GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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Green Cleaning Information for School Administrators, Staff and Parents

As concerns about chemicals in the environment grow, there is an effort to reduce the amount and type of chemicals people are exposed to every day. In light of this, a law was passed in 2009 by the CT legislature that requires schools to start a green cleaning program in the schools by July 2011. **School Districts need the cooperation of staff and parents to both comply with the law, and protect the health of students and staff.**

Public Act No. 09-81 (partial text)
AN ACT CONCERNING GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS.

On or before July 1, 2011, each local and regional board of education shall implement a green cleaning program for the cleaning and maintenance of school buildings and facilities in its district. No person shall use a cleaning product inside a school unless such cleaning product meets guidelines or environmental standards set by a national or international environmental certification program approved by the Department of Administrative Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Environmental Protection. Such cleaning product shall, to the maximum extent possible, minimize the potential harmful impact on human health and the environment.

On or before October 1, 2010, each local and regional board of education shall provide the staff of each school and, upon request, the parents and guardians of each child enrolled in each school with a written statement of the school district's green cleaning program. Each local or regional board of education shall make such notice, as well as the report submitted to the Department of Education pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-220 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, available on its web site and the web site of each school under such board's jurisdiction.

No parent, guardian, teacher or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.

This requirement means that the custodial staff will use cleaners that are less toxic. These green cleaners have been certified by an independent third-party (Green Seal: **http://greenseal.org** or Eco-Logo: **http://www.ecologo.org/en/index.asp**) to make sure that the health and environmental effects from their use are reduced.

This change will mean improved health for school occupants by reducing children's, teacher's, custodian's and other staff's exposure to toxic chemicals and asthma triggers that can be found in cleaning products. These include bleach, phenols, and ammonia often found in many over-the-counter general- purpose cleaners.

One important part of the law bans teachers and staff from bringing in their own cleaners, including sanitizers and disinfectants, or deodorizers, and parents (and parent groups) from sending in such products with their child/children. These products often have harmful ingredients that can cause health problems, especially for people with asthma and other respiratory problems. The best way to prevent germs from spreading is to use soap and water or, if unavailable, use the school approved hand sanitizer.

The facilities and custodial staff must be aware of all chemicals used in the schools. They have been trained to use the best cleaner for the situation/location. For example, they use disinfectants in the bathrooms, sanitizers in the kitchen and general purpose cleaners in the classroom. The nurse's office has a separate procedure. If there is a particular illness outbreak, then sanitizers and disinfectants may be used in areas that might be contaminated. Only the trained custodial and nursing staff should be handling disinfectants. It is recommended that the school provide teachers with small pump bottles (labeled with the product name and any health hazard) of the approved green cleaner to use in the classroom.

You should be able to find the following green cleaning information on your district's web site or by request:

- types and names of cleaning products that are better for the environment
- where such cleaning products are used in the school buildings and facilities
- schedule of when such cleaning products are used in the school buildings and facilities
- name of the school administrator, or a designee, for further information
- the statement prohibiting parents, guardians, teachers or staff member bringing in cleaners or disinfectants

Moving to a green cleaning system will require cooperation from all members of the school community. The result will be a healthier school environment.

For more information on green cleaning, visit the following web sites:

- Wastebusters Green Cleaning Myths Video: **http://www.depdata.ct.gov/video/mainpsa.asp?url=http://www.u10videos.com/DEP/Waste/WastebustersGreenCleaning.wmv&name=Wastebusters**
- CT School Green Cleaning Products Law: **http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/ACT/Pa/pdf/2009PA-00081-R00HB-06496-PA.pdf**
- CT Department of Public Health: **http://www.ct.gov/dph/ieq**
- CT Department of Public Health "Healthy School Environments" web page: **www.ct.gov/dph/schools**
- INFORM Cleaning for Health: **http://informinc.org**
- CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools: **http://www.pollutionfreeschools.org**
- Best Cleaning Practices Guidance for Infection Control: **http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/lib/ctfluwatch/h1n1/72209/cleaning_schools.pdf**



