

# WELCOME STUDENT ACTIVISTS FOR A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT!

**Thank you for your interest** in the Green Flag Program, an environmental leadership program for students. Through an investigative process, your Green Flag Team will work together to locate your school's existing policies on specific environmental issues, identify ways to improve upon them, and promote policy changes that will positively impact the environment on a local and global scale. The program will provide you with the groundwork. Your team will use the tools, do the work, and propose policy changes. Empower yourself, your Green Flag Team, and your school through investigation, organization, and leadership with the Green Flag Program.

## **The Green Flag Program for Environmental Leadership**

is a project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which is coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ). Through the Green Flag Program, CHEJ extends its long tradition of community organizing assistance to individual schools. We connect local, statewide and national groups to school communities to create effective environmental programs in schools and educate those communities about advocacy and problem solving in the process.

**This packet is a helpful tool** for your team to use as you work your way through the program. Use it as a guidebook, reference, or a resource to help you get through the different stages of the program. The packet progresses sequentially, offering helpful suggestions that your team can use along the way. Remember, the Green Flag Program is flexible. It provides you with a framework and offers time-tested suggestions for success, but leaves it up to you and your team to put your creativity, leadership and problem-solving skills to work to make a positive change. Here's how to get started on becoming an environmental leader in your school.

**To get started, obtain permission from your school, teachers or administrators** before moving forward with any of the steps in this packet. Your Green Flag Team needs to work together with the administrative and facilities departments to make a positive change in your school. Don't put a strain on that relationship by acting without proper permission. The administration, teachers and staff will be valuable partners in your work. Begin by building a good relationship with them.

Note the tips (★) throughout the packet. They tell you which activities can be submitted to the Green Flag Office towards completion of the program.

## ABOUT CHEJ

Lois Gibbs, community leader at Love Canal, founded the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) in 1981, as the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW). CHEJ believes people have the right to a clean and healthy environment, and that the most effective way to achieve change is through community organizing and empowerment.

Since 1981, CHEJ has coordinated several important national campaigns that have shaped the grassroots environmental health movement and contributed to numerous grassroots victories. Today, along with the BE SAFE Campaign, CHEJ coordinates the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which focuses entirely on raising awareness of children's environmental health issues and promoting better environmental policies and programs. For more information see: <http://www.chej.org/>

## ABOUT THE CHILD PROOFING OUR COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN

CHEJ launched the Child Proofing Campaign in 2000 in response to the increasing requests for assistance by community groups, parents, teachers, school administrators and activists alarmed by toxics in school buildings or on school grounds. Since that time, the campaign has coordinated the work of dozens of community, state and national groups to release four reports, testify before the Senate's Environment and Public Works committee and raise awareness of environmental health issues. The Child Proofing Campaign advocates for improved environmental laws, regulations, policies and practices to prevent schools from being built on or near contaminated sites and eliminate children's and school personnel's exposure to mold, toxic chemicals and other health hazards in schools.

The Child Proofing Campaign also responds directly to the requests of individual parents, teachers and community groups that are facing exposure to environmental health hazards in schools. We receive hundreds of calls and emails each year asking for information, support and organizing assistance. For more information see <http://www.childproofing.org/>

**The Green Flag Program was created through the dedication and hard work of the following individuals:**

### EDUCATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Rebecca Bell—Maryland State Dept. of Education  
Angelo Bellomo—Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Los Angeles Unified School District  
Cindy Craig—Youth Count  
Amanda Fisher—Teachers College at Columbia University  
Steve Heacock—Maryland Governor's Green School Program  
Sheila Lewis—Girl Scouts USA  
Maria Minno—Florida PTA

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Jessica Coleman & Nsedu Obot—Children's Environmental Health Network  
Cindy Craig—Youth Count  
Margaret Fitzgerald—Huckleberry Hill Elementary School  
Sue Hughes—Lockport, NY  
Louella Hung—Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign  
Jane Laping—Mothers for Clean Air  
Kim Phillips—Fayetteville, AR  
Jayne Mardock—National Religious Partnership for the Environment  
Denise Robinette—Healthy Living Foundation  
Athena Thompson—Homes that Heal

