

Sustainable procurement

“We can’t save the world by playing by the rules, because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change – and it has to start today”.

Greta Thunberg

“We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar.”

Damian Barr

The DfE’s [Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#), a strategy for the education and children’s services systems, tasks the education sector with reducing its environmental footprint, particularly in the drive to achieve net zero.

In action area 4, the strategy encourages schools to ensure sustainability is part of the assessment and validation criteria for the purchasing of products and services.

School resource management

Better school resource management starts with better procurement and ensuring we can obtain value for money by considering the 3 E’s – Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy. With sustainable procurement it’s the 3 E’s plus the principles of environmental and social.

Blockers to sustainable procurement

Who are the blockers to your school procuring more sustainably? If you completed a stakeholder map of low / high influence of outcome and low / high support for your efforts, where would people sit? Who is the natural champion of sustainable procurement in addition to you? How can you activate them to do more communicating about the green agenda? Who has high influence and low support? How do you manage them?

Understanding your data

- How much photocopying is going on in your school?
- How many glue sticks are you using a year?

Links to other strategies

It would help to bring sustainability up your setting’s agenda by including on the strategic plan and within your policies. Consider your school’s approach to sustainability and its targets to reduce energy consumption, waste or opt for greener suppliers. When you next review your policies, consider how sustainability can be threaded through them. It’s probably already mentioned in the curriculum policies, but what about your procurement or finance policies, your digital or premises strategy? Do you have a Sustainability policy?

By considering procurement as a process which starts with the idea that something is needed and ends when we pay for its disposal, we can truly consider the sustainability of the school resources we manage.

It's unlikely that on your procurement requisition (online!) form you have a line about where, when, how and at what cost the school resource will be disposed of at the end of its life. However, considering the hierarchy of waste (Prevent, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Dispose) especially the first three steps which take place before additional purchases are made, could reduce your waste costs and will reduce the amount going to landfill, for example:

Hierarchy	Examples
Prevent: Minimise waste	Avoid single used plastic Encourage catering contractors to stop using single use plastic. Install water fountains for students and staff to fill their reusable water bottles. Unnecessary packaging Avoid using suppliers with high use of packaging.
Reduce: Dependency on harmful, wasteful and non-recyclable products	Paper consumption If you must print, print double sided. Don't glue worksheets into workbooks. Limit laminating Ask yourself does this sheet of paper need to exist on this planet long after I don't?!
Reuse: Rebalance our throwaway culture	Polly pockets, plastic wallets, punched pockets If you need plastic wallets, can you empty ones holding content no longer required? School resource amnesty Before placing next year's stationery order, organise a clearing of cupboards of unwanted items into a central area, then reallocate.

We know that small changes in our habits can have an impact on reducing waste, for example the removal of single use plastic bags in our supermarkets and choosing to refill a water bottle rather than buy another bottle. A school resource amnesty is a real eye opener to how often purchases are made out of habit rather than out of necessity. To avoid this going forward you could consider a centralised stationery cupboard. This will take time to set up successfully and could create other issues (no one informing the office when the last box of photocopier paper is opened...) but with practice it could work. The next step would be a cross curriculum collaborative purchasing exercise.

Once you've established that a purchase definitely is required, you'll need to consider the supplier's green credentials. You could create a list of eco-friendly suppliers – from your own prerequisites – that could be based on their packaging; locality; fair trade, bee-friendly and recycled product range; recycling opportunities or community engagement and social benefits as well as price and ability to deliver on time and in an electric vehicle not a dinosaur juice powered one. Can you give feedback to suppliers to encourage them to change their practices?

i.e. reduce the number of deliveries or switch to e-invoices. Could you learn from their sustainability practices? Having the conversation, learning and then implementing change is key, as *Everything needs to change – and it has to start today!*

Scope 3 emissions

At present, calculating the extent of an organisation's scope 3 emissions is reliant on suppliers providing custom carbon factors for products and services. In the absence of this information, the calculation must be based on per £ spend. This data has limitations, but is an indicator of impact especially when accounted for on a per pupil basis. This accounts for changes in pupil numbers over time.

There are many free carbon calculators available with some created specifically for schools.

[Free Carbon Calculator for business | Value Match](#)

[Eco-schools count your carbon tool](#)

[Technical Guidance for Calculating Scope 3 Emissions](#)

Building relationships with suppliers over time will enable you to improve the quality of your data and gain a better understanding of the impact of your procurement on the environment.

You could identify your top ten suppliers, by spend, by environmental impact, or by area (curriculum resource, office resources, grounds maintenance, waste services inc. hygiene....) and seek information about their environmental impact, sustainability policies and product specific carbon factors using the template over the page..

Not all will have the information, but requesting it establishes a need.

Supplier environmental sustainability survey		
School Name:		
Number of employees:		
Contact name:		
Title:		
Date:		
Do you have a sustainability / environmental/ green policy statement? If yes, please provide a link or attachment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you publish a corporate social responsibility (CSR) report? If yes, please provide a link or attachment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you monitor and track your energy consumption at your facility (ies)? If yes, please describe:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have goals or targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or energy? If yes, what is/are the target/s?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you report greenhouse gas emissions and/or energy either publicly or to another customer? If yes, please describe where:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Optional greenhouse gas emissions		
Do you calculate your greenhouse gas emissions? If yes, what is the most recent year that data is available?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please provide:		
Total Scope 1 emissions (tCO2e)		
Total Scope 2 emissions (tCO2e)		
Total Scope 3 emissions (tCO2e) if measured		
Please provide a description of your major scope 1,2 and 3 emissions		

Product specific carbon footprints

Have you undertaken a life cycle assessment or completed a product carbon footprint measurement for any of your products?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

If yes, please provide details:

Emissions reduction

If you have been measuring emissions for a number of years, has a decrease in emissions been noted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

What steps are you taking to reduce your emissions?

What steps are you planning to make in the future to reduce your emissions?

Have you considered ethical procurement?

Review your procurement - is it ethical? Are your suppliers ethical? Could you shop locally?

<https://www.fairtrade.net/>

Purchase fair trade products for the staff room or school kitchen or sell them at PTFA events

Maybe your school would be interested in becoming a Fairtrade school

<https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade-schools-awards/>

Further procurement guidance:

Step 1 - Identify what you need and the estimated spend and consider wider strategic purchasing opportunities (use lessons learnt from previous procurement, how can you make it greener this time?)

Step 2 - consider regulatory framework including your own procurement policy compliance and Related Party Transactions and conflict management

Step 3 - Pre market engagement (notice)

Step 4 - Consider use of Lots (keep audit trail of reasoning)

Step 5 - Draw up a clear specification, how can you make this as sustainable as possible? Are your unique needs addressed?

Step 6 - Select most appropriate route (open, framework, direct award, competitive flexible, light touch contract) and integrate social value into evaluation criteria

Step 7 - Consider supplier exclusions (mandatory/discretionary)

Step 8 - Manage your purchase