

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 531

Development and Maintenance of School Food Gardens

The Limestone District School Board encourages the establishment of school food gardens on school property. This procedure has been developed to ensure that the gardens are well planned and maintained to ensure their safety and long-term sustainability.

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 Schools will be responsible for initiating the *LDSB School Initiated Outdoor Project Proposal* for a school garden, and for its construction, ongoing programming and maintenance of the garden.
- 1.2 The School Board will review each *LDSB School Initiated Outdoor Project Proposal* in a timely manner.
- 1.3 All volunteers should have completed current 'Criminal Record Check and Police Check'

2.0 Planning

- 2.1 2.1 The first step in establishing a successful school garden is to designate a garden team.
- 2.2 It is recommended that a garden team consists of, but is not limited to, two teachers, two parent volunteers, and one or two interested students from each participating class.
- 2.3 The garden team will be responsible for organizing, facilitating and implementing garden activities.

3.0 Location (Site)

School gardens are encouraged to be built on the front lawns of schools to foster community interaction. Consider the following when deciding where to build the school garden:

- 3.1.1 Will it interfere with emergency exit strategies or emergency vehicle pathways?
- 3.1.2 Will it restrict accessibility to and from entrances and exits?
- 3.1.3 Will it interfere with snow removal processes?
- 3.1.4 Will it interfere with landscaping and upkeep processes?
- 3.1.5 Will it receive appropriate sunlight and rainfall?
- 3.1.6 Do the plants selected require similar amounts of rainfall and sun and/or

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shade?

3.1.7 Is the garden going to be close enough to a water source?

3.1.8 Is the location on or near areas where children are allowed to frequent at recess?

3.1.9 Where will the garden tools be stored in respect to the garden?

4.0 Garden Design

4.1 It is recommended that raised beds be used in the construction of Limestone District School Board school food gardens since they separate the garden soil from the existing soil, so raised beds ensure that plant roots are not exposed to potential contaminants in the soil.

4.2 In ground gardens will also be approved following soil testing.

5.0 Implementation

5.1 Implementation will include funding the garden, acquiring the supplies, seeds and seedlings needed, and construction.

5.2 All purchasing must follow the LDSB Purchasing Procedures (AP 515).

6.0 General Maintenance

6.1 It is recommended that activities be scheduled to foster to a coordinated effort between classes, staff and volunteers.

6.2 Preparing the garden for winter can help keep the soil viable and healthy for the next season.

7.0 Summer Maintenance

7.1 Maintenance and harvesting is still required during the summer months when some of the garden team may be away from the site.

7.2 A volunteer-based effort must be coordinated to help maintain the garden during times when school is not in session.

7.3 Seek volunteers from local organizations, independent volunteers from the community, parents, students and other community outreach organizations.

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- 7.4 Community organizations that have previously participated in summer garden maintenance are often a good resource.
 - 7.5 Encourage students and families to participate over the summer.
 - 7.6 Develop a standard time slot(s) so students and volunteers can attend on the same day(s) each week. This will establish an effective use of resources and coordinated effort for maximum participation.
 - 7.7 Create a maintenance schedule that outlines all necessary tasks for volunteers to complete on specific days of the week.
- 8.0 Composting
- 8.1 Each garden will need a composting bin, ideally close to a watering source, not directly uphill from the garden (if there is a slope), and preferably in the shade.
 - 8.2 The composter can be a purchased bin or can be built as long as it has a sealed lid to keep pests out.
- 9.0 Programming
- 9.1 School gardens fit into the curriculum in a variety of ways and can be a platform for teaching character development such as cooperation, community and responsibility as well as growing and connecting with healthy food.
 - 9.2 Those considering a school garden are encouraged to plan programming through curriculum documents as they plan their garden to maximize the value of the garden to the school.
- 10.0 Food Handling
- 10.1 Food to be eaten from the garden must be handled in ways that ensure its safe consumption.
 - 10.2 Generally this includes proper hand hygiene and washing any produce before it is prepared or consumed, and ensuring the food is fresh and shows no signs of decay.
 - 10.3 Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Public Health has recommendations and also offers a Safe Food Handling course.
 - 10.4 It is not a requirement that someone involved with the garden attend this course, but the LDSB does recommend it.

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Related Legal Reference, Policies, Guidelines and Procedures:

Administrative Procedure 112, Environmental Education

Administrative Procedure 515, Purchasing Procedures

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