical factor which can adversely affect families which has been further exacerbated by the impact of Brexit and Covid-19 pandemic in recent years. It was agreed to produce a practical toolkit to support schools in the running of a School Uniform Recycling Initiative and to promote the recycling aspect of the initiatives. It was also reported that many families had barely or even unused items of school uniform due to their children not being able to attend school during lockdowns.

Locality Planning Groups are partnerships between statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with and for children, young people and families at a local level. Their work focuses on early intervention to improve outcomes for children and young people. They are one of the functions of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) operating across Northern Ireland.

School Uniform Recycling Initiatives have taken place across Northern Ireland involving schools, voluntary and community sector bodies. This Toolkit is aimed at Primary and Post Primary schools across the Southern Area to help them organise and run an initiative which bests suit their circumstances and resources.

This Toolkit may also be used by other schools and organisations outside of the Southern Area. We would encourage anyone interested in using this to contact us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk to discuss any support needs and to obtain a quick briefing before commencing.

LINK UP WITH OTHER LOCAL SERVICES OR PARTNERS (E.G. CHURCHES AND YOUTH CLUBS) TO AGREE ON SUITABLE VENUES, STORAGE OF ITEMS, ETC.

EVIDENCE: WHY RUN A SCHOOL UNIFORM RECYCLING INITIATIVE?

Across the UK, including Northern Ireland, we throw away 1,000,000 tonnes of textile waste each year with 300,000 tonnes ending up in Landfill. We buy more clothes than any EU country and have 5 times more clothes than our grandparents.

More than 30,000 still wearable school uniforms are dumped in Northern Ireland every year. Across the UK, it was estimated 1.4 million uniforms in good condition were binned in 2019.

Research in Northern Ireland by the Parents Engagement Group states the average **cost** of a Primary School uniform was £173 and post primary £378. The average **spend** for primary school pupils was £315 and £337 for post primary. School uniform grants for families in Northern Ireland are greatly lower than that of their UK and Republic of Ireland neighbours at the following rates:

£42.90 for a primary school pupil
£61.20 for a post primary/special school pupil under 15 years old
£67.20 for a post primary/special school pupil over 15 years old
£26.40 for a post primary/special school pupil physical education kit

Compilers of this Toolkit recognise the sensitive political implications currently existing around school uniform affordability and the debates held at a higher policy level, however, wish to assert that the toolkit aims to be a practical local solution focusing primarily on the environmental benefits while helping to ease the financial burden brought about by purchasing of school uniforms for all children.

WHO CAN RUN A SCHOOL UNIFORM RECYCLING INITIATIVE?

Anyone can run a School Uniform Recycling Initiative. Activities have been co-ordinated and run by Schools, Community Groups and Associations, Churches, Food Banks and Local Partnerships like the CYPSP, consisting of key local organisation aiming to provide family support.

If you are considering running a School Uniform Recycling Initiative for your school, chat with parents, teachers and students from your school community to establish if others would like to become involved. Bring your idea to the school and PTA's attention that this is something the school community would be interested in. If this is something the school or PTA is not interested in, perhaps a local community group may take on the task with help and support.

We strongly recommend engaging with pupils of the school to become involved from the beginning, to create a collective approach with ownership spread across the school. The Student/School Council, Lower Sixth Students or Eco-Committee would be a natural starting point in this respect.

We have included further information about Eco-Schools and volunteering recognition on pages 22 and 23.

To summarise, we have pulled together some options, to help you think about the best approach for your school. (A template is provided on the next page, with these options included, to print out and use as a discussion tool to weigh up the pros and cons to help decide what is best for your school.)

School Uniform Recycling OPTIONS

WHO CAN RUN THE INITIATIVE?	Pros	Cons	DECISION
Run by School Staff			
Run by Students (School Council / Eco Committee)			
Run by PTA			
Run by Community Organisation			
Joint Co-Ordination (Identify who)			
Other (Please share this model with us)			

DISCUSSION NOTES:

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

As stated, we are not aiming to provide a prescriptive model to be adhered to - flexibility is key.

This section provides a key Checklist for you to have discussions with teaching staff, parents, students and any other partners with whom you will be working. These will then help to produce a clear action plan.

(See the following four pages for a printable version of the Checklist.)

