Little Green Notebook

Presented by: The New School Office of Student Housing and Residence Life, Facilities Management and the Provost's Office

©2009, 2012

THE NEW SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

The purpose of the Little Green Notebook is to give you some tips on how to begin thinking of, and beyond, the basics of leaving a lighter footprint on our planet as a college student in New York City. When reading this book, please keep in mind the changes in the environment may not only affect you but others, including those you cherish most, your loved ones. It's better now to take care of your home, our home, rather than to trash it.

This guide is divided up into sections of your everyday residence life as a continuing student or first time freshmen, from moving in to partying to cooking. It's loaded with links to the websites mentioned, but there are many more out there. Make sure to do your own homework too. This is not the only guide that exists, and it shouldn't be seen as your only resource. Having the mantra "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" in mind will ensure that you are able to reduce your impact no matter how unique the situation or context.

The New School is committed to reducing its own environmental impact, and we encourage all students to help us with that goal. The University is already signed up for the Mayor's Challenge for Universities and is a participant in the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. For more information about the university's commitment to reducing its environmental impacts and expanding sustainability in the educational experience: check out Sustainability at The New School. At the end of this guide is also a list of online resources and organizations if you're interested in learning even more.

You will see mention of words such as "**sustainability**," "**climate disruption**" and the "**greenhouse gas effect**." Let's break it down. Simply, sustainability, according to a United Nations definition, is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Translation: We need to conserve finite natural resources and not send the planet into an irreversible tailspin. This is where the "greenhouse gas effect" and "climate disruption" come into play: Human activity releases carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions that then heat up the planet, which in turn causes fluctuations in the climate. So consider the planet – and its climate, fresh water, fuel sources – that you will leave behind.

What Sustainability Looks Like at The New School

Moving In

Getting to New York City

Flying…
If you're flying to New York by yourself or with your family, see if the airline or travel site you used has an option to purchase carbon credits. When you purchase these, it means that you're "offsetting" the carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions released into the environment by your flight – which in turn contributes to the greenhouse gas effect, which causes climate disruption. Your money might be invested in various carbon-reducing projects such as renewable energy technology or planting trees (which absorb CO_2) around the world. Some private companies where you could purchase these as well include Carbonfund.org, TerraPass, and Native Energy.

Driving…
Same story goes for driving to New York City. Carbon Fund, TerraPass, and Native Energy all provide carbon credit purchasing for car trips. But here are a few simple things you can do to get better gas mileage – which will reduce the CO_2 emitted during your trip – by following these these Department of Energy Tips. Plus you will save money.

Walking…

. . . just kidding

Stuff for your room

Durability is part of what it means to be sustainable. The longer something lasts and is used the less energy and waste will be needed to make and transport new stuff. Reuse whatever you can from high school or your parent's house – clothing, small appliances, lamps, and kitchen stuff – and bring it with you. If you do have to buy some things, see if someone is selling it on Craigslist. If you do have to purchase new items, there are stores like Sustainable NYC in the East Village or Green Depot in SoHo that sell products that are environmentally friendly or made with recycled materials.

Reduce packaging in your move-in by using reusable storage crates and large canvas bags for your stuff rather than cardboard boxes.

Everyday In Your Room

Computers/Laptops

Put your computer/laptop into *power save* mode to cut back on electricity, or better yet, turn it off when you're not using it – it's a myth that shutting down your computer regularly harms it or requires more energy. Follow the power saving setting instructions for both PCs and Macs at the end of this guidebook.

Also, laptops use less energy than desktop computers, so keep that in mind if you're purchasing a new computer for the academic year. If you're buying a new one, make sure the laptop is Energy Star© Certified (meaning it uses less energy than standard models) and is EPEAT© registered – this ensures better efficiency, less waste and fewer harmful materials.

Clothes

Want to get rid of that sweater that your mom made you pack to use "just in case?" At some places, you can get paid for your clothing! Check out places like Beacon's Closet next to 2 W 13th Street where they will pay you or give you store credit. And it's a great place to shop for gently used, trendy and vintage items.

If you're feeling like a philanthropic, you can always bring your clothes to the Union Square Farmer's Market every Monday and Saturday from 8AM.

And here's a link to all Salvation Army thrift store locations in New York City.

Curtains

Curtains let you put your personal touch on the room plus they are great insulators. By drawing your curtains before you leave your room each day, you will keep the heat out during the summer and maintain a cozy temperature in the winter.

