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Safety in School Gardens

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General Guidelines

- Wear gloves, footwear, a hat, clothing and sunglasses that will protect outdoors in the garden
- Tie back long hair and protect the face, neck and ears with sunscreen
- Do stretching exercises to warm up before gardening
- Keep water bottles close by to encourage increased water intake
- Vary jobs to avoid overtaxing one muscle group
- Use organic methods to avoid exposure to the most toxic fertilizers and chemicals
- Avoid growing chillies or other plants that are particularly potentially injurious to children
- Teach correct use of tools and store in compartmentalized containers for counting in and out
- Compost all unprocessed manure resources
- Never eat direct from the garden – wash all produce first
- Never use recycled water on vegetable or herb gardens due to potential food contamination
- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Keep a tube of Numit cream on hand to treat bites, ticks etc - <https://www.numit.com.au>

Tetanus

- Teachers and children involved in gardening activities should check their tetanus status before handling soil, compost, organic fertiliser and/or animal manure.

Organic Toxic Dust Syndrome (Farmer's Lung)

- Occurs from inhaling dust (sweeping, leaf blowers, mowing dry grass, spreading dry mulch, turning compost etc)
- Always wet down potentially dusty material
- Wear a dust mask as appropriate
- Wash hands often with soap and water.

Legionella Bacteria (*Legionella longbeachae*)

- Found in soil, potting mix, mulch and compost and can cause a fatal respiratory infection
- Wet down all materials before use to suppress dust and bacteria
- Wear a mask and gloves when appropriate
- Open bags with scissors (potting mix, compost, mulch). Reseal and use contents within 3 months
- Wash hands often with soap and water.

Melioidosis Bacteria (*Burkholderia pseudomallei*)

- Occurs naturally within the soil- particularly in tropical regions
- Moves into topsoil during the rainy season or during flood events
- Enters the body through minor cuts and scratches
- Wear gloves and appropriate footwear
- Thoroughly clean and treat all minor cuts and scratches
- Wash hands often with soap and water.

Dermatitis

- Wear appropriate clothing and gloves to protect from contact with potentially irritating plants
- Photodermatitis occurs when plant compounds on the skin come in contact with sunlight
- Azalea, chrysanthemum, alstroemeria, dandelion, grevillea, primula, hydrangea, many bulbs including daffodil and hippeastrum plus plants with milky sap (fig, frangipani, cassava) commonly cause contact dermatitis.

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