N.B. If this event is run by the school's Eco Schools Council, the initiative can contribute towards achieving Green Flag Award status. To find out more, click HERE.

If this event is run by students, the initiative can contribute towards achieving volunteering hours.

Visit Pages 22 and 23 to read more about Eco Schools and Volunteering.

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST

WHAT ITEMS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE INITIATIVE?

- [ ] Blazers
- [ ] Coats
- [ ] Ties
- [ ] Trousers
- [ ] Skirts
- [ ] Shirts
- [ ] Scarves
- [ ] PE Kits
- [ ] Stationery
- [ ] School Bags
- [ ] Sports Equipment
- [ ] Other

Bear in mind about initials/names on property. How can this be addressed?

(We have included a spreadsheet as an attachment for you to use to catalogue and document all items of school uniforms and equipment so you can take stock of incoming and outgoing items)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST

WHERE WILL ITEMS BE STORED?

Is there a room at school to store the items?

Can they be held over for a short time only or all year round?

Think about alternative spaces - youth clubs, church halls, etc.

Are there any links, through e.g. the PTA or local businesses, to assist?

QUALITY CONTROL

What will you accept or not accept and who makes this decision?

Do you have the facility to have items dry-cleaned?

Items donated already clean (freshly washed / dried / ironed) and in good condition - recommended

DISCUSSION NOTES:

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST

HOW WILL YOU NOTIFY PARENTS TO DONATE ITEMS?

Do you have a school app/text/message/e-mail system to cover all parents?

Do you have a social media platform to advertise?

Do you have any links with community groups or local media?

WHAT WILL YOUR INITIATIVE LOOK LIKE?

Some options to consider:

- Agreed day(s) to hold event at an appropriate location
- After school day finishes
- Project for students
- Linking in with other community events (e.g. family days) to have a stall
- Holding an online event where parents can contact for specific items
- Open Day - obtain uniforms prior to summer holiday
- Other (Please let us know of any other ideas)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST

WHO CAN HELP AND HOW BEST TO USE THEIR TALENTS?

Who can help with publicity?

Who can help with the collection (sorting and documenting/cataloguing) the items?

Who can help with the days of the events?

Who can provide any added value (local community groups/activities to attend on the day/s)?

Who can help with an online initiative?

WHEN WILL YOU HOLD THE INITIATIVE?

On specific days before/during/end of summer?

How long will this last for?

Are there arrangements for anyone unable to attend but interested in obtaining items?

Working with community organisations for summer provision – collection point built through partnerships

DISCUSSION NOTES:

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST

WILL THERE BE A COST TO ITEMS?

Will all items be free?

Will there be a nominal fee?
(If so, what is best to do with takings/donations?)

Give examples - Blazer £5, Items £1?

Could you request an anonymous donation?

HOW CAN YOU BEST PUBLICISE THE SCHEME?

Education Authority Portal

Parish bulletins, newsletters, local media

Messaging parents, social media or local links

Toy Box, Sure Starts, Early Years

Foodbanks

DISCUSSION NOTES:

EVALUATIONS AND WHAT NEXT?

EVALUATION

We are keen to ensure any School Uniform Recycling Initiative is evaluated to measure its impact. This should include quantifiable measures such as the number of uniforms donated, distributed and the number of families benefitting. Costings can be calculated by attributing values to each item in order to demonstrate the savings made as compared to full price uniforms.

We have provided evaluation templates for both parents and schools to complete in order to gain as much information as possible. To accompany the quantitative data we will also ask for qualitative information to understand how the initiative has impacted on families.

Please complete the templates as instructed and send through to us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk so we can add these to an evaluation report.

To give an example of the support we can offer, see the 2023 School Uniform Recycling Toolkit Infographic we produced using the completed evaluation forms submitted by schools and organisations.

FUTURE STEPS

There will likely be a surplus of items that have not been recycled so discussion and agreement should be made to identify where these will go. Ideas might include:

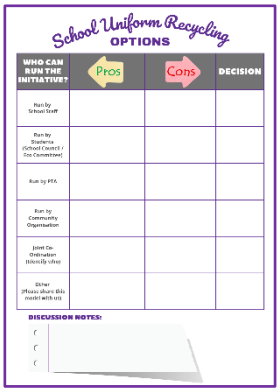
- Keep at a storage space in school so parents can contact at any time to enquire
- Keep at school for the following year's scheme
- Donate to local charity shops for selling on
- Please contact us if you have any other ideas

CONTACT US

If there is anything that you think has been missed from this School Uniform Recycling Toolkit, or if you have any related thoughts, please get in touch.

