

Using food growing to support community engagement

Think about the school community as a whole and the links you already have and could use to expand community relationships. The school garden or growing space can be the catalyst for activity to bring people together

Set up a community/family gardening club

- Advertise your intention to develop a gardening club with your school families and include extended family members in the invite to attend and support the club. Grandparents can sometimes be a good source of knowledge and experience and have some time to donate to the school garden.

Encourage other groups to use your growing space

- Local early years, children's centres or nurseries that have limited space can be encouraged to have a weekly slot in the school garden for family engagement.

Local business engagement

- Approach local businesses for support with your food growing programme. Corporate giving days can involve donations of practical help in developing your growing spaces to donations of equipment and tools.

Develop a calendar of events at the beginning of the year

- Consider a calendar of events that can be open to your local community based on the seasons and growing events, start early in the year with a seed swap. Easter holiday periods are useful for running sow and grow events as the soil warms up and is ready for planting. Plan a plant swap or sale for the summer mid-term break where local people can purchase/swap plants grown from seed or cuttings and divisions, this will increase everybody's plant stock and raise funds and resources for your garden.

Eating what you grow events

- Plan your food growing to include ingredients for a baking event towards the end of the summer term or early autumn term. Approach the local college or secondary school and ask them to bake for your cake sale using your harvested produce.
- Include a school garden stall at your community Summer Fete where plants and produce can be sold.
- For a more ambitious approach join with other neighbouring schools and organise a modest community lunch, organise volunteers to do some cooking or make use of a community centre kitchen if you have one locally.
- Link with your local church group for a harvest celebration in the autumn term. Invite your local businesses to support your food growing celebrations.

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Whole school approach

- Look to your governing body to assess whether they have links, contacts, ideas and avenues of support outside school.
- Explore the possibility of accessing a community allotment for your school families if space is short. Check your local authority website for information on allotments and local food networks/food partnerships.
- Think about communication with your local community and how to reach them through advertising events and opportunities to get involved. Consider where you will place flyers and messages to reach a wide audience.

Collaboration with other food growing schools

- Explore possibilities of sharing a food growing space/community garden
- Run joint events and share calendars for food growing events
- Consider linking with feeder schools for gardening clubs, for example yr6 pupils attending secondary school site for a gardening/food growing club
- Use of work experience placements for KS4-5 pupils with primary schools
- Gardening exchange days, when a group of pupils swap the gardening sessions for a neighbouring school
- Shared facilities for cooking produce

Food Growing Schools: London

For more school food growing advice and resources visit: www.foodgrowingschools.org

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