



SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

Montgomery County Public Schools

MCPS Recycling Program: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who coordinates recycling at each school or facility?

The principal or facility administrator designates a recycling coordinator. The coordinator maintains the facility's recycling plan, supports education, reviews concerns, and works with the Sustainability and Compliance Team.

2. Where should recycling bins be placed?

Place paper bins in classrooms, offices, and near copiers. In shared spaces, place appropriate recycling containers beside trash bins. Use clear MCPS labels, and keep stations accessible so they don't block doors, exits, or sidewalks.

3. What can go in recycling bins?

Keep clean, dry paper and cardboard in the designated paper recycling stream. Place accepted containers in commingled recycling. Check current [MCPS guidance](#) for specific items, especially cartons, trays, cups, and lids. A recycling symbol alone does not mean an item is accepted.

4. Can plastic bags or liners go in recycling dumpsters?

No. Keep plastic bags and liners out of paper and commingled recycling dumpsters. If liners are used indoors, empty accepted recyclables loose into the correct dumpster and manage the liners separately.

5. How should cardboard boxes be prepared?

Empty boxes, remove plastic packaging and other contents, and flatten them before placing them in the designated dumpster.

6. Can food or liquids go in recycling bins?

No. Keep food, liquids, and food-soiled paper out of routine recycling. Food scraps may go only into an approved compost collection stream where one is available. Otherwise, follow the school's trash instructions.

7. Why wasn't our recycling collected?

Blocked access or contamination may prevent collection. Check for vehicles, deliveries, snow, or other obstructions around the dumpster. Report missed service and urgent collection needs to recycling@mcpsmd.org or 240-740-3210.

8. What should we do if a recycling dumpster is full?

Request additional collection before materials overflow. Plan ahead for book cleanouts, moves, large deliveries, and end-of-year projects. Never enter a dumpster or stand on materials to compact them. Students should not place materials in outdoor dumpsters.

9. How do we report a damaged or improperly placed dumpster?

Submit a request through **Asset Essentials** or contact recycling@mcpsmd.org. Describe the problem, including broken lids, rust holes, leaks, damaged wheels, missing hardware, or placement that blocks a sidewalk or creates unsafe access.

10. How can we order recycling bins, lids, labels, or posters?

Use the supply order form on the [MCPS Recycling and Waste Reduction webpage](#). An MCPS Google account is required to access the form.

11. How should toner and ink cartridges be handled?

Follow the current MCPS toner and ink [flyer](#):

- **HP Original toner:** Use the HP return-label process and enter "MCPS" in the name field.
- **Aftermarket toner:** Dispose of cartridges as trash and recycle accepted clean cardboard packaging.
- **Ink cartridges:** Send through Pony to **John Meyer, Building A**, following current packing instructions.

12. How should schools handle yard waste?

Keep leaves, grass, and brush separate from trash and recycling. Request collection through the established MCPS [process](#).

13. How can our school start food recovery or composting?

Contact the Sustainability and Compliance Team at sustainability@mcpsmd.org before starting or changing a program. Coordinate approved equipment, procedures, staffing, cleaning, collection responsibilities, and ongoing funding.

14. How can students help improve recycling?

Students can sort correctly, promote recycling, and participate in supervised observations of recycling stations. They can help identify missing labels, confusing instructions, and recurring contamination.

15. What should we do for events and community use?

Place clearly labeled recycling containers beside trash bins in appropriate locations. Explain

sorting expectations to event organizers and visitors. Empty containers and restore stations before the next school day.

For missed pickups, additional collection, or service concerns, contact 240-740-3210 or recycling@mcpsmd.org. For education, program assistance, food recovery, or composting, email sustainability@mcpsmd.org.