

SCHOOL FOOD GARDEN STATEMENT

Background

The District recognizes the important role school food gardens can play in students' learning. Garden-based learning can enhance academic achievement through integration of hands-on experiences into diverse subjects such as math, science, nutrition and environmental education. Garden-based learning also allows students to discover and experience fresh, healthy food and to make healthy food choices.

The use of school food gardens is consistent with the District's commitment to sustainability and healthy food environments. School food gardens allow for the incorporation of fresh, local fruit and vegetables into the cafeteria and school meal program. A school food garden can also play a role in increasing the food security of the students, families and the community by providing space for the production of food through collaborative community and school gardens.

The District therefore encourages and supports the development of school food gardens, recognizing the many benefits to developing and maintaining school food gardens including opportunities for learning, for increasing access to healthy food, for promoting enhanced social and emotional development and for contributing to the greening of school grounds and the building of green spaces for neighbourhoods in Vancouver.

District goals, relative to garden projects, are to help the school community carry out a successful and sustainable project that meets the above stated outcomes while adhering to District codes and standards. The Food Gardens Process document (Appendix) outlines the process of planning, designing, implementing, maintaining and sustaining school and daycare food gardens located on District property to ensure their success over the long term.

Procedures

1. Guiding Principles for School Gardens

The following guidelines are to help the school community plan and implement a successful, sustainable project, which meets codes and District standards.

- 1.1. To embrace the spirit of caring, social responsibility, inclusiveness, co-operation, team-work, consensus and collaborative processes in the development of the garden space.
- 1.2. To ensure the involvement of children (daycare) and students (schools) throughout the planning, design, construction and maintenance of the garden.
- 1.3. To give students the opportunity to plant, harvest, prepare, and eat food they have grown.
- 1.4. To integrate eating experiences, food gardens, food preparation and nutritional education into the school curriculum for all grades. To ensure that the garden space is used to deliver and is connected to curriculum studies.

- 1.5. To encourage the use of environmental 'best practices' for organic gardening (pesticide and herbicide free, no treated lumber), water use, soil building, harvesting and seed saving.
- 1.6. To support students in the growing of culturally appropriate foods at their schools as well as to explore the cultural food and agriculture traditions represented by the diverse populations of Vancouver.
- 1.7. To promote environmental stewardship by involving students and local community in the ongoing maintenance of the garden space, weeding, watering, and garbage removal and compost care.
- 1.8. To respect the rights and responsibilities of District Grounds crews as laid out by their collective bargaining agreements.
- 1.9. To ensure approvals and implementation take place within a reasonable timeframe.
- 1.10. To ensure that no poisonous plants shall be used in the school garden, and to encourage the use of heirloom fruit and vegetable varieties where possible.
- 1.11. To ensure that the garden project is sustainable through ongoing maintenance throughout the school year and is continued through subsequent years

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Health Act
School Regulation 265/89
Canada Food Guide for Healthy Choices Guidelines
Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools
Daily Physical Activity Kindergarten to Grade 12

Adopted: February 2010
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