

**SEVEN  
GENERATIONS  
CHARTER SCHOOL**

SECTION: FINANCES  
 TITLE: 636.4 – VENDOR PURCHASING GUIDELINES  
 ADOPTED: May 10, 2011  
 REVISED:

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| <p>Guideline</p> | <p>In general, when considering the following document, environmentally and socially preferable products and services of similar quality and price to conventional counterparts should gain a purchasing preference. When the greenest or most socially conscientious option is not available, too costly, or impractical, we should look at how the products are produced, as well as the environmentally and socially responsible management practices of suppliers and producers, and choose those with the greatest degree of dedication to our values. We should always bear in mind the long-term effects on the health of all human beings as well as the overall environment with each purchase decision we make.</p> <p>Let us at Seven Generations begin to model paying our own way, rather than having our way paid for us by the world we share. Let us consider our own wake and take responsibility for our own lives and impact. Let us put forth great effort and be a stellar model by embodying our ideal of considering future generations.</p> <p><b>CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>Whenever SGCS acquires items for school use, whether through direct usage or as part of fundraising initiatives, the following opportunities and considerations should be taken into account. When one priority comes into conflict with other articulated values and difficulty arises (e.g. should one purchase organic, non-local tomatoes or local, non-organic ones?) the decision will be made by the committees or parties involved in the purchasing decision or with the Advisory Committee.</p> <p>1. NOT BUYING: Every attempt should be made not to purchase items at all, whether this takes the form of meeting our needs by modeling the creative reuse of existing school property (e.g. turning trash into art) or in the form of a call for donations from parents and community members (e.g. donated books, computer equipment, furniture, building equipment, etc.) Quality and condition of items should be considered before accepting items to recycle.</p> <p>2. BUYING USED: Where the above option is not feasible, every attempt should be made to purchase used items, reducing thereby our contribution both to landfills and resource depletion, as well as waste resulting from packaging and shipping, while simultaneously avoiding the likelihood of supporting labor conditions in violation of our school's commitment to mutual respect. Quality and condition of items should be considered before accepting items to recycle.</p> |
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3. BUYING LOCALLY/GLOBALLY: When purchasing, in an effort to support local economies as well as reduce environmental impacts related to transportation of goods, products should be sourced geographically from local to global.

4. ENVIRONMENT: Preference should be given to companies with a demonstrated commitment to ecological responsibility that work to exceed their environmental performance expectations, and all purchases should be made with the greatest concern for issues of sustainability.

When determining whether a product is environmentally preferable, all phases of the product's lifecycle will be considered, including: raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, operation, maintenance, disposal, potential for reuse and ability to be recycled. Products that have the following environmental attributes should be considered desirable:

- *Biodegradable* \*
- *Carcinogen-free*
- *Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-free*
- *Compostable*
- *Durable*
- *Energy efficient*
- Heavy metal free (e.g., no lead, mercury, cadmium)
- Less hazardous
- *Locally manufactured or grown*
- *Contain low volatile organic compounds (VOC) content*
- Less toxic
- Lower embodied energy
- Made from rapidly *renewable materials*
- *Persistent, bioaccumulative toxin (PBT)-free*
- Preserving and enhancing local economy
- *Recyclable*
- *Recycled post-consumer content*
- Reduced *greenhouse gas emissions*
- Reduced packaging
- Refurbished
- Returnable for refurbishing
- Resource efficient
- Reusable or contain reusable parts (rechargeable batteries, refillable pens, etc.)
- Third-party sustainability certification
- Upgradeable
- *Water efficient*

\* *Italicized bold listings* indicate terms defined in Appendix II (Environmental Purchasing Definitions)

5. FAIR-TRADE/NO SWEAT: Priority should be given to companies that demonstrate a commitment to Fair Trade, ideally through actual certification (see

Appendix I for latest and most credible Fair Trade Certification organizations). Fair Trade companies are devoted to fair wages, health and safety in the workplace, ending the exploitation of women and children and providing workers with an active role in the decisions made in the workplace and community as well as empowering people with limited opportunities.

6. ADVERTISING: Vendors will not require students to engage in commercial advertising. Sponsor recognition and corporate logos should be for identification purposes. Products purchased should adhere to the guidelines in the Commercial-Free School Policy.

