

# The Harker School

## Green Business Sustainable Purchasing Policy

The Harker School encourages the use of sustainable, green-certified products and services. By including environmental considerations in purchasing decisions, the school can reduce its environmental footprint and promote practices that improve human health, conserve natural resources, and reward environmentally conscious manufacturers. Considering that the people we serve are children and young adults, we have a particular responsibility to prevent exposure to harmful toxins.

School personnel are encouraged to actively seek out green-certified, environmentally preferable products and services when quality, performance, price, and functionality are comparable to their non-green counterparts.

### DEFINITIONS

- Environmentally preferable products and services are those with less negative effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.
- A toxic substance is one that can cause harm when breathed, swallowed or absorbed through the skin. Such substances are often found in cleaners, detergents, paints, pesticides and art supplies.
- Comparison between options will consider the environmental cost of acquisition of raw materials, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal.

### SCOPE

- Purchase products that minimize environmental impacts, exposure to toxins, pollution, and hazards to workers and the community.
- Purchase products that include recycled content, are durable and long-lasting, conserve energy and water, use agricultural fibers and residues, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use unbleached or chlorine-free manufacturing processes, and use wood from sustainably harvested forests.
- Institute practices that reduce waste by increasing product efficiency and effectiveness.
- Seek out suppliers that offer to take back or recycle products at the end of their useful life.
- Seek fiscal responsibility by balancing price, performance, and environmental considerations. For example, consider purchasing recycled-content paper products instead of non-recycled products whenever recycled-content products are available within a 5% cost differential. The cost differential of other product categories will vary.
- Seek opportunities to pool purchases with others to enhance markets for environmentally preferable products, to obtain favorable prices, and to reduce waste packaging, transportation, and product cost.
- Use life cycle analysis (LCA) to help guide best choices. LCA is a technique intended to qualify the total impact of a product during its production, distribution, use, recycling, treatment, and disposal.

- Require outside contractors and consultants to use environmentally preferable products, whenever practical, in performance of their services.
- Maximize the proportion of goods and services that come from local providers with acceptable environmental practices, thereby reducing the environmental impact of transportation wherever feasible and supporting a sustainable local economy.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Each individual is responsible for seeking and requesting environmentally preferred products. Purchasers should include green-certified product specifications in bid documents and contracts, as appropriate.

## RESOURCES

Green School Buying Guide by the Green Schools Initiative <http://www.greenschools.net/display.php?modin=54>

San Jose Go Green Schools Program <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1473>

US Environmental Protection Agency Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)  
<http://yosemite1.epa.gov/oppt/eppstand2.nsf/Pages/Homepage.html?Open>