Printer Paper

The university computer lab printers default to double-sided printing and most offices on campus do too. This has saved approximately 1,200 cases of paper a year. Consider printing on campus for this reason. Plus The New School purchases paper with 100% recycled content. This means that the paper used is made from previously recycled paper = no raw materials, less energy. So if you do have your own printer, purchase paper with 100% recycled content.

Art materials and other great stuff

Parsons Green Supply Center on the 4th floor of 2 W 13th Street collects discarded art materials plus a random assortment of treasures ranging from furniture to old electronics to be reused for FREE by students.

Phantom loads

Do you often see a light on for your electronic device telling you that it's plugged in? That means that the cord is still drawing energy from the socket. In other words, you're still using electricity even when something is not turned on! When you're not using a cord to power up your devices, unplug it from the wall. It's an even easier task when you have a power strip, that way you can simply shut it off when you're not using any electronic devices or small appliances.

Ink Cartridges

Coming soon. All residence halls will collect toner cartridges to be properly recycled.

Batteries

All batteries are accepted for recycling on campus. Look for blue tubes in most building lobbies to dispose of them. Small electronics such as cell phones and MP3 players are accepted as well. It is illegal for NYC residents to discard rechargeable batteries or lead-acid batteries in the trash as they are hazardous.

Lighting

Make sure to purchase CFL light bulbs instead of incandescent ones for your lamps. They have come along way. Some dim, and there are many more light quality variations: Looks for bulbs under 3000 kelvin as they give off a “warmer” light. Not only will CFLs last longer, but also you can drape fabric or a transparent material over them safely without the fear of setting the fabric on fire.

Simple rule: If you don't need the light, don't turn it on, especially if it’s during the day. Put up a sign next to the light switch to remind yourself to shut off the light, so that you’re not wasting electricity! And here’s an image to keep in mind: Electricity is still partially generated from dirty coal that has destroyed pristine landscapes and contributes to asthma rates – not to mention the greenhouse gas effect.

E-Waste

Keep an eye out for e-waste (electronic equipment) recycling collection at the end of each semester in your residence hall. These items may contain toxic chemicals that are harmful to the environment if they end up in landfills. The New School’s recycling vendor meets the highest global standards for responsible recycling practices.

Plastic Bags / Paper Bags

Say “No Thanks” to plastic or paper bags at the register. Packing your own canvas bag or bag in a pouch is just so much better. And here’s why: Plastic bags are made from petroleum and remain toxic even after they break down; some end up discarded in our oceans. Both plastic and paper bags require energy to produce and transport. Why get involved in all of that? Plus a reusable bag is more durable and comfortable to carry.

Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning

Depending on your building setup, you might be able to control the amount of heat or cooling that enters your room. At The New School – like most institutions -- heating and cooling is generated with fossil fuels still, which contribute to...you guessed it...the greenhouse gas effect. It may take a little bit of time to figure out how to be comfortable and not waste energy in your room. And you may need to report any problems with your heat or AC to the building staff -- opening the window when the heat is blasting is not a solution.

If you have a radiator . . .

Most radiators should come with valves that control the amount of steam that comes into your room. Just like screws "Lefty Loosey (to let on the heat), Righty Tighty (to prevent heat from entering)." However, don't close the valve entirely otherwise steam builds up and water begins to condense and spill over. If you feel that the heat is too much, tell your RA. Leave a bowl of water next to the radiator so that it acts more like a humidifier, allowing for the air in your room to be moist instead of dry.

If you have an Air Conditioner . . .

Don't leave the door to the hallway wide open, unless you're interested in making sure that the hallway is cool instead of your suite/room. Instead of leaving the A/C on all the time, raise the temperature a little bit to use less energy (78 degrees is the recommended setting by Con Edison). If you're really responsible, you can also set a timer (depending on your A/C) to turn on when you come back from class.

If you have Central Air / Heating . . .

And if you don't control the heat or cooling in your room, tell your RA or building staff to adjust the temperature appropriately. It may also mean that you're device might not be working properly. Fill out a work order to have it looked at.

Fans

They use 70 to 90% less electricity than air conditioning. Consider buying a fan for your room to make you more comfortable. Sometimes a breeze is all you need.

Your Kitchen

Eating

The New School Dining Services has a deep commitment to serving healthy, sustainable food – much of it organic and from local farms. The coffee is fair trade; the eggs are cage-free; and all utensils, plates and take-out containers are compostable!

