



Dear:

Thank you for offering your time to support our Mt Eliza Primary School Kitchen Garden Program.

We look forward to seeing you on the following dates.

4F DATES 9:00 am-10:25 am	4M DATES 11:00 am-12:35 pm	4S DATES 9:00 am-10.25 am	4HB DATES 11:00 am-12:35 pm
Friday 4th March	Friday 4th March	Friday 11th March	Friday 11th March
Friday 18th March	Friday 18th March	Friday 25th March	Friday 25th March
Friday 1st April	Friday 1st April	Friday 8th April	Friday 8th April

Regards

Year 4 Teachers

Brent Schuster, Greg Miller, Christie Brown, Maddy Harvey & Fiona Schulinus

03 9787 1385

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Maddy Harvey - maddy.harvey@education.vic.gov.au

Christie Brown - christie.brown@education.vic.gov.au



Volunteer Information Kit 2022

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer within the Kitchen Garden Program at Mt Eliza Primary School. This kit aims to answer any questions you may have about our school, our program, and your role as a kitchen garden volunteer. The Kitchen Garden Program is a significant part of our STEAM curriculum in the Years 3 and 4.

The Kitchen Garden Program is a highly valued learning experience of the Mt Eliza Primary School curriculum and has been developed and run by our school staff, adhering to our sustainable Mt Eliza Environment Team (MEET) philosophy and our school values of Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Connectedness and Challenge. The Kitchen Garden relies on many people to work to its full potential. Our volunteers are one of the most important facets of the project - we could not do it without you!

Each week, four groups will be cooking in the kitchen with a volunteer participant, and one group in the garden. If the weather is not suitable, all five groups will be cooking in the kitchen.

Please take the time to read all the information in this kit.

Aims of the Kitchen Garden Program at Mt Eliza Primary School

The aim of the Kitchen Garden Program at Mt Eliza Primary School is to introduce young students to the wonderful world of good food through developing and maintaining a productive food garden, orchard and composting. Students develop gardening skills by weeding, planting, harvesting and creating natural herbicides. Students learn and practise cooking skills, correct terminology and prepare a varied repertoire of delicious seasonal based dishes following the **OzHarvest FEAST program** in our purpose designed and well-equipped school kitchen. Both Kitchen and Garden learning spaces are nurturing places to share and gain food knowledge, and are an integral part of our school curriculum. We aim to engage the curiosity of the young students and assist them in learning how to grow delicious seasonal food in a sustainable and ethical way, how to develop and care for a food garden, how to recognise when food is ripe and at its best, how to prepare dishes easily and enjoyably and how to develop an expanding culinary palate. We also aim for our students to be excited by all of these experiences and take ownership of their learning journey. We want to inspire children to modify their eating habits because the food they are experiencing tastes so good rather than because they are being told to eat some foods and not to eat others.

Your commitment to us

In order to achieve our vision, we need people who are not only enthusiastic about making a difference but are also able to make a genuine commitment. It is highly desirable that volunteers commit to the same class each week, and consider volunteering with us for the entire term. It allows a relationship with the children to develop and is also easier for you to be familiar with the environment. It also helps with planning. It is essential to have a Working with Children Check and satisfy COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

What you can expect from us

Recognition - we know that the success of the program lies in the continuous support from our volunteers, as much as the work of everyone else in the Kitchen Garden team. At the beginning of every session, an outline of the lesson is given to the volunteers and then again to the class when it begins. Further details about your role as a volunteer are included in this kit. This is a thoroughly rewarding experience, in a healthy, safe and friendly working environment, full of people wanting to participate in the joy of growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing food.

Volunteer Guidelines

Important things to remember

- **Reliability and continuity** - It is highly desirable that volunteers commit to the same class/es each week for the term. It allows your relationship with the children to develop and also makes it easier for you to be familiar with the environment.
- **Firm and kind instruction** - Humour is a key ingredient when working with young people. Your role is one of facilitator, rather than a leader who imposes direction. Be a good model. Everyone is there to learn and have fun. Volunteers are not expected to be the disciplinarians, so seek teacher intervention if the firm and kind approach does not seem to be working.
- **Encourage** everyone in the group to participate and share the workload. It is important that you don't do all the work, but instead demonstrate and work with the children. Show them rather than tell them.
- **Encourage students to use their senses** to; touch, taste, smell, hear and see things around them.
- **Safety** - Practice safe bending and equipment use and encourage the children to do the same.
- **Cleanliness** - Making a mess and getting dirty may be part of the interactiveness, however, cleaning up at the end of the class is a part of the learning experience.
- **Confidentiality** - Volunteers have a trusted relationship with the students, please respect this.
- **Accept direction from the KITCHEN GARDEN TEACHER.** The kitchen and garden teacher/s run the lessons; your role is to assist them in this.
- **Philosophy & Values** - Volunteers should act according to the philosophy of the program and the values of the school, as detailed previously. • **Younger siblings**- Unfortunately, we are unable to have younger siblings attend the Kitchen Garden sessions. This is due the safety of the students and your child, as the group you are working with will need all your focus for the session.

