

LITTER CONTROL vs LITTER PREVENTION

The key to addressing litter issues in schools is to remember that:

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE

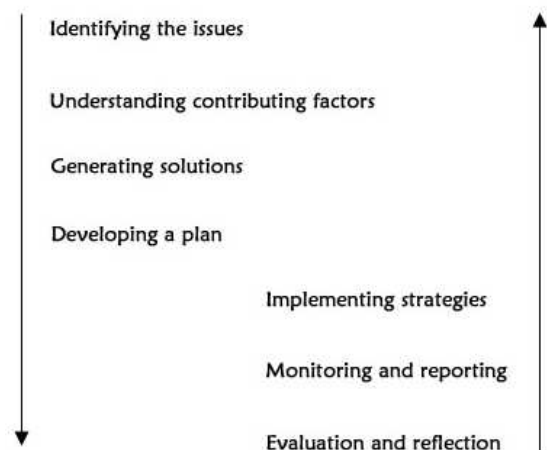
For litter prevention strategies in schools to be effective they need to focus on education and prevention rather than management and control, keeping in mind that it is littering (the behaviour) we are really combating, not 'litter' (the outcome). While regular 'clean ups' of litter hot spots are necessary, KESAB believes that using yard clean ups as a disciplinary action sends the wrong message to students, particularly in secondary schools. Students can develop negative attitudes towards caring for their environment, if it is associated with punishment. Students may also develop a diminished sense of responsibility, if they believe that someone else will be given the task of cleaning up after them.

Raising student and staff awareness of the environmental, social and economic impacts of littering is a good starting point for changing attitudes, but developing the 'right' attitude won't necessarily lead to changes in behaviour. *Social research suggests that it is often behavioural change that leads to attitudinal change.* In the long term, resolving litter issues in schools requires both the motivation to take action and a collective commitment to make litter prevention part of school culture and policy.

KESAB hopes that the **Litter Poster Series** will open discussions between school staff, students and the wider community about litter issues and look forward to supporting you in the near future with your school's litter prevention strategies.

KESAB is currently developing a Litter Prevention Program which will incorporate an action plan for schools along with educational resources and support materials. A feature of this new program will be an emphasis on student voice, leadership and action. All South Australian schools will receive a copy of the KESAB Litter Prevention Program as soon as it is completed.

Litter Prevention Action Plan



In the meantime, here are few points to consider when reviewing litter issues and strategies.

- Litter surveys are a useful tool for identifying common litter items and 'hot spots' around the school yards.
- Preventing litter is unavoidably linked with reducing waste.
- Many litter items could be recycled (e.g. paper bags and 5 cent deposit containers). Does your school have separate bins for general waste and recycling?
- Packaging (which includes everything from chip packets and fruit boxes to lunch bags and plastic wrap), is the largest component of school yard litter. How much comes from home, the school canteen or local shop?
- School litter is generally associated with recess and lunchtime (eating and play) so why not include littering in health and safety policies and programs?