

## **SCHOOLS GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SERVICE - SERVICE SPECIFICATION (ACADEMIES)**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The school grounds management, horticultural and arboricultural service provides professional and technical knowledge and advice, to create a safe outdoor learning environment and quality educational resource for the formal and informal curriculum.

### **2. Service Options**

The service provides a single point of contact for advice on all school grounds matters including:

- Grounds Maintenance Routine & Scheduled Contract Service (this is a continuation of the service currently provided and is charged and available separately from the Management service) \*
- Grounds Maintenance and Horticultural Advice.
- Playing Field and Sports Pitch Maintenance
- Sports Field Drainage.
- Synthetic surfaces and sports pitch areas.
- Landscape Projects (Design & Construction)
- Arboriculture - Tree & Woodland Management including H&S surveys & Advice. \*
- Environmental Advice & Education (Natural Environment Rangers Services) \*
- Playground Construction
- Safety Surfaces
- Outdoor Play Areas & Playground Equipment - Inspections/Repairs and maintenance Service\*.

\* Additional Buy in service.

#### **2.1 Grounds Management and Horticultural Advice:**

- 2.1.1 Managing School grounds efficiently requires a range of skills and professional specialists. To maximise the efficiency of providing a whole service, the schools grounds team based in City Services has evolved, with Graham Pugh providing the key single point of contact for all matters relating to school grounds. Having this main link between your school and the grounds maintenance team, landscape contractors and technical support staff has proved effective for the past 25 years, ensuring that the grounds maintenance work is delivered in accordance with the schools needs and the standards identified in the service agreements.

2.1.2 The School Grounds Team can provide advice on a wide range of service development and management needs and best arrangements for maintenance.

2.1.3 The Operations Manager - School Grounds co-ordinates the vetting of potential contractors arranging for specialist assistance when seeking and evaluating tenders for large and small development projects. The team can provide landscape advice and management plans when required.

## **2.2 Contract management and administration:**

2.2.1 With 65 schools signed up to the grounds maintenance contract, the group contract offers economies of scale and is still the most efficient method of delivering mechanised and large-scale activities: including grass cutting, sports markings, hedge/shrub maintenance and weeding. However, each school has its own individual needs and requirements and the flexibility of the contract ensured that most if not all of these are accommodated within the school's individual work schedule.

2.2.2 The management of the contract involves the administration of the individual school's particular contract, including liaison with the Head teacher or site manager.

2.2.3 Annual work programmes are agreed with each school with regular monitoring of the work by the Operations Manager - School Grounds and Head teachers. Routine processing of all payments and queries are carried out by the school grounds administration support with monthly statements of additional work sent to schools.

2.2.4 Direct contact with the School Grounds Maintenance Team ensures that any service dissatisfaction is dealt with and resolved quickly, ensuring the quality of work is maintained.

2.2.5 All variations and changes are incorporated into the contract as required by each school or in response to weather conditions or other difficulties.

2.2.6 Regular visits to each school and discussions with Head teachers and site managers regarding work in progress are routinely carried out as part of the contract management.

## **2.3 Professional and Technical Support Provided by the School Grounds Team: -**

### **2.3.1 Arboriculture - Tree & Woodland Management.**

Our professionally qualified and experienced tree officers carry out regular tree surveys for each school. The information is

stored on a database, and details the species, age, size and features of your trees, including any faults or evidence of disease or fungal attack. Any work identified is ordered through the citywide tree contract ensuring best value. \*

- Tree Surveys – Tree inspections are carried out every two years.
- Inspection and advice to ensure mature trees are maintained in a safe condition.
- Advice on management of young tree stock
- Managing emergency works \*
- Response to particular or unforeseen difficulties that may arise from time to time, e.g., storm damage, plant disease, etc.
- Advice with regards to trees implicated in subsidence of neighbouring properties is not included in the price and is charged as a separate service.

2.3.2 \*The cost of remedial works to problem trees is not included within the price charged for the grounds management service. Such works, should the school choose to order them, are delivered by SCC and charged separately at the quoted rate.