Above all, we would encourage every volunteer to enjoy their time sharing the learning during their Kitchen Garden lessons with our students.

Practical matters

Mt Eliza Primary School is located on the corner Wooralla Drive & Nepean Highway. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the class so you can:

- Sign in at the front office and have your WWC and Covid-19 vaccination details checked and documented.
- Be briefed on your activity by the Kitchen Garden staff.
- Enjoy catching up with your fellow volunteers.

If you are unable to attend, please telephone Mt Eliza Primary School front office and ask for your message to be passed on to the teacher **or** email your classroom teacher – phone: 9787 1385

Volunteering in the Garden

Produce that is grown in the garden may be harvested, then prepared and shared by the students in their kitchen class. Each week, one group of students will spend the Kitchen Garden session in the garden.

Garden class lesson format

When your group has a garden session, please be in the garden ten minutes before the class commences to discuss the class plan. Don't forget to sign in as a visitor at the Office. Please wear closed-toe shoes, appropriate clothing and a sunhat from October until the end of April, as we are a sun-smart school.

At both the beginning and the end of the class, the students gather together, to learn about the day's tasks and discuss what they have learnt. For the rest of the class, they go about their garden activities in their small group. Each group works under the supervision of a volunteer.

Examples of activities each group carries out in the garden include preparing beds, sorting seeds, harvesting, mulching, composting, planting, garden labels and worm farm maintenance.

Volunteering in the Kitchen

Kitchen class lesson format

When your group has a cooking session, please be in the classroom ten minutes before the class commences so you can become familiar with the recipe and the timing of the readiness of each dish for the mealtime. Don't forget to sign in as a visitor at the office first office and have your WWC and Covid-19 vaccination details checked and documented

Each kitchen lesson is an hour and forty minutes duration. The first 15 minutes are spent washing hands, putting on aprons, sitting quietly to listen to the recipe for the day and to discuss the ingredients and techniques we will be using.

Each class is divided into permanent groups comprising 5-6 students and is allocated a permanent 'station' to provide continuity (with a volunteer facilitating) and engender a sense of ownership and responsibility for the space and equipment.

Each station follows the week's FEAST recipe. If appropriate, students harvest some fresh ingredients from our beautiful kitchen garden. The recipes vary in their degree of difficulty and we rotate the easy/challenging/complex recipes weekly to allow the children to experience and master a range of skills. Ideally, there is one volunteer per station to facilitate students sharing activities such as; reading through the recipe, measuring ingredients, preparing the dish, serving in platters and cleaning up before the shared mealtime. Any students wandering from their assigned station should be asked to return to the group.

When possible, we sit as a group and share the dish together. Group discussion at the table and friendly assistance with passing of plates and cutlery is encouraged. Shouting across the room and getting up from the table is not. Positive language around the taste, texture, aroma of the meal is encouraged by adults, opinions are listened to, respect is given to everyone's efforts within the Kitchen Garden program. It is more than fine to not like a flavour - the "why" is explored!

At the end of the meal, each table is responsible for clearing and cleaning the table, and allocated group members wash, dry, and put dishes away; an exciting job!

Confidentiality & Feedback

Over time, children can develop a trusting relationship with you and may disclose personal information. Please do not discuss this information with anyone (e.g. other volunteers or people at home or work), except if you are concerned by the nature of this information. In which case, you should discuss it with the Kitchen Garden or classroom teacher.

Agreement of understanding

I have fully read this page and the attached Guidelines and hereby recognise, understand and accept my obligations as a volunteer with the Kitchen Garden at Mt Eliza Primary School.

Signature of Volunteer

Name and signature of Volunteer :

Dated: ____ / ____ / 2022