If you want order take-out, look for places that use compostable or biodegradable containers or ask if you can bring your own reusable container. It's astonishing the amount of waste that is generated from one take out order.

Or better yet, cook at home.

Cooking 101

Use the microwave over the stove whenever possible as it will use less energy. The need to preheat an oven is a myth – it just wastes energy. And you need much less water in the pot for pasta than you think. All you need to do is submerge it, not flood it. This will reduce the time it takes you bring the water to a boil not to mention reduce the use of fossil fuels needed to do so.

The Union Square Greenmarket

Try your hand at cooking fresh, local food. One of the most well known greenmarkets in the country is right next to campus with 1,000 varieties of fruits and vegetables from the region. Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 8AM - 6PM.

For those of you at William Street, there is a smaller greenmarket at Lower Water Street (across from the Seaport and just South of Fulton Street) every Saturday, 7AM – 1PM.

Corbin Hill Farm

Founded by a New School for Public Engagement faculty member, Corbin Hill Farm brings New York State farms (many of them organic) to you. Buy a "share" and pick-up a bundle of fruit and veggies each week right on campus.

Trader Joe's vs. Whole Foods

Both stores have an amazing variety of organic, local, and/or sustainable products. TJ's is typically cheaper than Whole Foods, which is known for its higher quality produce and products and also has an amazing buffet to grab a quick bite in their upstairs seating area.

Fridge

Check the temperature in your refrigerator's sensor (usually located right next to the indoor light). See about raising the temperature in your refrigerator to no more than 40 degrees. Also, try to avoid contemplating whether you're going to eat leftovers or a PB&J sandwich with the door wide open.

Sink

If you see that it's leaky, fill out a work order!
Be mindful of letting the water run when doing your dishes. You can first clean everything with a soap sponge or brush, then rinse.

Recycling

There's no such thing as "away": When you toss something into the trash it goes on to live a long life sitting in a stinky landfill or incinerated. Unless you recycle and compost. All paper, glass, metal and plastic waste you produce must be recycled and somewhat clean (a greasy pizza box cannot be recycled). It's NYC law – and it keeps these non-organic (and in some cases slightly toxic) items out of landfills. All residence hall floors have areas for you to sort your waste properly.

Composting

The New School composts! Now, now it's not the heaping, steaming pile of disgusting rotting junk that often comes to mind. Composting is a really easy and interesting way to reduce your waste stream by putting waste right back into the Earth. So what is compost you ask?

Well, let's first understand that anything that breaks down easily over time can be composted, anything biodegradable. This includes food scraps, paper napkins, coffee grinds, egg shells, dead flowers, the biodegradable utensils at all eateries on campus, etc. These organic materials are combined and over time they break down into compost – a nutrient-rich fertilizer that is sold back to local farmers.

There are a few ways to compost on campus:

Dine at any of these places on campus and look for the compost bin.

13th Street Residence Cafeteria
65 West 11th Street - Lang Café
25 East 13th Street - floors 2, 3, 4, and 5
55 West 13th Street - Café 55 and Library Café

Union Square Greenmarket

Bring your compost-ready scraps to Union Square on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Keep your container in a dark, cool place and place a plastic bag inside of a sealed container. Every time you have anything that's compostable, place it in the container and tie the bag up and seal the container – empty after a few days as it's prone to rot if not taken care of properly. This is an ideal situation for those of you who have already composted for a while and are willing to take compost out often.

Or

Try the freezer method. This is ideal for those of you who either don't accumulate a lot of compost and/or for those who are trying composting for the first time. Yes, it is safe for your fridge. No it will not smell … much. To minimize smell, it's important to take it out often (more than once every two weeks).

NOTE: It's important to remember that the Union Square Greenmarket ONLY accepts vegetable scrapings, coffee grounds, plant materials, and egg shells (NO MEAT OR DAIRY).

Your Bathroom

Shower

Mold! This issue alone might be your best reason for reducing your shower time. But there are two other reasons that are even more critical: Fresh water is finite, in fact, in some areas of the world it doesn't exist at all. Second, natural gas or oil heats that shower for you.

If you have a leaky showerhead, make sure you fill out a work order! And turn your water valve all the way off so that you minimize the amount of dripping. Then take your showers as quick as possible. As refreshing as it can be, it's important to keep your water usage low. If you want to be a real eco-hero, when washing your body, don't leave the water running. Use only enough to lather up the bar soap or body wash and then rinse after.

