

Pollution prevention

Method

Do an audit of your playground or local street. Can you see any of the following?

- Oil on the road
- Paint
- Dog or bird poo
- Soil / dirt / gravel / mud
- Litter
- Leaves / lawn clippings
- Chemicals such as detergents, weed killers, fertilisers, chlorine etc.

Choose one of these substances and brainstorm some ways to prevent it going down the stormdrains or into the stream. Here are some examples of action projects which help to prevent pollution:

Some ideas for Action Projects

Design a plaque or stencil to mark the stormdrains in your school or street so that people will know that these stormdrains lead straight to a stream, river or the sea. You will need to ask your local council for permission for this.

Start a litter recycling club at school. Design ways to separate the school's rubbish so that the good stuff can be used again. You will need a different bin for plastics, glass, organic materials, cans, paper and unrecyclables. Students could design the different lids for each bin.

Hold a competition in your class to design the best 'Litter Free Lunch Box'. You could collect all the rubbish that each person creates over a week's worth of lunches to see who has the least. Less packaging in lunch boxes means less litter in streams. Try fruit instead of sweets (no packaging), sandwiches in brown paper bags which can be composted, reusable drink bottles, and reusable containers for chippies or other treats.

Design and make a sign to go by your local stream to tell people about stormdrains. It could say something like - "Did you realise pollution enters this stream from the stormdrain on '_____' Street? Please keep the street and the stream clean."

Make a collection point at school for old paint and use it to paint a mural about stormwater pollution. Write to parents to request old paint and include a leaflet designed by the students. The leaflet could show how to wash paint brushes over the grass or in a sink rather than down the stormdrain. Parents could be asked to not tip paint down stormdrains, and to donate it to a school or take it to the landfill instead.



Take Action



Organise a 'Walk-to-School Week'. Fewer cars on the road means less oil or petrol will leak onto our roads to be washed down the stormdrain. One idea is a Walking School Bus where pupils walk together to school accompanied by different parents along the way. A school in Christchurch did this and it worked really well. The students and parents got lots of exercise, saved petrol money and helped the environment.

Make a model of your school's stormdrains and work out where they discharge into the local stream. Write a school stormwater policy and make a spill kit to be kept ready for any accident. The spill kit could include:

- The Pollution Response Service phone number (0800 496 734).
- Old rags to clean up spills (only if safe to do so).
- Objects such as sandbags to block off drains in the case of spills.

Sweep leaves away from stormdrains and put them in the compost or worm bin, then use the worm juice and compost as organic fertiliser. This reduces leaves and chemical fertilisers going down stormdrains.



Plant more trees and other native plants in your school grounds – they soak up the water before it enters the stormdrain and can even soak up some of the pollutants (flax is very good for this). Trees also provide shade.

