



Back-to-School Guide to PVC-Free School Supplies



This year when you send your kids off to school, send them off in style and with safer PVC-free school supplies!



The Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) has created the **Back-to-School Guide to PVC-Free School Supplies** to empower you to make smarter, healthier shopping choices for your kids, family, and environment.

The guide lists the most common back-to-school supplies made out of polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl) plastic and safer PVC-free alternatives.

Why Shop for PVC-Free School Supplies?

Children's school supplies, such as lunchboxes, backpacks and binders, are often made out of PVC – a plastic that is dangerous to our health and the environment. The production of PVC involves the use of cancer-causing chemicals that contaminate the air and water of surrounding communities. When PVC is manufactured or burned, numerous dioxins are formed and released, a highly toxic group of chemicals that can cause cancer, harm the immune and reproductive systems. Our bodies are contaminated with these and other chemicals released during the PVC lifecycle. This may pose irreversible life-long health threats.

PVC is unique from most plastics because it contains toxic additives used to soften or stabilize it. These harmful chemicals include phthalates, lead, cadmium, and/or organotins, which may be toxic to your child's health. They can leach out or evaporate into the air over time posing unnecessary dangers to children. **Children are at risk from even small exposures to these toxic chemicals. That's why it's especially important to purchase PVC-free school supplies.**



How to Identify PVC, the Poison Plastic

PVC products are often labeled with the words "vinyl" on the packaging, such as vinyl 3-ring binders. PVC packaging can be identified by looking for the number "3" inside or the letters "V" or "PVC" underneath the universal recycling symbol, indicating the product is made out of PVC. Just remember – bad news comes in threes, don't buy PVC.





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Product	Manufacturer or Retailer of PVC-Free School Supplies	Product Name and/or Alternative Materials	More Information
Aprons and Smocks	Bumkins	Waterproof Art Smock	www.bumkins.com
	Ecowise	Waterproof Super Art Smock	www.ecowise.com
Backpacks	CBH Studio	E_Max Laptop Back, Kiwi Bird Backpack, and Polar Bear Backpack	www.cbhstudio.com
	Fleurville	Kid's Messenger, People Pak	www.fleurville.com
	High Sierra	Denier Polymer Fabric	www.highsierra.com
	Jansport	PU	www.jansport.com
	Patagonia	Mesh, Nylon, PU	www.patagonia.com
	Progressive Kid	Kids Backpack/Messenger Bag (various designs), People Pak, Re-Run Messenger (various designs)	www.progressivekid.com
	Rawganique	Hemp	www.rawganique.com
	Seal Line Gear	Urban Backpack, Shoulder Bag and Tote Bag: PVC-Free Boundary Backpack (other bags have PVC). PU-coated polyester and scrim-reinforced urethane	www.seallinegear.com
	Targus	Grove Convertible Messenger/Backpack, Grove Messenger, Grove Sling, Grove Topload	www.targus.com
	Timbuk2	Hemp, nylon, PET, TPU waterproof liner	www.timbuk2.com
	Vulcana	Hemp and/or recycled rubber	www.vulcanabags.com
Binders	Avery	Aluminum Binders, Round Ring Poly Binder, Translucent Active Reference Binder (Many Avery binders are PVC)	www.avery.com
	Fleurville	Re-Run Beta Binder	www.fleurville.com
	The Green Office	Aurora Products Elements Eco-Friendly Round Ring Binder, Recycled PRESSTEX Round Ring Binders, Rebinder Round Ring Binders and Replacement Covers, and others	www.thegreenoffice.com
	The Sustainable Group	Various sizes. Recycled corrugated cardboard	www.sustainablegroup.net
Cell Phones	Nokia	All new Nokia products are PVC-free	www.nokia.com
	Sony Ericsson	All new Sony Ericsson products are PVC-free	www.sonyericsson.com
Clothing	H&M	All H&M products are PVC-free.	www.hm.com
Notebooks	Mirage Paper Company	Ecojot Greenlined Journal Notebook. 100% recycled, chlorine-free paper; paperboard cover; vegetable-based inks	www.ecojot.com
	Office Depot	Foray. Paperboard with wire binding	www.officedepot.com
Modeling Clays	Crayola	Air-dry clay	www.crayola.com
	Play-Doh	Flour-based	www.hasbro.com



