

## A/B/C. From school grounds ... To school gardens

### School grounds: an empty space?

**School grounds** are a space used by different people for different purposes: car park; playpark; sport and recreation areas; wild spaces; storage etc. Decisions on how to use the grounds are made on the basis of size and location of the school; for example, some schools may deploy a larger area to play if the school is located in the centre of a city, or to a car park, if the school is more peripheral.

**1. Uses and Purposes of school grounds.** We want to find out how the grounds are currently used and by whom; how much space there is for growing food in the school grounds; and what might be the best location for a food garden.

**Activity 1a:** in class, the teacher can lead a **group discussion** with the children about school grounds. A simple questionnaire or a drawing may be used to first find out from children how they like their school grounds; their preferred activities and what they would like to change, keep or what features they would like to add more of.

**Activity 1b:** discussion about school grounds may be narrowed around a discussion about **'growing spaces'**: are there any existing gardens already? What are their sizes? What can they be used for?

**2. Survey:** children may continue their research by **'designing and doing a survey'**.

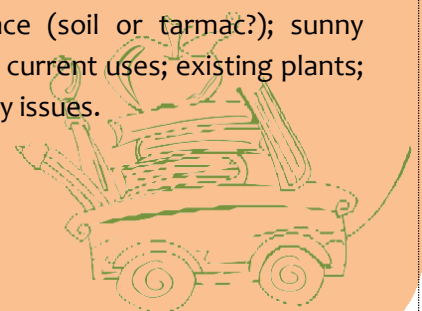
**Activity 2a:** In groups, children can devise a set of questions they would like to answer by going out and observing the grounds. Relevant items to look for may be: ground surface (soil or tarmac?); sunny spots vs. shaded areas; current uses; existing plants; accessibility and security issues.



*Previous step: Weeding and Harvesting*

**By the end of this month, pupils will have:**

1. Discussed the different uses and purposes of the school grounds.
2. Surveyed and mapped the school grounds;
3. Cleared the grounds of existing weeds;
4. Harvested and preserved/distributed existing produce;
5. Measured spaces for growing;
6. Made and assessed design plans for the garden.



3. **Clear the grounds.** Outside, children can look more closely at a potential space for growth. What is there on the ground? A collection of weeds, rubbish, stones may follow to support a discussion about what may be used in the garden and what we need to discard.

**Activity 3a:** children can help the teacher **write a request/recommendation** to the city council for the space to be cleared in order to start a food growing garden.

4. **Harvesting and preserving.** If the school has a garden already, children can harvest any remaining produce. Veggies, berries or flowers can be taken back home or used in the school for various purposes: observation and analysis; tasting, cooking or preserving (see handout 'From Harvesting to Cooking').

**Activity 4a:** harvest any existing produce from the garden and/or pick any wild produce growing near the school and in the school grounds (e.g. Rowan berries; bramble; herbs etc.).

5. **Mapping and Measuring.** It is important to find out where a garden may be located and the space that is needed.

**Activity 5a: Outside,** children can map and measure the different areas of the school grounds: i. Children can map where people play or run in order to decide on the best space to use for food growing; ii. Measure how much space is occupied by plants; herbs and flowers; how much sun any area can get; how far the growing space might be from the nearest door or water tap.

**Activity 5b: in class,** children can review their drawings and measurements. A discussion can follow: How much space is currently used for playing or exercising? How much space is unused? How much space is occupied by plants of different sizes?



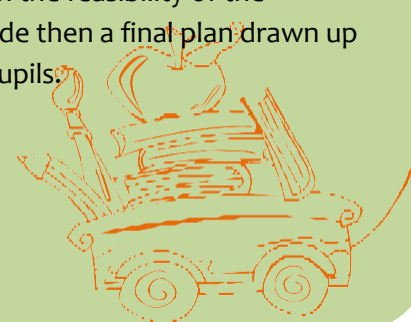
6. **Design your garden.** After considering questions about space and what children would like to see growing, in class, the teacher can guide children to design their garden.

**Activity 6a.** Individually and then in groups, children can draw their preferred garden, including all relevant features (paths; water access; shelter; fencing; signage; types of plants).

**Activity 6b.** In groups, they can discuss their plans and modify them if they wish.

**Activity 6c.** All plans should be submitted to the garden coordinator in the school for further discussion with the city council.

**Activity 6d.** The garden coordinator will visit the class and make some considerations about the different plans. In class, a discussion should follow on the feasibility of the suggestions made then a final plan drawn up and shown to pupils.



## From school grounds ... To school gardens Across the Curriculum for Excellence:

### Health and Wellbeing

- engages children and young people and takes account of their views and experiences, particularly where decisions are to be made that may impact on **life choices**
- uses a variety of approaches including **active, cooperative and peer learning** and effective use of technology
- encourages and capitalises on the potential to experience learning and new challenges in the **outdoor environment**
- leads to a lasting commitment in children and young people to follow a **healthy lifestyle** by participation in experiences which are **varied, relevant, realistic, and enjoyable**
- harnesses the experience and expertise of **different professions** to make specialist contributions, including developing **enterprise and employability skills**.

### Numeracy and Mathematics

- develop a secure understanding of the concepts, principles and processes of mathematics and apply these in different contexts, including the world of work
- engage with more abstract mathematical concepts and develop important new kinds of thinking
- develop essential numeracy skills which will allow me to participate fully in society
- interpret numerical information appropriately and use it to draw conclusions, assess risk, and make reasoned evaluations and informed decisions
- apply skills and understanding creatively and logically to solve problems, within a variety of contexts
- make creative use of technologies to enhance the development of skills and concepts

### Sciences

- develop **curiosity** and understanding of the environment and **my place in the living, material and physical world**
- develop the skills of **scientific inquiry** and investigation using **practical techniques**
- develop skills in the **accurate use of scientific language**, formulae and equations
- recognise the impact the sciences make on **my life**, the lives of others, the environment and on society
- develop an understanding of the **Earth's resources** and the need for responsible use of them
- express opinions and **make decisions** on social, moral, ethical, economic and environmental issues based upon sound understanding