Contact Darren Curtis at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk

TEMPLATES TO USE


School Uniform Recycling
OPTIONS

WHO CAN RUN THE INITIATIVE?	Pros	Cons	DECISION
Run by School Staff			
Run by Students (School Council / Eco Committee)			
Run by PTA			
Run by Community Organisation			
Joint Co-Ordination (Identify who)			
Other (Please share this model with us)			

DISCUSSION NOTES:

[TEMPLATE 1]

Who Will Run the Initiative?

School Uniform Recycling
CHECKLIST

WHAT ITEMS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE INITIATIVE?

- ☐ Blazers
- ☐ Coats
- ☐ Ties
- ☐ Trousers
- ☐ Skirts
- ☐ Shirts
- ☐ Scarves
- ☐ PE Kits
- ☐ Stationery
- ☐ School Bags
- ☐ Sports Equipment
- ☐ Other

Bear in mind about initials/names on property.
How can this be addressed?

We have included a spreadsheet as an attachment for you to use to catalogue and document all items of school uniforms and equipment so you can take stock of incoming and outgoing items)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

[TEMPLATE 2]

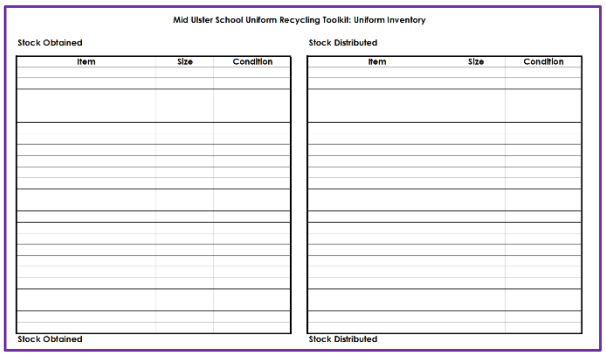
Points for Discussion Checklist

[TEMPLATE 3]

Donation / Collection Flyer

[TEMPLATE 4]

Event Flyer


Mid Ulster School Uniform Recycling Toolkit: Uniform Inventory

Stock Obtained

Item	Size	Condition

Stock Distributed

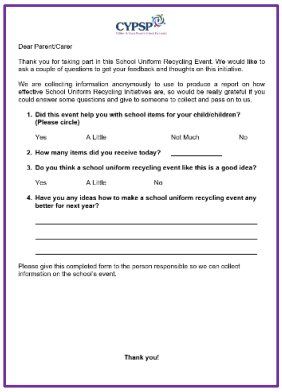
Item	Size	Condition

Stock Obtained

Stock Distributed

[TEMPLATE 5]

Inventory Spreadsheet


CYPSP

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for taking part in this School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback and thoughts on this initiative.

We are collecting information anonymously to use to produce a report on how effective School Uniform Recycling Initiatives are, so would be really grateful if you could answer some questions and give to someone to collect and pass on to us.

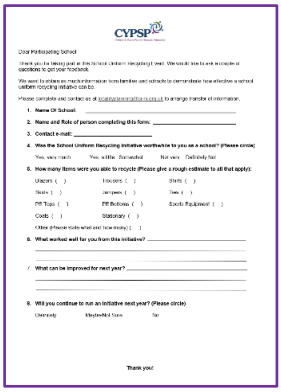
1. **Did this event help you with school items for your child/children? (Please circle)**
   Yes A Little Not Much No
2. **How many items did you receive today?** _____
3. **Do you think a school uniform recycling event like this is a good idea?**
   Yes A Little No
4. **Have you any ideas how to make a school uniform recycling event any better for next year?**

Please give this completed form to the person responsible so we can collect information on the school's event.

Thank you!

[TEMPLATE 6]

Parent/Carer Evaluation


CYPSP

Dear Participating School

Thank you for taking part in the School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback.

We want to collect as much information from families and schools to demonstrate how effective a school uniform recycling initiative can be.

Please complete and send back at [event.information.contact] to arrange transfer of information.

