

A/B/C. From School Grounds...to School Gardens



Previous Step: Weeding and Harvesting

BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, PUPILS WILL HAVE:

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



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 2: 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.



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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 3: 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 4: 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.

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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