

The School Environment Survey

What is a school environment survey? It is a survey that looks at how healthy your school's environment is. The environment includes not only nature but also everything that makes up our surroundings - the air, water, plants, things inside buildings, and even the building materials themselves. All buildings have their own environments, including schools. Though most people don't know it, school environments can be polluted. Fortunately, the causes of this pollution are often pretty easy to fix.

Through your detective work, you and your Green Flag team will be able to uncover facts about what your school does well and what your school can improve. If your school does something especially well or if it has environmental problems that you can help your school fix, you can win the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership. You and your Green Flag team can work with the Green Flag Program Coordinator and a mentor to pick an area to work on, find ways to make improvements, and make your school a healthier place to learn.

This survey asks you to investigate what cleaning products your school uses and how your school makes sure they are used safely. It also asks: how does your school control pests? What does your school reuse and/or recycle, and what does it throw away? You may have never thought about the air you breathe at school and what makes it clean or dirty, but there are ways the air quality can be improved. You need to find out your school's programs and policies in the four program areas of this survey, so you can choose an issue to work on, and you can only find out by asking.

So, where should you turn to get the answers? You will probably need to contact and interview your principal, facility manager, maintenance staff, teachers, and maybe even someone else hired by your school or employed by the school district. These are the people with the answers about your school's programs, and by talking to all of them you can find out the facts you need.

There are two general information sections (A and B) and four further sections addressing each of the four program areas in which your school is eligible to earn the Green Flag award (C, D, E, F). Please fill out the survey as best you can and do not hesitate to contact the Green Flag Program Coordinator if you need assistance.

Best of luck with your investigation!



A. Information about the individual Green Flag team members completing the survey:

Enter the names and titles (for example, administrator, teacher, student, parent) of those completing the survey, including the person we should contact for more information about the survey results.

1. Primary Contact Name: _____
2. Title (if applicable) _____
3. Primary Contact Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____
4. Email address: _____
5. Green Flag team members, including students (If you need more space, attach an additional sheet.)
 1. Name: _____ Title: _____
 2. Name: _____ Title: _____
 3. Name: _____ Title: _____
 4. Name: _____ Title: _____
 5. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 6. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 7. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 8. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 9. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 10. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 11. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 12. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 13. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 14. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 15. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 16. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 17. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 18. Name: _____ Grade: _____

B. Information about your school:

1. Name of Your School District: _____

2. Name of Your School: _____

3. School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Web Site: _____

4. Is there a building or facility manager at your school? Yes No

5. What is their name/title? _____

6. Does your school or school district have a maintenance plan? Yes No Don't know

7. Approximately how many students attend your school? _____

8. Does your school have an environmental group/club? Yes No

8a. What is its name? _____

8b. What issues does the group/club work on?

10. Are there courses on environmental issues taught at your school? Yes No

11. What are the course titles and to what grades are these courses taught?

12. What environmental activities were undertaken in those courses in the past year (attach more sheets if needed)?

C. Pest Management Activities

Does your school use chemical pesticides to keep insects, rodents, and weeds out of your school and school grounds? Or does it use Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which focuses on the prevention of pest problems, through routine housekeeping and maintenance that eliminates pest attractions and habitats and prevent pest access. Schools with IPM programs never apply pesticides on a regular basis throughout entire buildings or grounds — which means that kids and teachers are healthier. These survey questions can help you determine if your school could benefit from implementing an IPM program.

Questions about Pest Management

1. Does your school or school district have a written policy that covers any areas of pest management? The policy may be called an IPM policy, a pest management policy, or it may be a part of a larger school buildings and/or grounds maintenance policy. The policy might cover issues such as who is in charge of managing pests and responding to problems, what methods are used to manage pests, which pesticides may be used and where, when and how staff and students are to be notified of pesticide applications, etc. Your school principal should be able to help you answer this question and locate a copy of the policy if it exists.

	School has policy	School district has policy
Indoor pest management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Outdoor pest management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Outdoor grounds management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Staff, students, parents are notified of pesticide use prior to its application:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

If yes to any of these, please attach a copy of the policy (ies).

2. Does your school use any pesticides in school buildings? Yes No
- On school grounds? Yes No

If yes, please attach a list of pesticides used. Remember, pesticides can be insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and rodenticides. (See IPM Resource Packet available at www.greenflagschools.org for definitions of these pesticides. You may have to get this list from a central office at your school district).

3. If yes, who applies pesticides in your school or on schools grounds?
- Teachers Custodial staff Trained and licensed professional applicators on school staff
- Contractors Other (list) _____

4. What pest problems does your school have? Please place an "I" for indoor and/or an "O" for outdoor.
- ___ Cockroaches ___ Spiders ___ Stinging Insects ___ Ants ___ Flies ___ Moths
- ___ Rodents ___ Mold/Fungus ___ Head Lice ___ Aphids ___ Weeds ___ Moss
- ___ Plant diseases ___ Birds ___ Wood-destroying Insects (e.g., carpenter ants, termites)
- Other: _____

D. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Activities

Many schools engage in reduction, reuse, and recycling activities. What does your school do? Reduction, reuse, and recycling (RRR) activities help limit waste and preserve our planet's valuable resources. There are many types of recycling activities which include sorting out newspapers, cans, and bottles and much more. Your school can also purchase recycled content materials. Your school can reduce waste by composting food scraps, and using washable tableware, cafeteria trays and mugs instead of disposable items. Your school can also reduce waste by reusing single-sided paper, or making double-sided copies. These actions improve the environment by reducing what is often considered trash and converting it to resources. Completing this survey will help you learn about your school's current RRR practices and determine what you can do to improve them and help reduce the amount of waste disposed of at your school.

