



Guide for Zero Waste Ambassadors

Your role as a Zero Waste Ambassador (ZWA) is to help your classmates use the lunchroom sorting station correctly. Each sorting station should have 3-5 ZWAs, one to help at each part of the sorting station. If there are only 3 ZWAs, focus on the Recycling, Landfill, and Compost bins.

Important tips

- **Students should come up to sort as they finish-don't wait until the end of lunch.**
- **Students should start at the liquids end of the sorting line if they have a drink.**
 - **When in doubt, throw it out!**

What to do:

- Become familiar with what belongs where in the sorting station. If you aren't sure, look at the signs or ask for help. Don't worry if you aren't sure or make a mistake.
- Sort your own materials as soon as you are done eating.
- Decide which part of the sorting station you will help at and stay at that location as your classmates come up to sort their materials.
- As students approach, look at the items on their trays or in their lunchboxes and think about how they will need to sort them.
- Help your classmates figure out what goes where.
 - Speak up when giving guidance, if needed. Be positive, encouraging, and polite. If they make mistakes, say something like, "next time try to put (whatever) in the (whatever) bin...Thanks!"
 - Try not to do the sorting for them, let them learn how to do it themselves.
 - Encourage students to look at the signs for help.
- If something gets put in the wrong place, ask the student who put it there to get it out and put it in the correct place, or use a pair of tongs and do it for them.



The line starts here and goes —>

ZWA #1 Liquids:

- Make sure students remove straws from their drinks. Straws belong in the Landfill bin.
- Remind students to pour out leftover liquids.
- Use short phrases to remind the students what to do, such as “Remove your straw,” and “Empty your drink.”
- Some students may need help opening their milk cartons; you can help them, but remind them to do it before they get up from the table next time.



ZWA #2 Recycling:

- Make sure all drink containers are empty before students put them in the Recycling bin.
- Use short phrases to remind the students what goes where, such as “No straws in Recycling” and “Juice pouches are Landfill.”
- Remind students to look at the pictures on the sign to see what is recyclable and what is not recyclable.
- If recyclable materials (like a yogurt cup) still has a little food in it, it should go in the Landfill bin.
- Straws and juice pouches should go in Landfill.
- If food or landfill items are dropped into the Recycling bin, ask the student who put it there to remove it (or remove it for them) using the tongs.



ZWA #3 Landfill:

- Help students figure out what goes into Landfill, as needed. Keep recyclables, compostables, and trays out of Landfill.
- Use short phrases to remind the students what goes where, such as “All squishy plastics are Landfill,” “Straws and plastic utensils are Landfill.”
- If recyclable items, food, or trays are dropped into the Recycling bin, ask the student who put it there to remove it or remove it for them using the tongs.



ZWA #4 Compost:

- Remind students to put all food scraps, paper napkins, and food-soiled paper bags in the Compost bin– nothing else!
- Use short phrases to remind the students what goes where, such as “No plastic in compost,” and “Only food and paper in compost.”
- If any plastic or trash is put in the Compost, remove it using the tongs and put it in the proper place.



ZWA #5 Compostable Trays

- Remind students to stack trays neatly and tightly on the cart.
- Use short phrases to remind the students what to do, such as “Spin your tray around to fit neatly.” Or just make a circle in the air with your finger if you see a tray getting stacked the wrong way.
- If a stack gets too high, make another stack.
- When lunch is over, try to fit the trays together better, if needed.

