

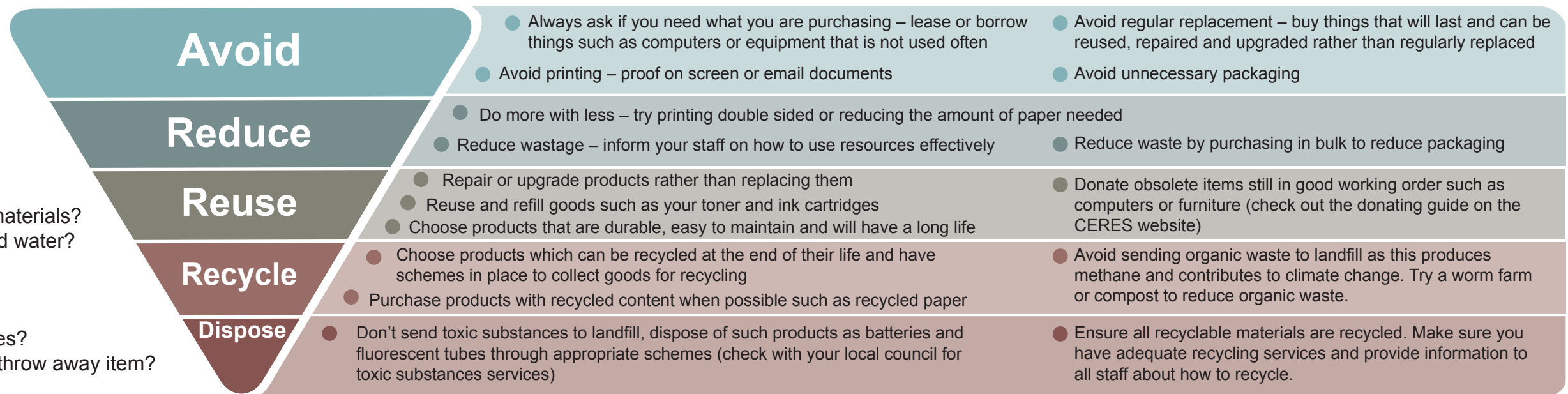
Green Purchasing Guidelines

Did you know that there are easy ways of reducing your school's environmental impacts through easy green purchasing decisions? By purchasing more environmentally friendly products you can help support green businesses. This guide will help you to purchase more sustainably.

The best form of green purchasing is to avoid purchasing in the first place. Find an alternative to purchasing or at least purchase only as much as you need. When making purchasing decisions use the 8 point checklist.

8 Point Green Purchasing Checklist

1. Is it of suitable quality and cost?
2. Does it use a minimum amount of virgin materials?
3. Does it use the least amount of energy and water?
4. Is it durable and repairable?
5. Can it be reused or recycled?
6. Does it use the least packaging possible?
7. Does it contain polluting or toxic substances?
8. Is there a long life alternative instead of a throw away item?



Office supplies

Purchase paper with a minimum of 50% post-consumer waste recycled content – try to get a higher % where possible

Always preference paper with Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC)

Avoid purchasing paper made entirely from virgin (new) material

Where possible, buy frequently used products in bulk to reduce packaging, but also avoid stockpiling items that don't get used often

Choose products that have minimal or recyclable packaging

Make sure toner cartridges for printers and photocopiers are refillable and preference ones that are refilled not new

When purchasing envelopes, avoid ones with conventional windows that can not be recycled – preference ones that are recyclable

Avoid Post-it notes – use cut up scrap paper instead

Avoid metal spiral binding as these contaminate the recycling stream – preference staples as these are easily removed during recycling

Always reuse before purchasing new items such as with folders and stationery items

Always ask your supplier what green product options they have available and if they don't have any, then request that they obtain them – this is especially the case with recycled content paper

Avoid toxic substances wherever possible

Develop and maintain a list of suppliers of sustainable office products

Myth

Recycled paper will NOT jam the photocopier – the most likely problem is moisture in the paper. It is best to store all photocopy paper in a cupboard that has no moisture problems.

Cleaning products

Choose cleaning products that are biodegradable, low in Sodium and Phosphate (PO₄), pH neutral and free of carcinogens, VOCs and scheduled poisons (S5, S6 or S7 products).

Preference products that have minimal packaging and contain non-hazardous materials

Source Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for high risk products and encourage staff to read them - these are freely available on the internet.

Myth

Green cleaning products are NOT inferior to conventional toxic cleaning products – most if not all green cleaning products will clean as well and some even better than toxic cleaning products.

Equipment

Choose energy efficient products. Check the energy star rating and efficiency features are the best available for the cost over the lifetime of the product.

Choose water efficient products. Check the water efficiency label rating <http://www.waterrating.gov.au/> and efficiency features are the best available for the cost over the lifetime of the product.

Ensure energy using products have a sleep mode or easily activated standby mode

Ensure printers & copiers have a duplex function for double sided printing

Where possible, choose suppliers that have product take back schemes to recycle their products at the end of their life

Always donate products that you are no longer using

Furniture

Maintain furniture you already have for as long as possible and always donate it at the end of life (see the CERES website for information on donating furniture)

Where possible, preference refurbished or second hand furniture

Choose furniture that is durable, easy to maintain, can be refurbished, upgraded and repaired

Timber furniture should be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified

Products made from MDF or chipboard should be completely sealed to avoid off gassing. Where possible, preference formaldehyde-free products

Avoid fashion finishes and colours as they may date quickly and create aesthetically obsolete products

Consider furniture with eco-accreditation

Consider purchasing locally produced/ manufactured furniture

Green products are NOT more expensive than conventional products. As with any product there is a wide range of product options and prices to suit your budget.

Using recycled toner cartridges will NOT invalidate the printer warranty

Myths

Computers will NOT be damaged in any way if you shut them down at night.

Refurbished products are NOT of lower quality than new products.

Plastic is not always the worst option, if it can be recycled (plastics 1 – 6) at the end of its life then it is better than products that cannot be recycled.