

Waste Minimisation



Each year Leicestershire produces more than 350,000 tonnes of waste. This equates to 1.2 tonnes of rubbish per household. This is the same weight as an average family car. Out of all this waste only 34% is recycled or composted. It is essential that we improve further and not only recycle but also reduce the waste we produce.

It currently costs taxpayers £20 million each year to deal with the waste in Leicestershire. It would clearly be more sustainable if every household could reduce the quantity of waste it offers for recycling and disposal by practising waste minimisation.

If we concentrate on decreasing the quantity of waste that we produce we can reduce the costs and energy used. By introducing less waste into the waste stream we reduce the amount of energy required to manufacture goods from virgin materials and we conserve finite resources

Waste minimisation

Reducing waste can benefit us in the following ways:

- Reduces waste management costs
- Reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill
- Reduces the amount of waste entering the waste stream
- Limits the quantity of waste needing to be recycled
- Reduces the use of fuel and emissions of pollutants caused through the transportation of waste
- Saves natural resources

The simplest way to control the waste we are producing is to remember the 3R's: REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE.

Reduce

It is important to reduce the amount of waste that we produce so that we use less natural resources. There are many ways that this can be done. When visiting supermarkets we can choose to buy goods with less packaging. Often there is the

option to buy loose fruit and vegetables to avoid the plastic packaging they frequently come in.

Further ways of reducing waste include:

- Refuse plastic carrier bags if they are not required
- Stop unwanted junk mail. Contact the Mailing Preference Service, DMA House, 70 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8SS. Telephone 0207 291 3310, or visit their website at www.mpsonline.org.uk
- Buy refillable products
- Compost all organic waste at home
- Buy durable products such as rechargeable batteries

Reuse

The idea of reuse is to think twice about whether something you are throwing away is actually waste. Jam jars for example can be used for cleaning paintbrushes. This saves money as well as minimising the amount of waste that is going to landfill. It is important to think about whether materials and products can be used again. There are things that can be reused at home and at school.

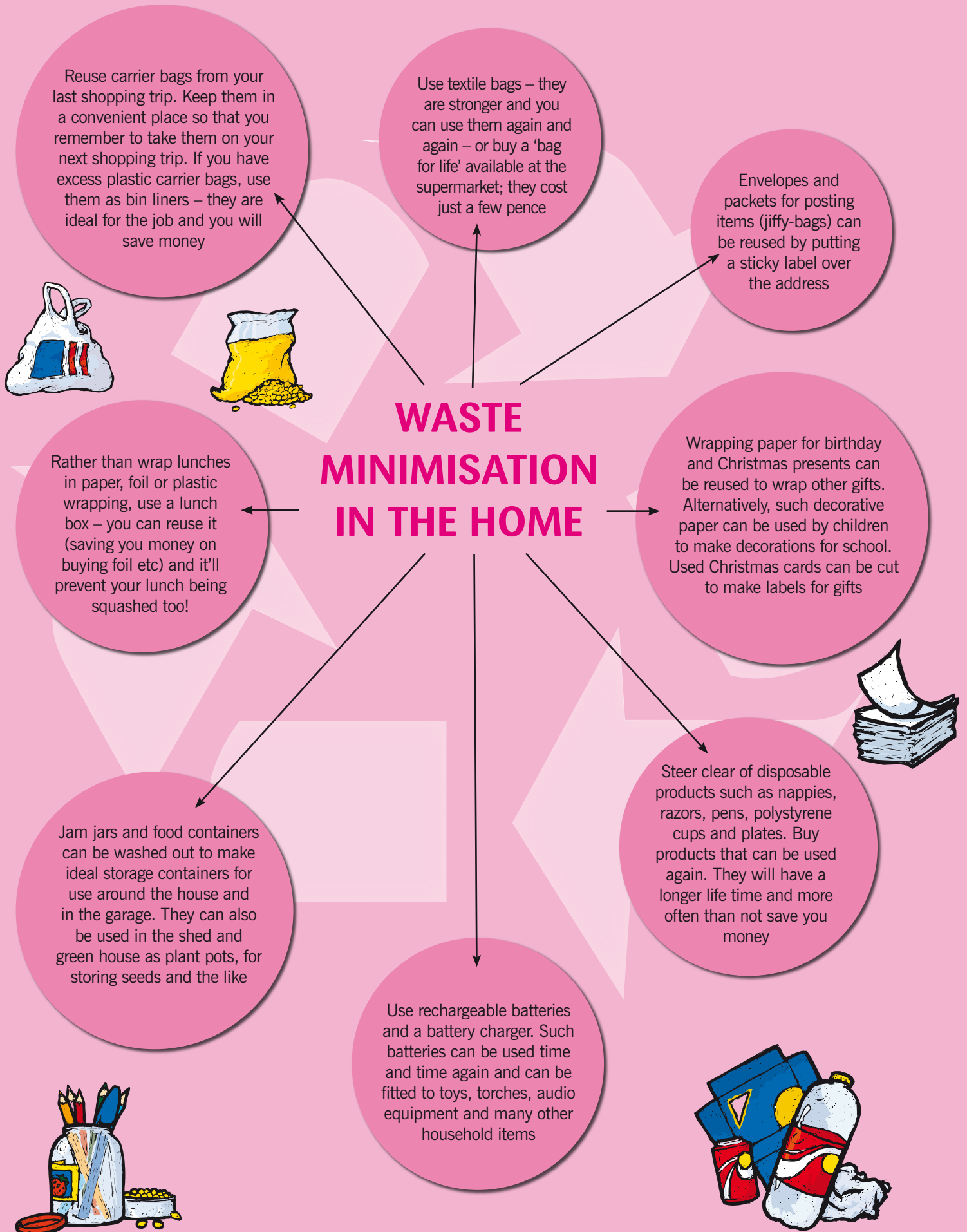
Here is a list of some of the ways to reuse items we might otherwise throw away:

