

Rob Sonneveld brings a great passion for gardening and the environment into the classroom at Dandenong South Primary School. He enjoys engaging with students and teaching them about the natural environment and incorporating a variety of sustainability activities into the school curriculum.

The garden...

The garden is located on the school grounds and is fully fenced. Rob grows a range of seasonal plants such as potatoes, tomatoes and a variety of herbs. A large passionfruit vine surrounds the garden space. A worm farm is managed by students to support learning about food waste and sustainability. The compost produced by the worms is used to fertilise the garden.



Rob Sonneveld in the school garden.

What happens in the garden...

During lunchtimes, the students can be found assisting in the garden. Activities include digging,

weeding, mulching, planting or even observing a healthy root base. Classroom activities explore water management strategies, healthy eating choices and a range of environmentally focused topics.

Health and wellbeing and learning outcomes:

- Enhanced communication occurs between students and staff.
- Children's motor skill development improves due to planting, weeding, harvesting and mulching.
- Studying the plant growth cycle and learning about the natural environment supports investigative study methods.
- Having older students mentoring younger students supports the establishment of responsible behaviours.
- The garden supports learning for children of all abilities.

Rob's top tips for success...

- ✓ Networking is very important as it increases engagement and offers opportunities for support.
- ✓ Make activities in the garden lots of fun to improve participation
- ✓ Take risks with what you plant and don't be afraid to pull out a healthy plant in order for students to learn.