Questions about Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

1. Does your school already have a recycling program? Yes No

What products (for example, glass bottles, computer printer cartridges, paper) do you recycle and how is this accomplished?

2. Does your school have waste reduction programs already in place? Yes No

Please describe any waste reduction activities your school has conducted during the past year: for example, composting, waste free lunches, art projects using objects normally discarded as trash:

3. Does your school have reuse programs already in place? Yes No

Please describe any reuse activities at your school (please describe the reuse — for example, using the blank side of scrap paper, reusable tableware in the cafeteria, donating items from locker clean outs, etc.):

If the school has any written policies related to recycling, reusing, and/or reducing, please attach a copy to this survey or fax it to the Green Flag program coordinator at 703-237-8389.

4. What company (ies) pick/s up the school's trash and/or recycling?

Trash: _____

Recycling: _____

5. Who is responsible for recycling at your school and what does that person do?

School maintenance or facility staff: _____

Recycling coordinator: (Is this person a volunteer? What else do they do?): _____

Teachers: _____

Students: _____

Parents or other volunteers: _____

E. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Activities

How can you learn more about the air you breathe? Everyone knows the air can be wet or dry. It can also be clean or dirty. How does your school keep the air you breathe fresh and clean? By looking at things that pollute your school's air in your neighborhood and in your school you can learn how to prevent some of those things from happening and ensure fresh, clean air.

The next series of survey questions will help you determine what your school is doing or could do better to improve the air you breathe at school. If there are problems, your school can receive a Green Flag award for implementing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Tools for Schools program, which can help your school improve indoor air quality with activities that everyone at the school can participate in.

Questions about Indoor Air Quality

Water Damage

1. Does your school have any unusual, stale, or unpleasant odors? Such odors could be signs of mold or mildew. Are there any places where you hear the sound of dripping water? This could be a sign of water damage, which can lead to mold or mildew. Walk through your entire school and summarize your investigation.

1a. Do any of the following areas show signs of water damage/moisture problems, including mold growth? (Are they wet to the touch or brownish in color?)

Floor tiles ____ Ceiling tiles ____ Walls ____ Carpets ____ By outside exits ____ Around windows ____

Other: _____

2. Fresh Air

How does each classroom get fresh air? List possible sources and if they are different for different classrooms, these should include operable windows and air vents:

3. Ventilation

Do all vents (ceiling, wall, mounted units) appear clean and unblocked? Yes No
List places where air vents are blocked and what is blocking them.

4. Health Check

Ask the school nurse which health problems from the following list students most commonly report.

Asthma _____

Allergies _____

Headaches _____

Other _____

Have any particular health problems been noticed recently (please provide general information if exact figures are not readily available)?

5. EPA's Tools for School

Does your school currently use or has it ever used the EPA's Tools for Schools Indoor Air Quality program or done any type of school environmental audit? Yes No

If so, how long has your school been doing the program? _____

If you no longer maintain the program, when and why did you stop?

F. Non-toxic Product Activities

Many cleaning products used by schools are called "green" products because they are less dangerous to human health and cause less damage to the natural environment. "Green" products are non-toxic, which means they are not poisonous and don't harm humans, animals or the environment. Does your school use non-toxic products? Does your school have safe-use policies? Who buys the cleaning products at your school?

How do you find out? This part of the survey will help you answer these questions. All products that clean your school have to be used carefully. You can learn about the ingredients in these products and how they should be used properly by reading the product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) required by the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Finding out more information about these products helps protect us from the toxic chemicals they contain and their improper use.

Questions about Cleaning and Maintenance Products Used at Your School

1. Does your school have a policy prohibiting or limiting the use of products containing toxic ingredients, such as hazardous (dangerous) chemicals, pesticides, etc? Does that policy include the purchasing of environmentally preferable or "green" products? (Please fax or attach the policy) Yes No

2. If so, what products are included in the policy? _____

3. Does your school keep Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on file for all products containing chemicals, for example cleaning products, paints and pesticides? See school building manager or custodian.
 Yes No Please list products for which there are MSDS sheets: (fax or attach)

For information on what a Material Safety Data Sheets is and what they are used for see:

- MSDS.com is a site produced by the Interactive Learning Paradigms, Incorporated:
<http://www.ilpi.com/msds/faq/parta.html#whatis>
- University of Vermont Safety Information Resources has a website that allows you to search for MSDS by manufacturers: <http://siri.uvm.edu/>

3a. If your school uses retail cleaning products (like the ones your family buys at the store) that do not require an MSDS, please indicate here.

4. Many products, especially those used in cleaning, contain dangerous chemicals. What, if any, health and safety precautions do your school personnel take when using such products?

4a. Are these safety precautions written down in the form of guidelines or a policy? Yes No
Are they available to teachers and parents for review? Yes No (If so, please submit a copy.)

5. Who does your school's purchasing of cleaning and maintenance products? _____

Are products purchased through a central source, such as the school district, or bought only by someone in your school?



**A Project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign,
coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice**

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