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Lyn Brabend—NYS Community IPM Program at Cornell University  
Julie Dick—Safer Pest Control Project  
Tom Green—IPM Institute of North America  
Pam Hadad-Hurst—NY Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Debra Martin—Jordan Institute  
Suzanne Miller—Vermont PIRG  
Jane Nogaki—New Jersey Work Environment Council  
Kagan Owens—Beyond Pesticides  
Marty Reiner and Charles Irvine—Texans for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Robina Suwol—California Safe Schools  
Angela Storey—Washington Toxics Coalition  
Ellen Weininger—Westchester County, NY

## NON-TOXIC PRODUCTS

Lisa Arkin—Oregon Toxics Alliance  
Stephen Ashkin—The Ashkin Group  
Bobbi Chase—Citizens' Environmental Council  
Doug Fishman—Burgundy Farm Country Day School  
Liberty Goodwin—Toxics Information Project  
Kathy Koumoutseas—Capitol Hill Region Cluster Group  
Mark Petrucci—Green Seal  
Mary Scarpa—North Country Union High School  
William F. Smith—Denver Public Schools  
Robina Suwol—California Safe Schools  
Amy Todisco—Consumers' Healthy Home Center

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLING

Angie Barger—Association of Vermont Recyclers  
Dewayne Johnson—Iowa Recycling Association  
Gary Gepford—Herndon High School  
Holly Kingsley—Summit Recycling Project  
Annette Mills—City of Falls Church Recycling Office  
Anne Morse—Winona County Recycling Association  
Victoria Wiedel—Solid Waste Agency of Lake County  
Christine Woods—Kids Against Pollution  
Cassie Wyss—Grassroots Recycling Network

**Other individuals and organizations that devoted time and energy to reviewing the program's materials:**

Claire Barnett—Healthy Schools Network  
Diane Ethier—Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools  
Ellie Goldberg—Healthy Kids: the Key to Basics  
Jake Lubarsky—Thornton Middle School  
Mickey Maheu—Southeast Elementary School  
Freda Sherburne—Oregon Green Schools  
Larry Swain—Michigan Dept. of Agriculture  
Virginia Walton—Mansfield CT Recycling Coordinator

**The program would also not have come into existence without the support and generosity of the following foundations whose grants have funded the Green Flag Program:**

Bauman Foundation  
Beldon Fund  
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CS Fund/Warsh-Mott Legacy  
Educational Foundation of America  
Groundspring.org  
Mitchell Kapor Foundation  
Alida R. Messinger  
New York Community Trust  
Turner Foundation  
Wallace Genetic Foundation  
Winslow Foundation

The Campaign also received generous donations of award materials from Patagonia Beneficial T's Inc.

All the materials for the program were excellently and thoughtfully designed by Kieran Daly of KDaddy Design.

# THIS GUIDE CONTAINS...

## 1. Green Flag Basics: Program Overview

From earning your Green Flag to passing safer and healthier policies in the four issue areas, this section lays out the requirements of the Green Flag Program from start to finish.

## 2. Before the First Green Flag Team Meeting...

This section is intended to get you thinking about what being in a Green Flag Team is all about. What does it mean to be part of a team? Also included in this section are some tips on how to spread the word about your first team meeting.

## 3. Creating a Strong Green Flag Team...

This next section offers pointers on what to do at your first team meeting, as well as some helpful hints on how to keep your team running smoothly by creating group solidarity. It includes fun activities that will get your team started on working together.

## 4. Communicating with Administrative and Facilities Departments...

Administrators and facility department workers listen to motivated, organized, and determined students. Good communication with the school community is key to advancing change. This section outlines ways to communicate with others about your ideas.

## 5. Generating Media Attention...

Positive press will get your school and community behind your team and give your team well-deserved credit for your work. This section explains how to work with the media to gain community support and highlight your team's hard work.

## 6. Leadership Activities...

Included in this section are some activities for your experienced team. Use your team's new skills to organize and achieve beyond the classroom.

### ALSO INCLUDED...

- **The School Environment Survey**
  - ✦ Submit as part of the Level 1 requirements
- **Fact Sheets** offering background information on the four issue areas and why they are important. ✦ Fact Sheets include activities your team can complete towards credit for Levels 2 and 3.

# GREEN FLAG BASICS: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Refer back to this outline as your team progresses through the Green Flag Program. It will help you formulate goals and track your progress.

