

Do Green Cleaning Programs really make a difference within schools?

Green cleaning programs are designed to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the school. An effective program promotes a healthier facility with improved indoor air quality, reduces environmental and health impacts, and may positively affect students' grades and attendance.

Are Green Cleaners as effective as traditional cleaners?

Yes, most green cleaners are as effective as traditional cleaners when used properly. All OGS-approved products have undergone a rigorous certification and review process (i.e., Green Seal or Eco Logo) to ensure they adhere to strict performance standards and meet environmental and human health criteria.



How much does a Green Cleaning Program cost?

Many green cleaning products are cost competitive and offer the same cleaning power as traditional cleaners. Because green cleaning products are often sold in concentrated form, the actual in-use cost may actually be less than some traditional, "ready-to-use" alternatives. In addition, the health benefits of implementing a green cleaning program outweigh any extra cost of the program.

Who is responsible for the implementation of a Green Cleaning Program within a school district?

Implementation of a comprehensive green cleaning program requires support and cooperation of many stakeholders including administrative and custodial staff, students, teachers, parents/PTA, and the school board. Together the funding, support, and implementation of a green cleaning program; and ensure that defined goals and objectives for the program are met.

Can I bring a cleaner into the school from home?

In order for the program to be effective, only OGS-approved green cleaning products must be used within the school. The school should create a policy regarding home cleaner usage and actively work with staff to address cleaning issues. The staff, as stakeholders, play a key role in successful implementation of a green cleaning program.

Green Seal, Inc.

<http://www.greenseal.org>

Eco Logo Program

<http://www.ecologo.org>

Carpet & Rug Institute

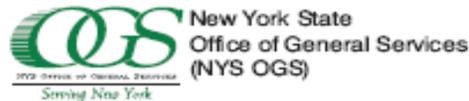
<http://www.carpet-rug.org>

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

<http://www.edfacilities.org>

Healthy Schools Network

<http://www.healthyschools.org>



[See FAQs Section of the OGS's Green Cleaning Website](#)

Environmental Services Unit

E-mail: nysogsesu@ogs.state.ny.us

Website: <https://greencleaning.ny.gov>

School Contact:

Delivering Green Cleaning in New York State Schools



clean **Clean Environment, Healthy Kids, Better Education** better

Introduction to Green Cleaning in Schools

Green cleaning involves the use of cleaning products that work effectively while minimizing adverse impacts on human health and the environment. Green Seal and Eco Logo are two organizations that test and certify cleaning products as "green."

The New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Environmental Services Unit (ESU) developed a list of green cleaning products approved for school use, which can be found on the OGS Website. (See Informational Resources)

Importance of Green Cleaning Programs in Schools

Students, teachers, and staff spend eight to ten hours each weekday in school buildings. Even more so than adults, children are vulnerable to, and may be severely affected by, exposure to hazardous chemicals found in cleaners, waxes, deodorizers, and other facility maintenance products. In addition to the use of green cleaning products, a green cleaning program uses technologies like microfiber cloths to reduce the use of cleaning chemicals and HEPA-filtered vacuum cleaners to promote healthy indoor air quality. A healthier school environment leads to a better learning environment for students and working environment for staff.



Indoor Environment Concerns

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the concentration of indoor air contaminants can be two to five times greater than the outdoors. Common indoor contaminants include dirt and dust, chemical vapors, pesticides, bacteria, and mold. An unhealthy indoor environment created by harsh cleaning products and/or improper cleaning procedures is linked to a variety of ailments such as:

- Allergies
- Asthma and other respiratory illnesses
- Infectious diseases
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Eye, nose, throat, and skin irritation
- Learning problems, and

Who Benefits from a School Green Cleaning Program?

Students

Children's physical and mental health can be severely affected by chemical and other environmental hazards. Increased rates of asthma, cancer, and behavioral and attention deficit disorders have been associated with contaminants found in the indoor environment. Studies have identified a connection between a clean school environment and improved learning, reduced absenteeism, and better test scores.



Teachers/Staff

A healthy indoor environment creates a healthy and productive workspace for teachers, which directly results in a better education provided to the students.

Custodial Staff

Custodial staff are frequently in direct contact with cleaning agents. Prolonged exposure to chemicals commonly used for cleaning can cause injuries such as burns, and respiratory illnesses such as asthma. A comprehensive green cleaning program addresses the proper use of cleaning equipment designed for comfort and safety, and provides training to ensure correct methods and practices are used. A healthier work environment can reduce the number of injuries, worker turnover rates, worker compensations claims, and insurance rates.



Parents as Stakeholders

Parents are important stakeholders in a green cleaning program and can actively support the program in their children's school district. Parents' support can help ensure compliance and promote funding to purchase green cleaning products and equipment. As parents, you will be the first to recognize if the program is working. Notify your school if you have any comments or concerns about the effectiveness of the green cleaning program.



NYS Schools Green Cleaning Legislation

Chapter 584 of the Laws of 2005 amended the state Education and Finance Laws and thereby became the first state in the nation requiring mandatory use of green cleaning products in elementary and secondary schools. This legislation includes school districts, special act school districts, city school districts in cities having a population of 125,000 or more people, boards of cooperative educational services, charter schools, approved private schools for the education of students with disabilities, state-supported schools for the deaf or blind, and any other private or parochial school. The law went into effect on September 1, 2006.



Other Green Initiatives:

Governor's Executive Mansion

"Greening the Governor's Mansion" is an important initiative that brings clean, efficient technologies to the Executive Mansion. Serving as a model for the state, the residential green initiative will help address global climate change while lowering energy bills and fueling the innovation economy by supporting new industries born from the expanded use of clean power.