1. **Name Of School:** _____
2. **Name and Role of person completing this form:** _____
3. **Contact e-mail:** _____
4. **Was the School Uniform Recycling Initiative worthwhile to you as a school? (Please circle)**
   Yes, very much Yes, a little Somewhat Not very Definitely Not
5. **How many items were you able to recycle (Please give a rough estimate to all that apply):**
   Blazers ( ) Trousers ( ) Shirts ( )
   Skirts ( ) Jumpers ( ) Ties ( )
   PE Tops ( ) PE Bottoms ( ) Sports Equipment ( )
   Coats ( ) Stationary ( )
   Other (Please state what and how many) ( )
6. **What worked well for you from this initiative?** _____
7. **What can be improved for next year?** _____
8. **Will you continue to run an initiative next year? (Please circle)**
   Definitely Maybe/Not Sure No

Thank you!

[TEMPLATE 7]

School Evaluation

INSERT LOGO OR SCHOOL NAME INTO THIS TEXT BOX

School Uniform Recycling Initiative

WE ARE NOW COLLECTING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- ☑ Blazers
- ☑ Coats
- ☑ Ties
- ☑ Trousers
- ☑ Skirts
- ☑ Shirts

- ☑ Scarves
- ☑ PE Kits
- ☑ Stationery
- ☑ School Bags
- ☑ Sports
- ☑ Equipment

For further info. contact: << NAME / TEL. / E-MAIL / FACEBOOK >>

<< DATE >>

<< TIME >>

<< VENUE >>

Supported by:

CYPSP
Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership
www.cypsp.hscni.net

INSERT LOGO INTO THIS TEXT BOX

<< SCHOOL NAME >>

INVITES YOU TO THEIR

School Uniform Recycling Initiative

<< DATE >>

<< TIME >>

<< VENUE >>

For further info. contact:

<< NAME >>

<< TEL. >>

<< E-MAIL >>

<< FACEBOOK >>

Supported by:

CYPSP

Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

www.cypsp.hscni.net

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for taking part in this School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback and thoughts on this initiative.

We are collecting information anonymously to use to produce a report on how effective School Uniform Recycling Initiatives are, so would be grateful if you could answer some questions and give to someone to collect and pass on to us.

1. **Did this event help you with school items for your child/children? (Please circle)**

   Yes A Little Not Much No

2. **How many items did you receive today?** ( )

3. **Do you think a school uniform recycling event like this is a good idea?**

   Yes A Little No

4. **Have you any ideas how to make a school uniform recycling event any better for next year?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

Please give this completed form to the person responsible so we can collect information on the school's event.

Thank you!

Dear Participating School

Thank you for taking part in this School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback.

We want to obtain as much information from families and schools to demonstrate how effective a school uniform recycling initiative can be.

Please complete and contact us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk to arrange transfer of information.

1. **Name Of School:** _____
2. **Name and Role of person completing this form:** _____
3. **Contact e-mail:** _____
4. **Was the School Uniform Recycling Initiative worthwhile to you as a school? (Please circle)**

   Yes, very much Yes, a little Somewhat Not very Definitely Not

5. **Was the Toolkit useful to your school in helping to run an Initiative?**

   Yes, very much Yes, a little Somewhat Not very Definitely Not

6. **How many items were you able to recycle (Please give a rough estimate to all that apply):**

   Blazers ( ) Trousers ( ) Shirts ( )

   Skirts ( ) Jumpers ( ) Ties ( )

   PE Tops ( ) PE Bottoms ( ) Sports Equipment ( )

   Coats ( ) Stationery ( )

   Other (Please state what and how many) ( )

7. **What worked well for you from this initiative?** _____

   _____

8. **What can be improved for next year?** _____

   _____

9. **Will you continue to run an initiative next year? (Please circle)**

   Definitely Maybe/Not Sure No

10. **Any further comments about your Initiative or Toolkit?** _____

    _____

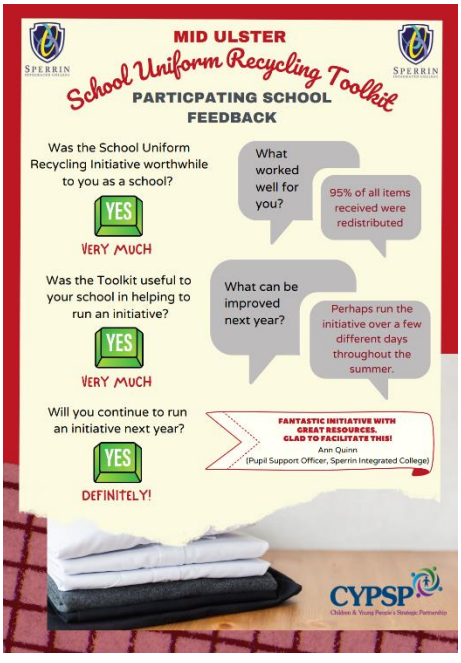
Thank you!

