



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

1. Responsibility

1.1. Schools will be responsible for reviewing and understanding the process for initiating a school garden project, and for construction, ongoing programming and maintenance of the garden year-round as outlined in A Design Guide for Limestone District School Board Outdoor Play and Learning Environments (p.8)

1.2. Schools interested in initiating a school garden will identify key staff and volunteers who will lead and take responsibility for the ongoing care and maintenance of the school garden as outlined in A Design Guide for Limestone District School Board outdoor Play and learning Environments.

Schools will submit an Outdoor Project Initiation Request and then follow the subsequent Outdoor Project Stages as outlined in A Design Guide for Limestone District School Board Outdoor Play and Learning Environments, Appendix H

1.3. Facilities Manager and / or designate will review each submitted Outdoor Project Stage form in the process in a timely manner and provide feedback.

1.4. The school is responsible for an annual review and plan update regarding the garden programming, maintenance, and school team.

1.5. All volunteers should have completed current 'Criminal Record Check and Police

2. Planning

2.1. The first step in establishing a successful school garden is to identify a garden team.



It is recommended that a garden team consists of students, staff, caretaking staff, families, caregivers, administration, and other interested community members.

2.2. The garden team will be responsible for organizing, facilitating and implementing garden activities.

3. Location (Site)

School gardens are encouraged to be built in a visible location to foster community interaction. It is more important to consider the following when deciding where to build the school garden:

- Will it interfere with emergency exit strategies or emergency vehicle pathways?
- Will it restrict accessibility to and from entrances and exits?
- Will it interfere with snow removal processes?
- Will it interfere with landscaping and upkeep processes?
- Will it receive appropriate sunlight and rainfall?
- Do the plants selected require similar amounts of rainfall and sun and/or shade?
- Is the garden going to be close enough to a water source?
- Is the location on or near areas where children are allowed to frequent at recess?
- Where will the garden tools be stored in respect to the garden?
- Accessibility for all individuals.



4. 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. Raised beds ensure that plant roots are not exposed to potential contaminants in the soil.
- 4.2. The garden design needs to be accessible for all individuals as outlined in A Design Guide for Limestone District School Board Outdoor Play and Learning Environments.
- 4.3. In-ground food gardens are no longer approved.

5. Implementation

- 5.1. Implementation will include funding the garden, acquiring the supplies, seeds and seedlings needed, and construction. All construction will follow the Outdoor Project Stages Process as outlined in the Design Guide.
- 5.2. All purchasing must follow the LDSB Purchasing Procedures (AP 515).

6. General Maintenance

- 6.1. It is recommended that activities be scheduled to foster 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. 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 and communicated to the school



administration and the school caretaker for maintenance of the garden during times when school is not in session.

- 7.3. Seek volunteers from local organizations, independent volunteers from the community, parents/ guardians, students and other community outreach organizations
- 7.4. Community organizations can be a helpful resource in summer garden maintenance.
- 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, including access to water
- 7.8. Some schools may not wish to continue the gardening season through the summer. Options exist for reduced garden summer maintenance; ie. Cover crops.

8. Composting

- 8.1. It is recommended that each garden have 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. Schools will consult with the Operational Supervisor when considering a composter.

9. 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. 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.

Administration Procedure 531

Development and Maintenance of School Food Gardens



Related Legal Reference, Policies, Guidelines and Procedures:

Administrative Procedure 112, Environmental Education

Administrative Procedure 515, Purchasing Procedures

Administrative Procedure 117, School Fundraising

Administrative Procedure 496, Volunteers

*Landscape and Student Development: A Design Guide for Limestone District School Board
Outdoor Play and Learning Environments*