



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
POLICY BULLETIN**

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**TITLE:** Guidelines for Promoting Safety  
In Edible School Gardens

**NUMBER:** BUL-6864.0

**ISSUER:** Janice Sawyer, Chief Risk Officer  
Risk Management & Insurance Services

**DATE:** June 6, 2017

**ROUTING**  
 School Site Administrators  
 Local District Administrators  
 Central Office Administrators  
 All Locations

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide school staff safety guidelines when planting, harvesting, and sampling edible gardens on their campuses.

**BACKGROUND:** On September 25, 2007, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board passed a resolution to preserve and sustain school gardens. In addition to encouraging the use of school gardens as outdoor laboratories, the resolution promoted tasting and sampling of garden produce. Since then, legislation, grants, and partnerships have helped to bolster the expansion of edible school gardens in the District – there are more than 250 LAUSD campuses with edible teaching gardens. Federal, State, District and environmental organizations have published a variety of school garden resources. A compilation of safety guidelines for edible gardens has been extracted from these resources and are summarized below. Additional materials may be found under the Related Resources section of this Bulletin.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This is a new bulletin.

**GUIDELINES:** The following safety guidelines apply:

**I. GARDEN LOCATION, SOIL, WATER, FERTILIZATION AND PLANT SELECTION**

- Carefully select the garden location. Place the garden away from contaminants (e.g., septic systems, garbage, utilities, animals, etc.). Consult your Complex Project Manager prior to commencing a new garden
- Ensure that the soil is safe and clean. For all gardening and/or planting activities, the District’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) must be notified to provide guidance and oversight regarding the assessment of exposed surface soils. Refer to BUL-5761.0, Procedures for Modifications and Additions to District Property Funded by or Performed by a Third Party, for additional details.
- All import soils shall be bagged and commercially available. Approval



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from OEHS is required for all bulk purchases (e.g., topsoil, planting mixes etc.) and/or related soil excavation/removal activities.

- Use barriers to keep out animals and pests.
- If raising animals is part of the gardening program, keep small livestock (e.g., chickens; rabbits, etc.) in an area that does not allow access to the garden beds or cover the beds to ensure the safety of garden edibles.
- Only use potable water or captured rainwater for watering purposes.
- Follow proper manuring and composting techniques.
- Keep an inventory of plants added to the garden (see Section IV, Documentation). Choose plants that are non-allergenic and non-toxic (see Edible Plants on LAUSD Approved Plant List [http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file\\_id=310975965](http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=310975965)).

### II. HARVESTING AND SAMPLING

- Make sure that garden tools are maintained in good working condition.
- Harvesters should wear gloves while working in the garden and should wash their hands after gardening activities.
- Use clean storage containers for produce.
- Log harvesting and sampling activities, including date and individual/group participating (see Section IV, Documentation). **PLANTS NOT ON THE INVENTORY SHOULD NOT BE EATEN.**

### III. STAFF COMMUNICATION, KNOWLEDGE AND OVERSIGHT

- Establish good communication between school personnel, community members and/or others sharing the garden. Refer to BUL-5761.0, *Procedures for Modifications and Additions to District Property Funded by or Performed by a Third Party* for additional details.
- Involve school complex project managers in providing technical support and oversight with community-initiated projects (see Community Initiated Projects: a Manual for Complex Project Managers [http://mo.laschools.org/green-spaces/documents/view/funding-resources/lausd-applications-forms-guides-and-agreements/LAUSD\\_COMMUNITY\\_INITIATED\\_PROJECTS.pdf](http://mo.laschools.org/green-spaces/documents/view/funding-resources/lausd-applications-forms-guides-and-agreements/LAUSD_COMMUNITY_INITIATED_PROJECTS.pdf)).
- If garden edibles are to be used in the cafeteria, establish good communication between garden staff and food service staff throughout the planting and harvesting stages.



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- If experiencing a pest problem in or around the garden, inform the plant manager, who will place a service call to the District's Pest Management Department to get the problem rectified as soon as possible. The use of pesticides and herbicides is strictly forbidden except when applied in compliance with the District's Integrated Pest Management Program by authorized Pest Management personnel.
- Encourage staff to follow protocols (such as the garden rules outlined in Attachment A, Sample Consent Form) when guiding children through gardens.
- Staff overseeing and/or utilizing garden should be knowledgeable about the plants in the garden.
- Staff overseeing and/or utilizing garden should be familiar with the guidelines in this Bulletin.

#### IV. DOCUMENTATION

- Clearly label all plants in the garden.
- Parent/guardian should sign a consent form (Attachment A – Sample Consent Form) acknowledging the activities involved and indicating any student allergies to garden pests or plants.
- Plants in garden should be inventoried when planted and logged when harvested and/or eaten (Attachment B – Sample Inventory/Log). Inventory/log should be available to all parties sharing the garden.
- If the garden is shared by the school and the community, prepare a memorandum of understanding (MOU) describing shared responsibilities for the scheduling, activities undertaken, maintenance requirements, liability, and supervision during hours of use.
- The MOU should establish the obligations and commitments of the responsible parties and how incurred costs will be paid.
- The MOU should be reviewed and approved by authorities of the school and community and legal counsels representing each authority.

**AUTHORITY:** This is a policy of the Division of Risk Management and Insurance Services.



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**RELATED  
RESOURCES:**

[USDA Food Safety Tips for School Gardens](#)

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/foodsafety\\_schoolgardens.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/foodsafety_schoolgardens.pdf)

[USDA School Gardens Fact Sheet, USDA Farm-to-School Program](#)

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/FactSheet\\_School\\_Gardens.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/FactSheet_School_Gardens.pdf)

[Department of Public Works Smart Gardening Workshops](#)

[https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/wk\\_scheds.cfm](https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/wk_scheds.cfm)

[LAUSD Approved Plants List – Edible Plants in Edible Gardens](#)

[http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file\\_id=310975965](http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=310975965)

(laschools.org website: Facilities Branches >Asset Management> Standards> Studies and Reports> Approved Plant List, October 2016)

[Preserving and Sustaining School Gardens](#)

[LAUSD Board Resolution, September 25, 2007](#)

[Procedures for Modifications and Additions to District Property Funded by or Performed by a Third Party](#)

BUL-5761.0, May 14, 2013, Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Facilities Services Division.

**ASSISTANCE:**

For assistance or further information please contact Risk Management and Insurance Services (213) 241-3139.