SAMPLE EVALUATION INFOGRAPHIC SHEET

In 2022 we carried out a pilot using this Toolkit with Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt.

See the below feedback from the staff member who co-ordinated the activity and an infographic of the feedback using the above templates. (We will be able to help produce something similar for participating schools.)

"I found the tool kit to be extremely useful, although due to time constraints we were unable to follow the proposed time line. However, the tool kit was laid out in a very concise way, which made it very easy to follow. I found the checklist to be the most useful part, as it gave step by step instructions and highlighted some issues that I hadn't initially thought of. I did amend the inventory spreadsheet to suit my way of working, and to allow us to see what year group had the greatest uptake. The adaptable templates were a great help and allowed to process the scheme much quicker. Overall, I feel that there is an ample amount of information provided and that the tool kit is a fantastic resource for any school to use".



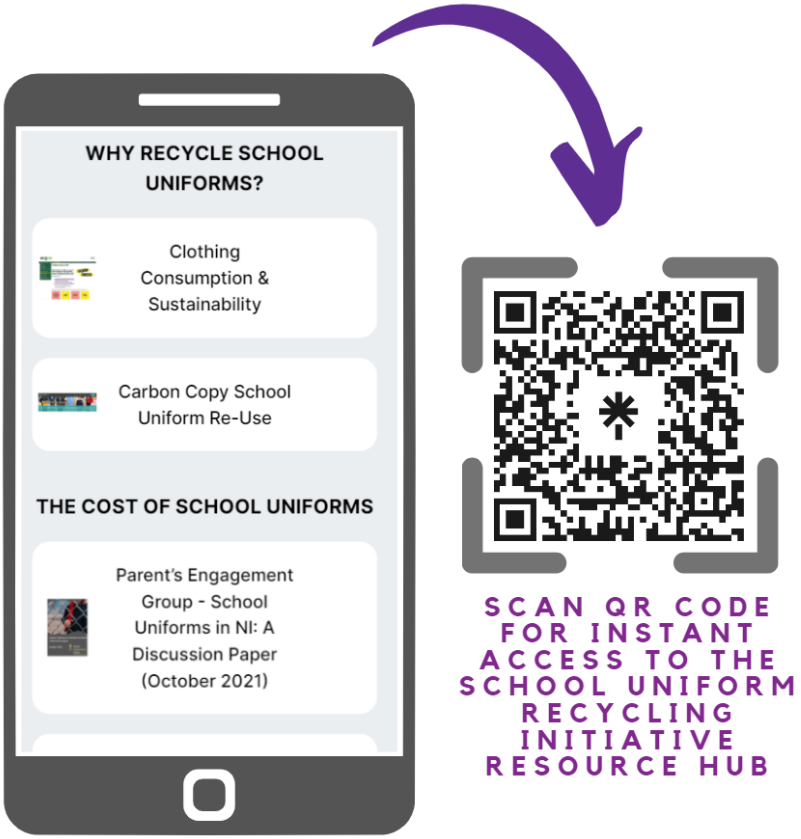
As referred to previously, we have produced an infographic for 2023, including evaluations from 11 schools/organisations. (Contact us to obtain a copy of this.)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

There is a lot of further reading and information that can be accessed online. We have highlighted our sources on Page 4 (the section on 'Evidence') in grey and underlined so you can click on these to open for more information and evidence behind these figures. Throughout the document, all underlined text in grey takes you to the corresponding website or e-mail address.

We have also included a suite of further reading and information in relevant areas that can be accessed online and these can be visited by either scanning the QR code with your mobile phone or clicking on the area highlighted underneath the image of a mobile phone.