## What is it?

The Green Flag Program is a national environmental awards program that creates safer and healthier school environments through investigation, education, innovation and action. Students work to pass environmentally healthy policies in four different issue areas to create lasting positive changes to the environmental health of their school.

Visit [www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org) for a more in-depth description of the program requirements and Awards. All of your documentation can be submitted through the website.

## The Nitty Gritty

There are four issue areas to the Green Flag Program. For each issue area, there are three levels. Level 1, the “forming a team” stage, only has to be completed once, while Levels 2 and 3 must be completed for all four issue areas.

## Level 1: Forming a Team and Conducting the Survey

- Form your Green Flag Team and hold a meeting
- Complete the Green Flag School Environment Survey (included)
- Submit your completed survey to the Green Flag Office
- Receive the Green Flag Award for Level 1:



- Then hold a media event to raise awareness that your school is a Green Flag School

## Level 2: Discovering and Sharing Information

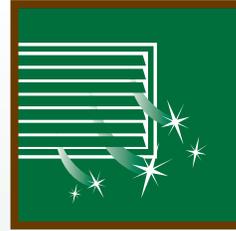
- Decide which of the four issue areas your group wants to work on first:
  - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
  - Non-Toxic Products
  - Indoor Air Quality
  - Integrated Pest Management
- Conduct the Level 2 Survey for your issue area (available for download at [www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org))



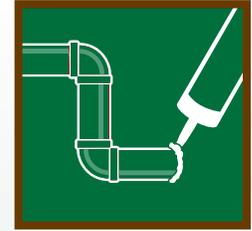
**REDUCE, REUSE,  
RECYCLE**



**NON-TOXIC  
PRODUCTS**



**INDOOR  
AIR QUALITY**



**INTEGRATED PEST  
MANAGEMENT**

- Research to find out if your school has a policy for that issue area
- Research the issue area. Why is it important? Using information from your School Environment Survey, research the possible health and environmental effects posed by your school's current practices
- Research safer alternatives to your school's current practices by using materials on our website and calling the Green Flag Office
- Make a presentation to your class, school, or community on what you've learned about your issue area
- Complete a "classroom activity" related to your issue area (see examples at [www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org))
- Submit Level 2 Survey and all other documentation to the Green Flag Office

**Receive the Green Flag Award for Level 2:  
Four Green Flag t-shirts**

### **Level 3: Creating a Policy, or Improving Upon a Policy**

- Work with the Green Flag Office to formulate a policy for your issue area. The policy will create a lasting change in your school.
- Hold a meeting with administrative and facilities departments and teachers to present your ideas
- Pass your policy and begin implementation with the help of an expert
- Complete a "classroom activity" related to your issue area
- Submit your policy and other documentation to the Green Flag Office

**Receive the Green Flag Award for Level 3:**

- Patch for your issue area (pictured above)
- Certificate of Achievement for each team member

Pass a policy in each issue area to complete the Green Flag Program!

### **Contact the Green Flag Program**

The Green Flag Program believes in your team's ability to create healthy changes in your school. Use all of the resources available to you as you work your way through the program. In addition to this guide and your team's collective creativity, drive, and leadership, you have another tool in your toolbox: The Green Flag Staff. Allow us to assist in your team's efforts to create safer and healthier environments. Contact us:

**Green Flag Office  
Center for Health, Environment and Justice  
P.O. Box 6806  
Falls Church, VA, 22040  
[www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org)  
[childproofing@chej.org](mailto:childproofing@chej.org)  
(703) 237-2249**

# BEFORE THE FIRST GREEN FLAG TEAM MEETING...

Before holding your first Green Flag Team meeting, it might be a good idea to spend some time thinking about what being in a team is all about. What can a team accomplish that one person cannot? Your team will need leadership, negotiating, and relationship-building skills to be successful. Think about how grassroots groups like your Green Flag Team can accomplish change...

## Lead by example, set goals and envision your team's success...

*"We must become the change we want to see."  
- Mahatma Gandhi*

## Teamwork is about the empowerment of every team member...

*"I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."  
- Ralph Nader*

## Being a leader means finding common ground between all involved...

*"Leadership is a harder job to do than just choose sides. It must bring sides together."  
- Jesse Jackson*

## Get Permission, Spread the Word, and Set the Agenda...

There are a few orders of business that must be taken care of prior to holding your first team meeting. Be sure to account for all of the following...