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Paperclips (color)	The Green Office	Plastic Clips	www.thegreenoffice.com
Lunch Boxes and Bags	California Innovations	Hi-Top Munchsak, Lunch Pack, Pattern Tote, Power Pack Plus, Secret Bucket, Upright HardBody Lunch Box	www.californiainnovations.com
	Crocodile Creek	Lead-free	www.crocodilecreek.com
	Ecobags	Canvas, organic canvas or recycled canvas with Velcro close	www.ecobags.com
	Fleurville	Lunch Buddy, Lunch Pack	www.fleurville.com
	Land's End	ClassMate, Deluxe Lunch Sack, HotStuff, Lunch Sack, Therma Cool	www.landsend.com
	Mimi the Sardine "The Lunch Bug"	Acrylic, cotton	www.mimithesardine.com
	Reusablebags.com	Lunchbugs Cloth Lunch Bags, CoolTotes Insulated Bags, EarthPak Bahs, SIGG Kids Bags, Lunch Pak, Laptop Lunch Kit, Byo Lunchbag	www.reusablebags.com
	The Soft Landing	Laptop Lunch Bento Box Sets	www.thesoftlanding.com
	Tin Box Company	Tin	www.tinboxco.com
Raincoats	H&M	EVA, nylon, PE, polyester, PP, PU	www.hm.com
	Land's End	Kid's Solid Rain slicker, Men's / Women's Microfiber Rain Jacket, Women's Aquacheck Jacket. Microfiber, nylon	www.landsend.com
	I Play Baby Wear	Children's Raincoats. Waterproof fabric	www.iplaybabywear.com
	L.L. Bean	Waterproof TEK2.5 nylon	www.llbean.com
	REI	Cascade Rain Jacket – Kids', Cascade Rain Jacket – Toddlers'	www.rei.com
Report Covers	The Green Office	Pressboard Report Cover With Reinforced Top Hinges, Pressboard Report Covers With Tyvek Reinforced Hinges	www.thegreenoffice.com
Sheet Protectors	The Green Office	Easy Load Top Loading Recycled Polypropylene Sheet Protectors	www.thegreenoffice.com
Sneakers	Adidas	Sandals: EVA, rubber outsole; Sneakers: molded EVA insole and midsole	www.adidas.com
	Asics	All Asics products are PVC-free. Bamboo, canvas, EVA, leather, rubber, etc.	www.asicsamerica.com
	Birkenstocks	Uppers: birko-Flor material (acrylic and PA), leather, wool; Footbed: cork, leather, jute; Soles: EVA, PU	www.birkenstocks.com
	Croc	"CrosLite" resins (EVA), some with rubber sole. Note – some Croc knockoffs, like the Kamik Doodle, are made out of PVC	www.crocs.com
	Ecolution	Hemp, plant-based dyes, recycled tires.	www.ecolution.com
	Nike	Most Nike products are PVC-free	www.nike.com
	Puma	Uppers: canvas, mesh, PU, suede; Outsole: EVA, rubber	www.puma.com



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Other Plastics to Avoid

PVC isn't the only problematic plastic out there. We also recommend avoiding these to prevent harm.

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS)

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene is manufactured with styrene (see below under polystyrene). It's also manufactured with acrylonitrile and butadiene, both classified as probable human carcinogens by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Polycarbonate (PC)

Polycarbonate is manufactured with a chemical called bisphenol A (BPA) that can leach out of PC plastics. Scientific panels have raised concern that exposure to BPA *in utero* may cause developmental effects and infants and children exposed to BPA may have increased risk of neurological and behavioral effects.

Polystyrene (PS)

Polystyrene is manufactured with styrene, a chemical that can damage the nervous system and is classified as a possible human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Companies – Want to Be in the Guide?

We may publish an updated version of this guide over time, so please send us information about your company's products if you'd like to be listed in future additions. To be considered, please e-mail mike@chej.org with the subject "PVC-free school supplies".



Learn More & Get Involved!

We hope you find these tips useful as you go shopping for school supplies. Visit our website at <http://www.besafenet.com/pvc> to sign up for our PVC Action Network e-mail list and learn more ways you can create and sustain a healthy environment for your family!



About the Center for Health, Environment and Justice

CHEJ mentors a movement building healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm caused by chemical and toxic threats. We accomplish our work through programs focusing on different types of environmental health threats. CHEJ also works with communities to empower groups by providing the tools, direction, and encouragement they need to advocate for human health, to prevent harm and to work towards environmental integrity. Following her successful effort to prevent further harm for families living in contaminated Love Canal, Lois Gibbs founded CHEJ in 1981 to continue the journey. To date, CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide.



Center for Health,
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