

VEGIE GARDEN

POLICY

1. Why a vegetable garden?

- 1.1 As with all other aspects of our school life, our vegetable garden is an important part of our life as an educational community
- 1.2 It offers an informal and enjoyable way for staff, parents and students to work together in a common cause
- 1.3 The garden also provides our students with another avenue of learning – the care of it teaches patience and develops an understanding and respect for the processes of nature and its seasons
- 1.4 It also provides an opportunity for many of our students to engage in an activity which may not be possible at home

2. How is our garden managed?

- 2.1 Consistent with our commitment to community and shared responsibility, the management of the garden rests with parents who have a basic knowledge of gardening practice
- 2.2 Of necessity this is a team effort as each parent will bring to the garden their own particular set of knowledge, skills and preferences – hence the importance of working together creatively, sensitively and with an opportunity for all who wish to be involved to be so
- 2.3 The primary purpose in management is to ensure that the knowledge and skills of our parents are passed on to our students in ways which are easily grasped and implemented
- 2.4 The longer term purpose of management is to build the confidence of students in caring for the garden themselves with the parental role becoming, in due course, one of encouragement and guidance as required
- 2.5 Produce from the garden to be used in classroom cooking or sold as a fundraiser. Money raised to be put back into the veggie patch.

3. How will parental teamwork be developed?

- 3.1 Parents who wish to participate in the co-operative management of the garden will record their interest and commitment to the school office. This will provide an easy reference for the office to connect with participating parents quickly if there are garden needs which need to be attended to sooner than later
- 3.2 Parents are encouraged to be familiar with all other participating parents as a way of establishing particular interests and the sharing of time, effort and skills
- 3.3 Teamwork will proceed on the basis of ongoing conversation and consultation between parents. Ideally, parents will agree on shared responsibilities to save any one parent having to carry the burden of the overall oversight of the garden.
- 3.4 The Principal will retain a list of participating parents and will, from time to time, convene a meeting with at least a week's notice being given to parents. This will provide a forum to review current practice, ways in which teamwork may be further improved and developed and consider the addition of any resources needed which may have budgetary implications.

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4. How will our students be involved?

- 4.1 Given the purposes identified in Section #1 above, staff will liaise with the parents' team to establish the best ways of engaging students in the care of the garden
- 4.2 During this period of developing a process for engaging students in the care of the garden, the Principal will identify effective ways of connecting staff and parents to ensure that this process is clear and readily implemented
- 4.3 Time may be set aside during class time for garden care in collaboration with the parents' team and with the approval of the Principal

5 How will the experience of community be preserved and strengthened?

- 5.1 As with all community endeavours, there will be "rough edge" moments when attention will need to be given to smoothing these out
- 5.2 Participating parents will be able to express their specific concerns to the Principal provided these are communicated in helpful and practical ways. Comments based solely on blaming or criticizing other parents are unacceptable simply because these undermine the community experience
- 5.3 In order to reduce these difficult moments and to resolve them speedily and effectively, the Principal will identify a strategy suited to each such moment with concerns and complaints (if these surface) in a non-judgmental and constructive manner
- 5.4 The Principal will determine the best ways forward with the intention being to preserve and nurture the ongoing teamwork among staff, parents and students

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in May 2015

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