- **Get permission to start a team:** This may be a great way to find a Green Flag Team Advisor. Approach a teacher or faculty member who you think would make a good Team Advisor, explain

the program goals (creating a healthier learning environment, preventing illness from chemical exposure, etc.), and tell them a bit about what their role would be in your team. You could also try going directly to the principal to ask for permission. Whomever you approach, be ready to explain to them why the Green Flag Program is important, and how much time you anticipate they would have to put into supporting the team (one meeting per week, two meetings a month, etc.).

- **Find a Meeting Place:** For your first meeting, it is a good idea to reserve a space that is a little small for the number of people you expect to attend. Being slightly crowded creates an exciting atmosphere, whereas conducting a meeting in an auditorium would give the illusion of poor attendance, and therefore, disinterest.
- **Spread word of your meeting:** Give everyone the opportunity to learn about the first team meeting. Advertise by putting up flyers, handing out pamphlets, and talking to friends or sending them an email or instant message about where and when the meeting will take place. See if you can make an announcement at the beginning of school or in an assembly.
- **Set a meeting agenda:** Write out a basic outline for the first meeting. Include a description of program basics, time to discuss what everyone wants to see happen at the school, time to talk about how you are going to divide work amongst team members, and time to brainstorm about how you are going to get started on your first project area. End by agreeing upon the next meeting time.



# CREATING A STRONG GREEN FLAG TEAM

## Group Ice Breakers

Starting a group can be the hardest part of group work. At your first team meeting, try some icebreaker activities to allow team members to feel more comfortable with one another. Try one of the icebreakers below, or use one of your own. Remember, while developing teamwork and problem solving skills, you are allowed to have some fun!

- **Two Truths and a Lie:**  
Have each team member say two true things and one false thing about themselves. The group then tries to guess which statement was a lie.
- **Famous Pairs:**  
Tape the names of famous pairs and couples to each group member's back. Then, have everyone try to find their famous match by asking yes or no questions.
- **Interviews:**  
Have each team member interview the person next to them for 5 minutes, and then introduce that team member to the rest of the group.
- **The Human Knot:**  
Have the group stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Then, have each person put their hands into the middle of the circle and join hands with two different people. Without unclasping hands (changing hand grip is okay), try to untangle the human "knot" to reform the circle.
- **Human Bingo:**  
Fill each square on a bingo card with different objective criteria (has brown eyes, has a fall birthday, has two sisters, plays a school sport,

etc.) and make copies for everyone. Be the first to get bingo by filling the boxes with signatures of other group members who fit the criteria. Provide a prize for the winner!

## Other Things to Think About at the First Green Flag Team Meeting

Keep these helpful hints in mind when conducting your first meeting. These tips will be useful throughout the program.

1. Try to balance group conversations so that everyone's voice is heard. **Value all opinions equally**, and respect your fellow team members.
2. When the team needs advice, not information, **brainstorm ideas** for solving the problem. Groups come up with far better solutions than individuals.
3. When in a group discussion about the Green Flag Program, make sure to **remind one another** about how the team's efforts are making a difference.
4. **Organize for long-term success.** Set an ultimate goal and outline steps to follow along the way. Deciding what you want to accomplish and how you plan to do it is half the battle! Lay the groundwork and establish a formula for success!
5. **Keep the team focused** on Green Flag goals by either working together on each part of the program, or by choosing who wants to work on what.