Sink

Just like with the shower, if you see that it's leaky, fill out a work order! Also don't let the water run, if you're not using it (you're stealing water from the fishes). For guys, if you're shaving, use the water stopper to fill the sink with hot water. And do not let the water just run when you are brushing your teeth.

Cleaning Up

Cleaning Products

Read labels! Know what is in the household products – including laundry detergent, dish soap, glass cleaner -- you buy as many can contain ingredients harmful to you and the environment. Here are some quick tips to making the best consumer decisions possible:

Seek out cleaning products with the Green Seal label.
Stay away from products with labels that include: "caution," "warning," irritants" or "corrosive."
Avoid products with chlorine bleach, ammonia, aerosols, nonylphenol ethoxylates, phosphates, petroleum-based ingredients or are labeled as a "disinfectant" because they can contain bleach.

You can rely on these manufacturers to live up to their "green" claims:
Seventh Generation
Ecover
Method
Trader Joe's brand "green" cleaners
Whole Food's brand "green" cleaners

Buy 100% recycled-content paper towels, tissues and toilet paper as you will be "closing the loop": The paper you place in the recycling bin will be reused for these products. Your purchase helps support the entire process. Although, by using sponges in lieu of paper towels you will be reducing the amount of waste you generate. Remember: Waste – including recyclable, compostable items – require energy in its transport.

The New School Facilities Management purchases toilet paper with 100% recycled content and paper towels with 70% recycled content for all bathrooms on campus. And the department also abides by its own Green Cleaning Program that ensures a safe, eco-friendly environment on campus. Disinfectants are used to keep everyone healthy – especially during flu season – but sparingly and only in key areas.

Your Floor / Residence Hall

Laundry

Don't ever wash your clothes unless you have enough for a full load. Most detergents are made for cold washes these days. That's because approximately 90% of the energy used for washing clothes is for heating the water. What a waste, right? With these detergents, clothes get just as clean in cold as they do in warm or hot.

Burn Calories, not Electricity! Take the Stairs

Most buildings have stairwell access. Not only are you going to be saving a bit of electricity by not requiring an elevator to haul you up to your floor, but if you're looking for a way to add in some fitness, taking the stairs to get back up to your room will burn a few calories.

Bike to class!

Biking is a great form of exercise and it cuts down on your travel time to get to class. There are numerous bike racks on campus located in front of most New School buildings. And all residence halls have secure bike storage.

And Citi Bike, a long-awaited bike share program, was launched in New York City in fall of 2012. Bikes will be available at hundreds of kiosks – many close to New School buildings -- for a daily or annual fee.

Recycle a Bicycle and Craigslist are great resources to purchase used bikes. Make sure to purchase a helmet and bike lock and follow street traffic regulations.

Your Campus

Recycle Right and Compost!

There are plenty of places to recycle in university buildings and all campus eateries offer compost collection. Take the time to find that recycling station instead of tossing your soda can in the trash bin. Read signs if you are unsure about where something goes. And know that these small efforts help the university become more sustainable.

Bottled Water

New York City has access to one of the world's most readily accessible and cleanest water sources in the world. The New School has banned the sale of bottled water on campus for this very reason and because these plastic bottles are toxic to the environment and wasteful. Purchasing your own water bottle will save you cash in the long run. There are plenty of water bottle filling stations around campus with chilled, filtered water.

BYOMug

Disposable coffee cups and lids make up a good part of the university's waste stream, where they will eventually end their lives in landfills. If you BYOMug to campus, your coffee and tea will not only stay warm, you get a discount from any eatery on campus to fill up (just $0.99!)

Take the Stairs! Not the Elevator

With the wait time for elevators in most campus buildings, the stairs save you time and are good for your heart!

Become an ECO-WARRIOR

There are so many ways to get involved on campus. Environmental student groups, ReNew School and Urban Forestry Club, and a new Bike Task Force meet often to plan projects and awareness initiatives on campus. Talk to your RA about organizing a fun program in your residence hall to promote eco-awareness. Sign The New School Sustainability Pledge to share what steps you will take to help make the university a more sustainable institution.

And keep an eye out for public programs and events on campus that address sustainability. Email sustainability@newschool.edu with any ideas you have or questions about how to get involved.

Also, call people out! If you see someone throw away a plastic bottle in the trash; hand it back to them and inform them that they put in the wrong place. Remind your suitemates to shut off lights and electronics when they leave the room. Introduce someone to the Little Green Handbook.

