



Green Guide for Back to School

- **Pencils: plain wooden without paint or glossy coating.** Ones made from recycled newspaper, money, or denim can be fun for the kids and good for the environment.
- **Pens: recycled plastic ballpoint** (a safe alternative to the scented pens, which contain chemicals that are used in the fragrance).
- **Crayons: soy and beeswax.** Paraffin wax, which is a product of crude oil, is found in most common crayons.
- **Markers: water-based.** Dry-erase, scented, and permanent markers contain solvents and chemicals classified under “fragrance.”
- **Paint: water based and colored with natural, non-metal pigments.** Try a Do-It-Yourself recipe for clay and avoid PVC (polyvinyl chloride or #3 plastic).

Classroom Cleaning Products

Cleaning products should always be fragrance-free and air fresheners should never be used in the classroom. Rather than relying on harmful wipes (which include chemicals that trigger asthma and allergies) to clean up and disinfect, encourage teachers and students to wash their hands throughout the day with plain soap and water. Look for eco-friendly cleaning products that have the EcoLogo, Green Seal, or EPA’s Design for the Environment symbol on the label.

Diesel Bus Exhaust

School buses are limited by law to 5 minutes of idling (running while parked) in an hour. This exhaust contains high levels of ultra-fine particles that impact our health and trigger conditions, such as asthma. If you see excessive idling let your child’s teacher or principal know. Healthy Schools PA has “Idle Free Bus - Young Lungs at Work” school bus window clings available. Contact us for details!



Encourage your school to go green with cleaning supplies!

- **Notebook Paper: at least 30% post-consumer waste** and not whitened with chlorine bleach.
- **Notebooks, binders, and pocket folders:** recycled cardboard, natural fibers, or plastic covers labeled “no PVC.”
- **Backpack: free of PVC** (such as Jansport or Terracycle brand).
- **Lunch box: free of lead paint, PVC, BPA, or antimicrobial chemicals.** Remember to avoid containers made from #3, #6, and #7 plastics. Lunchboxes made from cotton or stainless steel are good alternatives.
- **Lunches:** fill your lunchbox with **local, seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables** when possible and pack water, rather than sugary fruit or energy drinks.
- **Water bottle: stainless steel or BPA-free aluminum bottle.** This will reduce waste and money spent on bottled water.
- **Hand Sanitizers: fragrance-free and triclosan-free.** Many common soaps and sanitizers contain these harmful substances.

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