

# MINIMIZING WASTE - SUPPORT PACKAGE



## Stuff Swap

Kids grow so fast that their clothes are often almost new when they outgrow them. Once they are outgrown, where do all those clothes end up? Textiles make up a large [proportion of landfill waste](#) even though they're recyclable. Why not set up a school clothing swap so everyone can get new clothes at no cost? At the same time, used clothes will go to someone new and skip the trip to the landfill. As a result, you will be keeping all those clothes in use and cut down on consumption and demand for new items.

Many schools host clothing, toy, book, and costume swaps because they are fun and support the community. Gift swaps are great around the holidays, and themed clothing swaps are helpful when cold temperatures are on the horizon. Hosting these swaps is also a very important way to reduce our ecological footprint. The impact of all our stuff is significant on the Earth. Reusing 'stuff' means less energy is needed to produce new products and saves our limited resources.

## Action Plan

**Pick a time.** You may want to host your swap to coincide with special occasions like Halloween, Waste Reduction Week, Environment Week, or Earth Day. Some schools have scheduled a swap around parent-teacher visits so the students get to look during the day and the parents get to look at night. Who knows, you may get some new parents attending parent-teacher night if there is a swap at the same time!

**Spread the word.** Let staff and students know that you are planning a stuff swap. Students can make signs to post around the school. Have regular announcements to get the students taking the lead at home to clean out their closets. Include information on the date, time and location of the swap as well as the donation location and date. This is a great time to share some environmental reasons why a swap is so important. Also, promote the swap on school websites, in emails, newsletters and on Facebook pages. You can also request that everyone bring a reusable bag on the day of the swap to take home their 'new' clothes.

<b>Clothing Swap</b>	<b><u>Waste Reduction Clothing Swap Facts</u></b>
<p>The students and staff will be having their 1st annual clothing swap November 25–26th. Please look around your house for clothing that you would like to donate to our clothing swap.</p> <p>Items could include but limited to clothes for boys, girls, snowsuits, boots, hats, mitts, fancy dresses, etc....</p> <p>On November 25 and 26, students/parents will be able to go shopping for FREE in our school clothing swap.</p> <p><i>(Please wash prior to donation, and no undergarments. Thanks!)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ The fashion industry is the second largest user of water in the world and the number one polluter of clean water Over 90 million items of clothing end up in landfill sites globally each year. According to the Environmental Protection Agency USA throws away almost 30 kgs of clothing every year per person.</li><li>◆ Growing cotton uses 22.5 percent of all the insecticides used globally.</li><li>◆ Some 72 toxic chemicals have been identified in water solely from textile dyeing, 30 of which cannot be removed.</li><li>◆ Nylon and polyester are made from petrochemicals and essentially non bio-degradable. Nylon manufacture creates nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 310 times more potent than carbon dioxide.</li></ul>

An example of a swap announcement in a newsletter from Green School Petite Rivière Elementary



**Collect donations.** Set a time and date for students to bring in donations. Remember if you have a long collection period you will need space to store the stuff until the swap.

**Organize the room, donations, and visitors.** Organize your space to accommodate the amount of donations. It is best to organize clothes by size. Remember to leave enough room for people to move around and browse. If possible, have a change room. Make a schedule for each class to visit the swap. Younger students will likely need help which is a great leadership opportunity for older students.

**Swap.** If possible, have extra volunteers on the day of the swap to help the students find clothes that they like and fit. The tables may need to be reorganized between groups. School volunteers might be keen to help with swaps.

**Donate leftovers.** Package up the remaining clothes and donate to a local food bank or clothing collection group, like [AFTerWear](#). The [Canadian Diabetes Association](#) is another option that assists fundraising through their “In The Bag” clothing drive program.



Halloween costume swap at Green School West Pictou Consolidated School



Clothing swap at Green School Petite Rivière Elementary



**Say thank you.** Share the success of your event with students, staff, parents, the community, and Green Schools Nova Scotia. Remember to thank everyone who helped make your swap a success.

Example of a thank you message in a newsletter from Green School Petite Rivière Elementary

### Facts to share

- The fashion industry is the second largest user of water in the world and the number one polluter of clean water.
- Over 90 million items of clothing end up in landfill sites globally each year.
- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans throw away almost 30 kgs of clothing per person every year.
- Growing cotton uses 22.5 percent of all the insecticides used globally.
- Some 72 toxic chemicals have been identified in water solely from textile dyeing, 30 of which cannot be removed.
- Nylon and polyester are made from petrochemicals and essentially non biodegradable. Nylon manufacture creates nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 310 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

## Resources

[Green Schools NS Green Halloween Support Package](#)

[Green School Petite Riviere Elementary's first clothing swap](#)

[Green School West Pictou Consolidated Halloween costume swap](#)

### **Videos**

[How your T-shirt can make a difference](#)

[Story of Stuff](#)

[Textiles: Environmental Impacts](#)

[Planet Monday Makes a T-shirt series \(5 parts\)](#)

### **Books**

[Where did my Clothes Come From? - By Chris Butterworth](#)

### **Dates**

[Earth Day: April 22](#)

[Environment Week: June](#)

[Costume Swap Day: October](#)

[Waste Reduction Week: October](#)

[Buy Nothing Day: November](#)