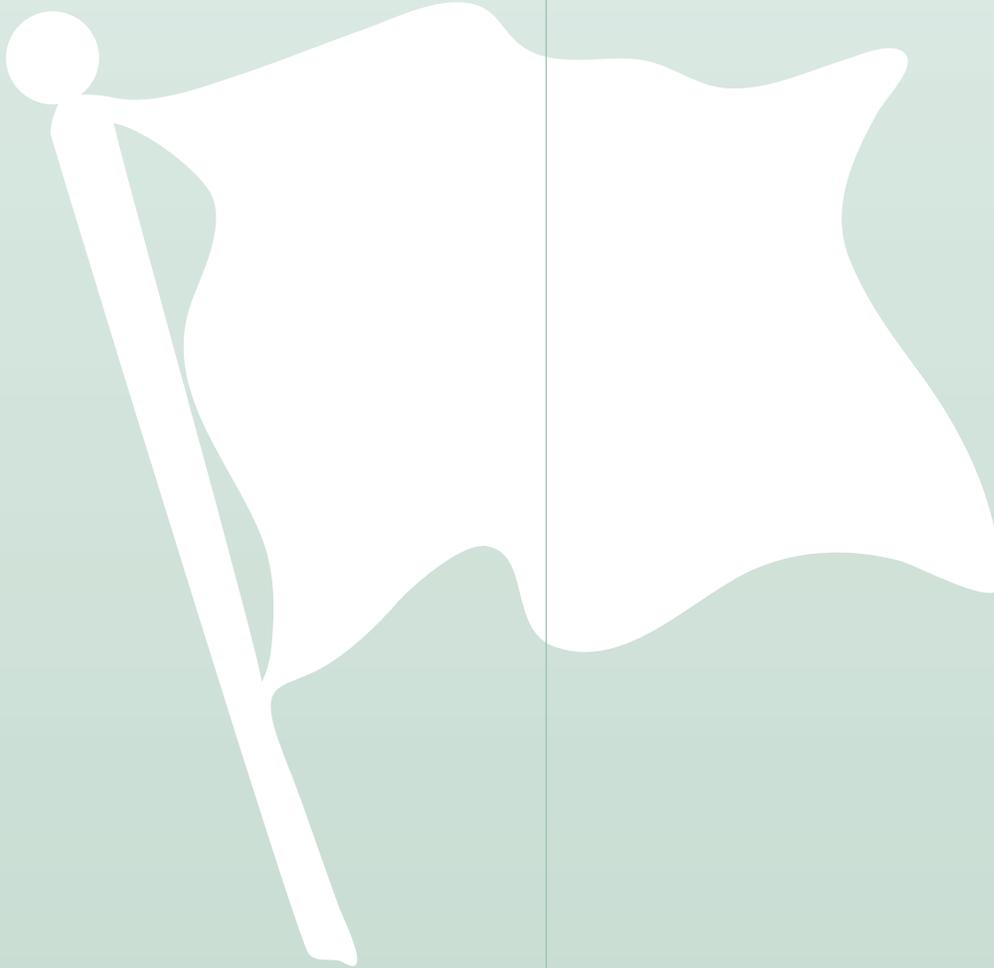
6. **Delegate!** Make sure everyone leaves the meeting with something to do. Even if a couple of individuals could accomplish the work faster, involving everyone will invest the whole team, and help the team grow.
7. For questions relating to your program area, or to get local resources, **contact the Green Flag Program Office** at [childproofing@chej.org](mailto:childproofing@chej.org) or (703) 237-2249.

### Student Coordinators

During the course of your group work, one or two individuals may emerge as team coordinators. It is perfectly fine if no group member assumes the student coordinator role, however, it often helps to have a consistent spokesperson for communication and logistical purposes. That being said, student coordinators should...

1. Motivate fellow students to get involved in the Green Flag Program.
2. Develop student, teacher and administrative contacts that will help your school implement the program.
3. Coordinate the team to brainstorm ideas on how to improve your school environmental activities.
4. Take the lead in communicating with the school administration about team ideas and goals.
5. Stay in touch with the Green Flag Office.

★ *Record the names of your team members in your School Environment Survey and submit it to the Green Flag Office as part of the Level 1 requirements.*



# COMMUNICATING WITH ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACILITIES DEPARTMENTS

The key to a student group's ability to create policy change within their school is communicating effectively with administrative and facilities departments. After all, many of your ideas and proposed changes will affect the work of your school staff and administration. They should be involved in the process as much as possible and as early as possible. Your team will only succeed in making lasting policy changes if it is prepared, organized, and respectful of the ideas of school staff and administration. Here are some tips your team can use to help with the communication process.

## Set Goals

The best way for your team to prepare for a meeting with school staff departments is to establish clear goals within the team. Having specific goals will allow administrative and facilities departments to understand exactly what your team is trying to accomplish.

## Be Prepared!

If your team expects to be taken seriously, it must be prepared. Here are some tips to follow to prepare for meetings with administrative and facilities departments.

- Clearly define the role that you want the administrative and facilities departments to play to help your team reach its goals.
- Be aware of how your team's demands will affect those involved. For example, is your team asking the facilities department to do more work?
- Use the goals your team has set to form a series

of questions to pose to administrative and/or facilities department members. Brainstorm possible roadblocks that your team may encounter, and work with administrative and facilities departments to work around them.

