



Reopening SOP for School Garden Program During COVID-19

This SOP has been modified from the ACA Operations Guide Summer 2020.

Policy

All participating GSG Garden Coordinators (GCs) and students must be in good health to participate in the garden program. All GCs must wear proper PPE, including gloves and cloth face coverings/face shields when appropriate, and practice hand washing regularly throughout the day. GCs will teach, model and monitor safe and appropriate precautions. GCs will design/choose and offer activities that enable specified precautions to be implemented throughout the duration of the program. All garden tools and program equipment must be cleaned and sanitized before and after each use, and safety of site must be maintained. GSG will increase communications on all levels.

Purpose

This SOP outlines the procedures for running and maintaining a safe program in the school garden setting. GSG's objective is to reduce exposure to, and spread of, COVID-19 during garden programming. This SOP does NOT cover sanitation of equipment used in our programs (see Sanitization SOP). Procedures may vary by location; refer to safety precautions established at individual sites.

Required Safety Equipment

- Eye and skin protection are required when handling sanitizer.
- Cloth face coverings or face shields shall be worn by staff when in the garden.
- Disposable gloves should be worn by staff during harvest and sanitization procedures.
- Students will follow school protocol for mask use. In schools that mandate specific face coverings, students who arrive without accommodating the school policy will not be permitted in program space.
- GC will have access to cleaning and sanitizing solutions and paper towels.
- Proper handwashing stations should be accessible and regular use should be encouraged.
- Gardens will have appropriate CDC safety signage throughout.

Procedures

* COMMUNICATION

Communication with Students:

- *Student orientation.* GCs should attempt to connect with each teacher to understand what has been taught and then do overview and context setting as appropriate. Orientation shall be given by the GC on students' first day in the garden, and crucial points reiterated at the beginning of each class thereafter.
 - How germs and viruses spread.
 - Benefits of being outdoors.
 - Hand washing/ sanitizer- how and when to wash hands; locations of sinks and sanitizers.
 - How to practice physical distancing in the garden.
 - Tools and gloves will not be shared.
 - Symptoms- what to look out for and how to report.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Coughing etiquette.
 - Any site specific policies and guidelines.

- *Signage for students:*
 - Post appropriate CDC posters/signage throughout program spaces:
 - [COVID-19 Information](#)
 - [Handwashing](#)
 - [Cough Etiquette](#)
 - [Symptoms Associated with Spread](#)
 - [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
 - [Physical Distancing](#)

- *In case of confirmed or suspected case:*
 - Maintain confidentiality; do not provide the name or any potentially identifying information of the confirmed or suspected case.

Communication with Staff:

- *Prior to Program:*
 - GSG will provide training and educational material, including this guide, to staff. Additional information will be included on:
 - GSG administration's responsibilities as they relate to COVID-19
 - Workplace controls, including the use of PPE
 - Staffs' individual roles and responsibilities as they relate to COVID-19
 - GSG emphasizes the importance of staff vigilantly self-monitoring health for symptoms associated with COVID-19. Staff should stay home and utilize proper notification channels if they show any signs of symptoms.

- *During Program:*

- GSG will continue to provide educational material, including this guide, to staff and enforce training requirements. This includes information on workplace controls, including the use of PPE.
- GSG will maintain awareness of workers' concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues related to COVID-19.
- Administration is available to hear concerns and answer questions related to these issues.
- GCs must promptly inform GSG administration regarding any changes to their site's policies.

Communication with Local Health Officials:

- Designated administrative staff will continually seek guidance from local health officials, the CDC and the DOE to determine whether to further adapt program or end program early if it becomes necessary, or if the virus threat increases.

* SCREENING AND PREVENTION

Pre-Program Screening:

- Before reopening of school garden program, staff will confirm that they have self-assessed the following:
 - Self-screening for the presence of symptoms (fever of 100.4 °F or greater, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, nausea, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting, etc.) within the past two weeks.
 - Determining if the individual has recently traveled nationally or internationally; if so, staff shall only attend if their return has been within a period of time considered safe by local authorities.
 - Determining if the individual has been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with, tested for, or quarantined as a result of COVID-19.
- **Staff who have any signs of symptoms or possible exposure should contact their supervisor immediately and refrain from entering site grounds.**

Ongoing Screening Procedure:

- GSG staff should complete a daily health self-assessment via the [Wellness Checklist](#).
- GCs will comply with any additional site screening requirements as needed.

Response and Management of Suspected or Probable Case(s):

- If a staff member falls ill during program and warrants further clinical evaluation, inform both GSG administration and Altres.
- Administration will reach out to the school, families and/or local health officials as necessary.
- If illness is related to COVID, GSG will assist with "contact tracing" immediately to determine the potential or confirmed case's contact with other students or staff members over the previous two days.

* MANAGEMENT OF GARDEN SPACES

- Pathways must be clear for both movement and physical distancing.
- All gates and doors should be propped open prior to the start of program in order to reduce touch points.
- Proper CDC health signage should be posted as needed to encourage safe behavior throughout program space.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet between students.
- GCs should reference and follow school policy regarding student to teacher ratios. Policies may vary by site.

* CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Sanitation procedures (see Sanitization SOP) should be followed before and after every use of all program equipment and non-porous work surfaces.
- Continuously sanitize frequently touched surfaces (sink handles, garden handles/locks, hose handles, etc.) throughout the day.
- Remove trash and replace liner daily. Communicate with custodians for removal and/or supplies.

* ACTIVITIES

General Guidance:

- Students should follow school protocol regarding masks. Staff should always wear cloth face masks or face shields.
- Garden class should remain outside, unless in the event of unsafe or inclement outdoor conditions exist. GCs should establish a contingency plan with school administration prior to the start of school; if safe conditions cannot be met, GC should cancel class until outdoor conditions improve.
- Ensure students and staff maintain safe hygiene:
 - Request that teachers have students washed their hands on their way to garden class.
 - Hand washing should occur frequently, especially where chances of spread are more likely (after a cough, after cleaning/sanitizing, etc).
 - All shared items and equipment should be cleaned and sanitized between each use (see Sanitization SOP).
- Encourage use of reusable water bottles.
- No games or activities that require touching.
- Any paper, crafts, etc. left behind by students will be discarded.
- Consider scheduling and planning activities in a way that allows for maintenance of tools and equipment in between sessions.
- Harvesting may continue to take place. Food preparation and garden snacks will be suspended until further notice. GSG administration will notify GCs when these activities can resume.

* SAFETY

- Efforts to maintain physical distancing should not impact existing safety protocols (e.g., first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR], etc.)
- If emergency care is needed and physical distancing cannot be maintained, then follow normal school procedures.

Records

- [Wellness Checklist](#)
- [Incident Report Form](#)

Reference

- [Sanitation and Cleaning SOP for School Garden Program During COVID-19](#)
- [Sanitation SOP for Harvest Tools, Equipment and Preparation Areas](#)
- [Sanitation and Safety Materials List](#)
- [Reopening Protocol One-Pager for School Garden Programs](#)