Going out

Take the Subway, not a Taxi

The New School is perfectly situated on top of one of NYC's major mass transit hubs. There are 15 subway lines and 6 bus routes around the Greenwich Village campus. It's far more affordable and can be faster than a cab.

Taxi rates just went up in September 2012 so that about every 4 blocks you are paying $0.50 – to get in the cab is $2.50 plus there are surcharges for peak times, for night…ugh. Aside from saving money, mass transit shrinks your carbon footprint as tailpipe emissions from cars contribute to the greenhouse gas effect and also air pollution.

Moving Out

You've just finished the year and you want to give yourself a big pat on the back. But then you realize that Housing gives you 24 hours to move out after your last final / project is completed. It's not exactly a long time to make sure your room is completely vacated, especially if you're sharing a suite with four or more people. The temptation is to just toss it down the chute and head off into the sunset.

But wait! There are some simple ways to make sure your stuff goes on to another life. Speak with your RA about what recycling opportunities are right there in your building. Clothing, cleaning supplies, non-perishable food, e-waste and books are typically collected in all residence halls. Drop off other items at Parsons Green Supply Center or sell them on Craigslist. Then dig out those large canvas bags and crates you used to move in and utilize them to move out.

There is no Planet B.

Take care of our one and only home, Earth

New York City Organizations and Online Resources

Environmental Non-Profit Organizations / Job / Volunteer Opportunities

The Lower East Side Ecology Center
Sustainable South Bronx
Envirolution
GreenMaps
Food Not Bombs (NY Chapter)
The Natural Resources Defense Council
Sierra Club
Idealist.org
The Salvation Army

Cool Websites / Blogs

TreeHugger
GreenBiz
DotEarth ("The New York Times")
Inhabitat
EcoGeek

If you have ideas about additional information, tips and resources that can be added to The New School Little Green Notebook please e-mail Alisa Bayes at BayesA@newschool.edu.

Be part of the solution!

THE NEW SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

ENERGY SETTINGS FOR PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Please be mindful of your daily computer use and power down, as computer use accounts for a large proportion of energy use on campus. Changing computer settings can greatly reduce the amount of electricity and money needed to operate them. Consider the following facts:

Windows

Idle states consume between 32.21 and 91 watts.
Sleep modes consume between 2.64 and 3.18 watts.
Standby modes consume between 1.23 and 0.93 watts.

Macintosh

Idle state (with display off) consumes about 47 watts.
Idle state (with display on) consumes about 150 watts.
Sleep mode consumes about 1.45 watts,

HOW TO SET YOUR COMPUTER

Windows XP

Step 1: To configure power management on Windows XP, click on **Control Panel**.

Step 2: Control Panel has two views. In **Theme View,** double-click on **Performance and Maintenance** and then on **Power Options**. In **Classic View**, double-click on **Power Options**.

Step 3: The **Power Options Properties** dialog box should now be displayed, with the **Power Schemes** tab selected. Here time-outs can be set for your monitor, system standby, and hibernate. Laptop and notebook computer users can specify an alternative power scheme to take effect when the PC is running on battery power, either standby or hibernate.

If you are unable to select a hibernate time-out, you may need to enable the hibernate feature: Select the **Hibernate** tab in **Power Options Properties**, check **Enable Hibernation,** and click **Apply**, then **OK**. (Desktop users should set **Hibernate** to **Never**.)

Step 4: Set monitors to enter sleep mode after five to 30 minutes of inactivity; 10 minutes is recommended. The lower the setting, the more energy is saved. The **Turn Off Hard Disks** setting does not save much power and can be ignored. Windows 7 users will find that this process has now been made easier. To adjust your settings in this operating system, go to **Control Panel**, then **Hardware and Sound**, and open **Power Options**. Consider using the **Balanced** option, which balances performance with energy consumption, or **Power Saver,** if you are a true sustainability champion. All settings can be adjusted under **Edit Plan Settings**.

Macintosh

Step 1: Click on the apple symbol (Apple Menu) in the upper left corner of your screen.
Step 2: Go to **System Preferences**.
Step 3: Click **Show All** (if necessary).
Step 4: Select **Energy Saver** from the **Hardware** row.

Step 5: Set **Put the Computer to Sleep When it is Inactive** for 30 minutes or less, using the slider.

Step 6: Set **Put the Display to Sleep When the Computer is Inactive** for five to ten minutes, using the slider.

For more information, visit www.energystar.gov. For questions related to these Power Down procedures, contact sustainability@newschool.edu.