2.3.3 Note: it is the schools' liability if the recommended H&S works are not carried out.

## 2.4 **Environmental advice and Education (Natural Environment Ranger Service)**

2.4.1 The Natural Environment Rangers Service educational aims are:

- To promote the open spaces and wildlife of Southampton and encourage their enjoyment, understanding and a respectful attitude towards them.
- To provide quality educational opportunities about the basic principles of ecology, natural processes and sustainability.
- To support curricular work about, in and through the natural environment and promote the effectiveness of Learning Outside the Classroom

2.4.2 Working with the School Grounds Team, we can advise on:

- wildflower meadows
- increasing biodiversity
- the creation of ponds and dipping platforms
- opening up existing tree and scrub areas for access
- recycling of green waste by chipping or creating log piles
- creating small woodlands in unused corners
- management of existing unused 'wild' areas

## **2.5 Playing Field Management**

2.5.1 The provision of good quality grass playing surfaces is essential in helping children learning team sports and games. The School Grounds Team can advise and organise:

- Sports Pitch maintenance and improvement
- Playing Field drainage or maintenance problems
- Sports Pitch marking
- renovation of sports pitches or general grass areas
- Meadow Grass areas

## **2.6 Outdoor Play Areas & Playground Equipment - Inspections/Repairs and maintenance Service**

2.6.1 Our Play Rangers are accredited RPII Inspectors and are specialists in the inspection, repair and maintenance of children's play areas. We can advise and make recommendations on the most appropriate items of play for each individual situation. Working with the School Grounds Team, we can provide

- Annual Equipment inspections\*
- Six weekly equipment inspections\*
- Repairs Service\*
- Purchase Advice
- Playground Construction\*
- Advice on Safety Surfaces
- Advice on synthetic sports areas
- Playground and Hard-court markings

\* Note: The cost of inspections, remedial repairs and construction is not included within the price charged for the grounds management service. Such works, should the school choose to order them, are charged separately at the quoted rate.

## **2.7 Project management of School Grounds Improvement Works (Landscape Projects Design & Construction)**

2.7.1 A well planned outdoor environment that is carefully designed and thoughtfully managed can be used to deliver many aspects of the curriculum. It can also extend the range of play and recreational opportunities to cater for the needs of all pupils and, at the same time, encourage a positive feeling for the school and the wider environment. The School Grounds Team can offer a full design service for individual projects, this includes an initial site visit and survey and production of a Concept plan. Specialist advice is

available to help with soft landscaping and hard landscaping schemes and includes:

- Tree and shrub planting
- Wildlife Ponds
- Hard Surface/paved areas
- Raised planters.
- Fencing
- Footpaths
- Site Furniture
- Playground markings

2.7.2 The Operations Manager - School Grounds also provides to schools and other departments' advice and comments on any proposals for schemes that are to be implemented on schools with a view to the effect on Grounds Maintenance costs.

## 2.8 **Summary - Helping to set the overall site strategy:**

2.8.1 *School grounds are almost as varied as the pupils that use them and they are used in a variety of different ways. However, all school sites whatever their shape and size have a fundamental role in helping to set the environment and the ethos of the school.*

2.8.2 Pleasant and attractive grounds give a favourable message to parents, pupils, and staff whereas, grounds that are bleak or appear neglected, will tend to make the whole school seem unattractive and rejected.

2.8.3 In the longer term, the appearance and layout of school sites can influence the behaviour of children while they are on the site and either help or hinder the creation of the right environment for effective education and the development of attitudes.

2.8.4 It is now widely accepted that school grounds must be designed to cope with the needs of the school, which include:

- Spaces for curriculum PE and sport
- Spaces for informal recreation, sitting and social congregation.
- External teaching areas preferably linked to the classrooms.
- Shelter, security, and privacy
- Teaching resources such as ponds and other natural habitats
- Its wider role in the local community

## 3. **Service Contacts and Performance Review**

Any queries, concerns, or complaints about the overall operation of the scheme should be addressed to:

Graham Pugh, Operations Manager - School Grounds.

Direct Line: 023 8083 3219

E-mail: [Graham.pugh@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Graham.pugh@southampton.gov.uk)