

Consulting with pupils

There are many ways of involving pupils in the development of school grounds. If possible, this should be done at all levels and stages, from exploring how the grounds are currently used, to fundraising and the planting of trees. This sheet explains one way of engaging your pupils.



How do we use the school grounds now?

1. Explain to the pupils that you are thinking about improving the school grounds and would like their ideas.
2. Start by investigating how the pupils currently use the grounds.
3. Give the pupils flags made from blunted kebab sticks and sticky postal labels.
4. Ask pupils to record on the flag something they do in the grounds on a normal day such as play football, chat with friends or play hide and seek.

5. Ask pupils to put their flag in the place in the grounds where they carry out that particular activity.
6. As a class, transfer the information from the flags to a large map of the school grounds.

You now have a picture of how the grounds are used.

What would we like to be able to do in our grounds?

1. Ask the pupils to think about what they would like to be able to do in their grounds.
2. Repeat the flag and mapping activity, with an emphasis on pupils' wishes.
3. Pupils could use chalk to mark playground areas.
4. Older pupils could have their own map of the school grounds and draw a plan of how they would like to see the grounds.

You now have a record of your pupils' aspirations for the school grounds.

Use the ideas generated by the pupils as starting points to develop further by consulting other parties. Use the map of how the grounds are currently used to ensure that the features are accurately located.



FACT

The Economic and Social Research Council has found that pupils who are at risk of disengaging may come back on board if they think that they matter to the school. Consulting with pupils about work in the school grounds is a good way of making them feel they matter!