This is not the exhaustive list of all relevant information however gives a taste of what exists online for those who wish to learn more about this area of work



Alternatively, visit the School Uniform Recycling Initiative Resource Hub by clicking HERE

TIMELINE FOR RUNNING AN EVENT

Week 1

TOOLKIT AVAILABLE

Confirm Online Briefing with Locality Planning Team

Weeks 2 & 3

COMMENCE DISCUSSIONS

Online Meeting with Schools to introduce Toolkit

School discusses and agrees "Who will Run the Initiative?"

[Template 1]

Week 4

AGREEMENT

School discusses and agrees on "Points for Discussion" Checklist

[Template 2]

School agrees on starting date

Week 6

BEGIN

School begins Publicity for Initiative

School releases Flyer for Donations / Collections

[Template 3]

School releases Event flyer

[Template 4]

School keeps a record of stock using Inventory Spreadsheet

[Template 5]

Week 6 Onwards

FUTURE

Run Recycling Initiative

Complete & Return Evaluation Forms

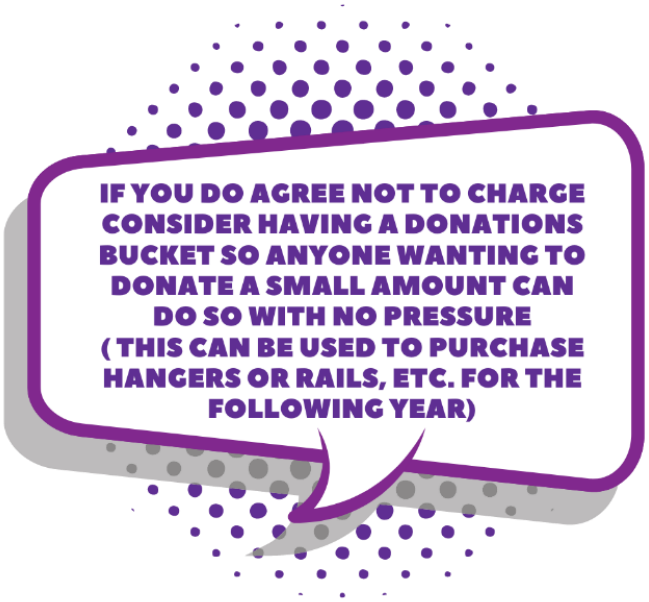
[Templates 6 & 7]

ECO SCHOOLS

Engaging with pupils to become involved from the outset creates a collective approach with ownership spread across the school. The Student/School Council or Eco-Committee would be a natural starting point in this respect.

Many schools are registered on the Eco School programme and receiving a Green Flag award. By your schools Eco-Committee being involved in a School Uniform Recycling Initiative it creates a fantastic opportunity to get on board with recycling and waste reduction within your school. This can be documented as a great example of work around these topics when working towards or renewing your school's Green Flag award.

It may also be an option to contact one of your local Council's Recycling Education Officers or equivalent to gather further support and build local links.



VOLUNTEERING

For students (e.g. Lower Sixth) there are opportunities to link involvement with a School Uniform Recycling Initiative to volunteering hours and awards recognised both locally and nationally. The main volunteering body across NI is Volunteer Now however there may be some locally-based volunteering organisations who run a similar scheme that you may consider to use.

VOLUNTEER NOW

This is the lead organisation for promoting and supporting volunteering across Northern Ireland, providing access to opportunities and encouraging people to volunteer. They are a resource for volunteer-involving organisations providing support on involving volunteers, governance and safeguarding.

Volunteer Now Impact Awards: "Young volunteers inspiring change": Launched in June 2021, this programme has replaced the Millennium Volunteers programme and enables all young people across Northern Ireland to receive recognition for the hours that they complete through its online platform (powered by Be Collective).

Registration is on the Volunteer Now website (www.volunteernow.co.uk) which requires applicants to create a profile and join your volunteering organisation as well as the Volunteer Now Impact Awards group. A certificate is sent electronically upon completions of 50,100 and 200 hours of volunteering. This will appear in a social profile and will form part of a Social CV, ready for download, printing and saving. All volunteering history will be automatically inserted.

This Toolkit was designed and written by the CYPSP Locality Development Team in the Southern Area

For further information, contact Darren Curtis, Locality Development Officer in the Southern Area, on localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk

May 2025