#### APPENDIX I-FAIR TRADE RESOURCES

World Fair Trade Organization, The Netherlands, <http://www.wfto.com/>  
Fair Trade Federation, Washington, DC, <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/>

#### APPENDIX II-ENVIRONMENTAL PURCHASING DEFINITIONS

Biodegradable – The ability of a substance to decompose in the natural environment into harmless raw materials. To be truly biodegradable, a substance or material should break down into carbon dioxide (a nutrient for plants), water, and naturally occurring minerals that also do not cause harm to the ecosystem. In terms of environmental benefits, a product should take months or years, and not centuries, to biodegrade.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – Any of a group of compounds that contain carbon, chlorine, fluorine and sometimes hydrogen and have been used as refrigerants, cleaning solvents, aerosol propellants and in the manufacture of plastic foams. The uses of CFCs is being phased out because they destroy the planet's stratospheric ozone protection layer.

Compostable – A product that can be placed into a composition of decaying biodegradable materials and eventually turn into a nutrient-rich material. It is synonymous with "biodegradable," except it is limited to solid materials. (Liquid products are not considered compostable.)

Durable – A product that remains useful and usable for a long time without noticeable deterioration in performance.

Energy-efficient product – A product which exerts or utilizes less energy than similar products in the same product category.

Greenhouse gases – Any of several dozen heat-trapping trace gases in the earth's atmosphere that absorb infrared radiation. The two major greenhouse gases are water vapor and carbon dioxide; lesser greenhouse gases include methane, ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), CFCs, and nitrogen oxides.

Life-cycle cost – The amortized annual cost of a product or service, including capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and disposal

costs discounted over the lifetime of the product or service. (Compare with Product Life cycle.)

Locally manufactured or grown – Manufactured or grown within 100 miles of Emmaus, Pa.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) – Written or printed material about a product that include information on the product’s physical and chemical characteristics; physical and 11 health hazards; exposure limits; whether the product contains carcinogenic ingredients above a certain threshold; precautions for safe handling and use; control measures; emergency and first-aid procedures; the date of preparation of the MSDS or the last change to it; and the name, address and telephone number of the manufacturer.

Persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic compounds (PBTs) – Toxic chemicals that persist in the environment and increase in concentration through food chains as larger animals consume PBT-laden smaller animals. They transfer rather easily among air, water, and land, and span boundaries of programs, geography, and generations. As a result, PBTs pose risks to human health and ecosystems. They are associated with a range of adverse human-health effects, including effects on the nervous system, reproductive and developmental problems, cancer and genetic impact. They include heavy metals and chemicals such as mercury, dioxins, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls).

Post-consumer recycled content – Percentage of a product made from materials and By-products recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream after having completed their usefulness as consumer items and used in place of raw or virgin material.

Product life cycle – The culmination of environmental impacts for a product, including raw-material acquisition, manufacturing, distribution, use, maintenance and ultimate disposal of the product. (Compare with Life cycle Cost.)

Recyclable product – A product that after its intended end use can be diverted from the solid waste stream for use as a raw material in the manufacture of another product.

Recovered materials – Waste materials and by-products that have been recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream.

Recycled materials – Material and byproducts that have been recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream and have been utilized in place of raw or virgin material in manufacturing a product. These are derived from post-consumer recycled materials, manufacturing waste, industrial scrap, agricultural waste and other waste material, but do not include material or by-products generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.

Refurbished product – A product that has been completely disassembled and restored to its original working order while maximizing the reuse of its original materials.

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|  | <p>Renewable materials – Materials made from plant-based feedstock capable of regenerating in less than 200 years, such as trees and other agricultural products. Rapidly renewable resources, such as grain-based feedstocks, regenerate in less than two years.</p> <p>Sustainable – An action is said to be sustainable if it satisfies present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.</p> <p>Upgradeable product – The ability to increase a product’s performance or features 12 without replacing the product. Virgin material – Any material occurring in its natural form.</p> <p>Virgin Material is used in the form of raw material in the manufacture of new products.</p> <p>Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) – Chemicals that readily evaporate and contribute to the formation of air pollution when released into the atmosphere. Many VOCs are classified as toxic and carcinogenic.</p> |
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