

5 Ways for a Sustainable School Year!

During the school year there are many ways you can be sustainable. For example instead of buying fresh notebooks and supplies every month, utilize your old supplies . It's also a great moment to think about how your everyday choices can affect the planet. Sustainability doesn't have to be overwhelming or "all or nothing". Small habits actually add up, and most of them are easy to bake into your normal routine. Here are five practical ways to make this school year a little greener.

1. REUSABLES!

One simple way to make the school year a more sustainable one is to swap disposable items for ones that are reusable. A water bottle beats buying plastic bottles every day. In fact, it reduces carbon footprint by up to 85% (Southern Sustainability Institute). Packing lunch in reusable containers instead of cling wrap or paper bags also cuts down on the waste. Even choosing refillable pens or mechanical pencils helps. These small switches don't seem dramatic, but they reduce a surprising amount of trash over the course of a year.

2. NO MORE PAPER!

Most schools already use laptops for school, so taking one extra step to reduce paper isn't that hard. Keep your planner, to-do lists, and notes on your device instead of relying on paper. Only print when you absolutely need to, for example, when you need a short cheat sheet. If you have to use paper, try printing double-sided or choosing recycled options. It's a choice that is simple, but it will definitely make a difference.

3. BUY LESS AND REUSE!

It's tempting to buy all the supplies you need whenever you see a stationary store, but you probably have more usable supplies than you think. The mechanical pencils that are left behind in your drawer, the eraser that's lost at the bottom of your backpack, or the new set of markers that you totally forgot about. Reusing what you can cut down on waste and saving money. If you really do need to buy something, look for something that is durable or second-hand, and maybe you can ask your siblings.

4. COMMUTE!

How you commute to school matters too. If you live close enough, walking and biking are the greenest options. It is a simple way to reduce emissions and get some movement in before the day starts. If that's not an option, take public transportation or the school bus.

5. BRING OTHERS WITH YOU!

Sustainable habits stick better when they're shared. Suggest recycling bins in the classrooms, remind friends to turn off lights, or join or start an eco-club. Just doing small things consistently can inspire others to do the same.

None of these steps requires you to be perfect. They're just everyday choices that make the school year feel a little cleaner, a little less wasteful, and a lot more intentional.

Work Cited

Southern Sustainability Institute. "A comparison of bottled and tap water using life cycle analysis." 22 November 2024,

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14T6LmRYWo2HAle5zPR8WiGP0vdX2xAYVTbXcSRizFtE/edit?tab=t.0>. Accessed 14 November 2025.