- Use reusable nappies instead of disposables
- Buy reusable carrier bags from supermarkets
- Use rechargeable batteries
- Buy reusable items such as jam jars
- Donate old clothes and shoes
- Reuse the backs of paper for scrap paper

Recycle

Once we have reduced and reused as much waste as possible then we can think about recycling. The recycling section of this pack explains which materials can be recycled and what happens to these materials during the recycling process.

EXAMPLES OF WASTE MINIMISATION IN THE HOME



EXAMPLES OF WASTE MINIMISATION AT SCHOOL

WASTE MINIMISATION AT SCHOOL

Jam jars are useful for school art classes where they can be used for cleaning paintbrushes

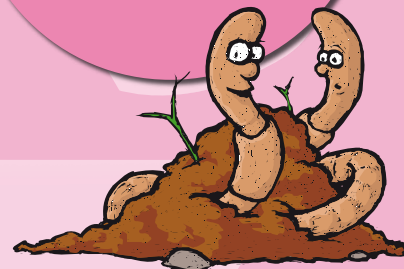


Ask your head teacher to think about this idea. Instead of giving out merit/reward slips, have pages in our journal/school diary where teachers can stamp in a merit/award

Buy snacks with less packaging on them. For example you could buy an apple instead of a packet of crisps. Or you could bring cake or biscuits in to school from a large bag/packet at home instead of buying individually wrapped biscuits or cakes. This will reduce the amount of packaging

Encourage your school secretaries to reuse envelopes by sticking a label over the old address. This will save money as well as reduce the amount of envelopes that would be thrown away

Make a worm compost bin or see if your local council can provide you with one. You can recycle tea bags, fruit scraps and some of the left over school dinners in a worm bin



Use reusable bottles or flasks for your drinks instead of individual cartons or cans and use reusable airtight containers for snacks and packed lunches instead of disposable wrappers

Always use both sides of a piece of paper, before you recycle it. Set up a scrap paper tray to store paper and use this for rough working or wet plays. Paper that cannot be written on anymore can be used to make papier mache models or masks. It can be mashed up to manufacture 3D models or for making your own recycled paper