- Be prepared to answer follow-up questions from department members.
- Consider forming an environmental committee of Green Flag Team members, administrative and facilities departments, and teachers to meet several times a year.

## Schedule and Conduct a Meeting

After your team has established its goals and formulated a list of questions for the administrative and facilities departments, it is time to schedule a meeting. Here are some guidelines to follow to make your meetings go smoothly.

- Establish who needs to be at the meeting. Try to include a minimum number of knowledgeable team members, and only essential department members in the meeting. Reducing the number of people in the meeting will allow for maximum productivity.
- Delegate team member roles (e.g. note taker, communicator, Green Flag Program knowledge expert, etc.).
- After setting up the meeting date and time, send a letter to administrative and/or facilities departments detailing the meeting's agenda (you may need advice from your Team Advisor on the best way to schedule a meeting with staff

departments.) Stick to the agenda in the meeting!

- Be respectful. Establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect will make the program easy and enjoyable for everyone. Start off your first meeting by thanking the department members for their time. Then, introduce each team member. You may want to have everyone share some personal background information, or explain why the Green Flag Program interests them. Allow everyone at the table time to introduce themselves.
- End the meeting by recapping what was

discussed. This reinforces what was accomplished during the meeting. Also, conclude by scheduling another team meeting (if necessary), and confirming what your team has offered to do and what the departments have offered to do.

- Send a "Thank You" letter to all those involved in the meeting. Thanking department members for their time and interest will establish a good working relationship and paves the way for subsequent meetings.





# GENERATING MEDIA ATTENTION

Media coverage of your Green Flag Team's actions and successes are a great way to boost support for your team, shed a positive light on your school, and highlight your team's concern with global issues, such as environmental health. Generate media attention around your Green Flag activities to include the community in your efforts, and around your award ceremonies (flag and patch presentations) to share news of your achievements.

✦ *Newspaper articles, TV interviews, or other media-related events that inform others about your issue area can count towards classroom activity or presentation requirements. Submit documentation to the Green Flag Office for credit towards Levels 2 and 3.*

Here are some tips on how to garner the attention of your school, community, and beyond...

- Start with your **school newspaper**. Tell them about your team and what you hope to accomplish. Provide them with statistics from your School Environment Survey (or Level 2 Survey) as well as some information on how your team's actions or policy will improve upon existing practices at your school, for example, switching from toxic pesticides and/or toxic cleaning products to non-toxic or less-toxic alternatives, improving upon or initiating recycling, or improving indoor air quality. Share information on the dangers of environmental contaminants with your school reporter. Invite a school reporter to attend an event to take some photos of the group in action.

- If your school has a **radio or TV station**, offer to be interviewed "live" in the studio, during a classroom activity, or while the team completes the School Environment Survey (or Level 2 Survey).
- Be energetic! Choose your most upbeat members to convey your team's enthusiasm.
- After gaining coverage around the school, move onto a **PTA newsletter or school district publication**. Parents, teachers, and administrators want to know what students are doing and are proud to display examples of their leadership and activism. Provide pictures! Offer to speak at a PTA or school board meeting. The more the community knows about your team's efforts, the more likely you are to get support, and educate others!
- Contact a **local public access or news TV station or your local newspaper**. Remember to be both professional and enthusiastic.



# LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

By this time, your team will have gained organizing experience and will be continuing to build group solidarity. Put your team's new skills to the test by completing some of the activities below, or by coming up with your own.

★ *Incorporate elements pertaining to your issue area in your leadership activities. Document and submit a description to the Green Flag Office to fulfill the classroom or presentation requirements for Levels 2 and 3.*

1. **Organize a Bike to School Day** where students ride their bikes to school instead of driving their cars. Use your organizing skills to mobilize the masses, increase consciousness, and reduce pollution.
2. **Research youth activist victories** and give a short presentation to your team showing how the victory was achieved. Try to find specifics about how the group organized and worked toward success. Brainstorm ideas on how to emulate the success of the groups you researched to achieve your goal of a healthier school environment.
3. **Organize a Battle of the Bands fundraiser** to raise money for your Green Flag Team. Use the proceeds to purchase materials for other Green Flag activities, such as purchasing indoor air quality test kits or water quality test kits.
4. **Organize a recycling drive for old electronics.** Online auction giant eBay has launched a website to facilitate the reusing and recycling of old electronics. Visit <http://rethink.ebay.com/> to research how your school can recycle its old electronics through eBay's program to reduce toxic electronic waste. If your school is in need of electronics, use the website to find out how your school may be eligible to receive refurbished electronics.
5. **Change from bottled water to a reusable water container.** Americans throw away millions of bottled water containers every day. Design posters and pamphlets that educate your school about the benefits of reusing water containers. Reduce waste in your school; try to get as many students and staff as you can to make the switch.
6. **Take Action in Support of Fellow Environmentalists.** Keep your eye on current events! Look in the newspaper, online, or watch the news to find others working to improve the environment in one of Green Flag's four issue areas. Find a group asking for help, and take action! Gather signatures to add to a petition, make calls to your federal representatives, or hand out informational flyers to support an effort for environmental protection. Find out how your action made an impact, track your issue, and see how your work in the Green Flag Program is part of a larger movement of groups working to create safer and healthier environments.

For more leadership activity ideas, visit the Green Flag Website at [www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org)

# 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.

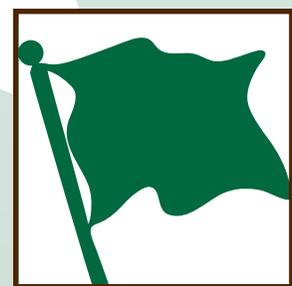
Through your detective work, you and your Green Flag team will be able to uncover facts about what your school does well and what your school can improve. If your school does something especially well or if it has environmental problems that you can help your school fix, you can win the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership. You and your Green Flag team can work with the Green Flag Office 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 Office if you need assistance.

**BEST OF LUCK WITH YOUR INVESTIGATION!**



**GREEN  
FLAG  
PROGRAM**

\*This document, along with all other materials in the Guide to Action, is also available on-line at <http://www.greenflagschools.org/>



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## 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: \_\_\_\_\_
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  13. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  14. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  15. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  16. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  17. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_
  18. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 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](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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?

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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:

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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.):

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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 Office at 703-237-8389.

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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:

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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.

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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)?

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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?

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**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? \_\_\_\_\_

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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?

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- 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?

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# CONGRATULATIONS!

**YOU'VE COMPLETED THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT SURVEY! HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO RECEIVE YOUR GREEN FLAG AWARD FOR LEVEL 1...**

- Make sure that you have officially formed your Green Flag Team and recorded their names on page 2.
- Hold an informational meeting to get the word out about Green Flags. Invite members of the community and set goals for your team!
- Submit this survey, along with a short write-up of your informational meeting, to the Green Flag Office. Email, fax or mail to:

Green Flag Office  
The Center for Health, Environment and Justice  
P.O. Box 6806  
Falls Church, VA 22040-6806  
childproofing@chej.org  
Phone: (703) 237-2249  
Fax: (703) 237-8389

**NOW YOUR GREEN FLAG TEAM CAN MOVE ON TO LEVEL 2!  
HERE'S HOW TO GET STARTED...**

- Choose from one of the four Green Flag Issue Areas
- Download and complete the Level 2 survey for your Issue Area at <http://www.greenflagschools.org/Level2.htm>.
- Research your school's policy and your state's existing policy for your Issue Area if they exist
- Present what you've learned to your school and/or community
- Complete a classroom activity pertaining to your Issue Area
- Submit documentation of all the above steps to the Green Flag Coordinator to receive your Green Flag Award for Level 2!

**AFTER COMPLETING LEVEL 2, MOVE ON TO THE THIRD  
AND FINAL LEVEL OF GREEN FLAG TO PASS A POLICY IN  
YOUR ISSUE AREA!**

Visit the Green Flag website to learn more about Level 3, awards/rewards for each level, presentation and classroom activity examples, sample policies, Green Flag School success stories and more!

<http://www.greenflagschools.org/>



**GREEN  
FLAG  
PROGRAM**

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

P.O. Box 6806 • Falls Church, VA 22040-6806

Phone 703.237.2249 • Email: [childproofing@chej.org](mailto:childproofing@chej.org) • [www.greenflagschools.org](http://www.greenflagschools.org)

