## **Tool Safety and Work Group Management**

## **in School Gardens**

## **Garden work session set-up:**

* Provide drinking water, as needed
* Provide shade available near work area, if none existing
* Basic first-aid kit available on-site
* Review work plan/activities and determine number of students, working groups and tasks
* Have tools available, including gloves and eye protection, as needed
* Inspect tools for damage, including splintered handles, dulled heads and blades, worn or broken teeth or broken joints.
* **If a tool is broken, splintered, has defects or damage, remove it from use until it is repaired.** Get one splinter under your fingernail, you make sure itʻs your last.

**Garden lead and teacher(s):**

* Establish “call and response” students. “Call” should elicit immediate stop to work.
* Agree on suitable activities and have clear goals that can be shared with haumana
* Communicate on weather and site conditions
* Ground students in place and space before beginning work (observe entrance to garden)
* Student safety is garden coordinator kulena (responsibility). Students (and teachers) should understand and appreciate this.
* Introduce new garden term and vocabulary for specific action, method or result
* Agree on time to end work session for tool return and site clean-up
* Hui students upon completion of work, review new garden terms and solicit manaʻo and mahalo

Students**:**

* Wear sturdy shoes that cover the whole foot, including the toes
* Wear hat or cap for longer period, full sun mala activities (weave niu frond hats)
* Wear gloves to protect hands from punctures, scrapes, cuts and blisters
* Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including eye protection or dust particle mask, as necessary or recommended by alakaʻi
* Drink plenty water. Drink water every 10-12 minutes during heavy activity in hot conditions
* Take a break to the shade every 20-30 minutes, or as needed.
* Wear sunscreen, if needed
* Bring a water bottle, pre-filled

**Before using tools:**

* Instruction by garden coordinator (alakaʻi) as needed
* Keiki younger than 14 should not be given sharp tools unless directly supervised by teacher or garden coordinator (see age appropriate tool use recommendations)

**Tool Safety notes:**

* Every tool has a (more) dangerous side – for cutting, breaking up soil, digging, raking or weeding. The working edge or tip of a shovel, rake, hoe, pitch fork or pick axe is the **“red zone”** of the tool.
* Always hold tool with the **“red zone”** pointed towards the ground when not in use.
* When putting a tool down, the cutting edge, or **“red zone”**, should be on or pointed to the ground – rakes should be put with tines down – as should pitch forks, hoes, and shovels
* **Tools should never be raised above waist level when being used in active work areas, and never above the head with close proximity of other students**
* Never lay a tool on the ground in an active work area unless the area is designated for this
* Tools are not toys. No horseplay allowed with tools.
* Be aware of your personal work zone. Stop working or adjust your activity if your work zone is entered. Aloha your intruder.
* **Gloves are mandatory for use of any tool with a blade or cutting edge, including pruners and tree saws**
* PPE (eye protection) while using tools that may create airborne fragments from tool impact points should be worn as directed by alakaʻi.
* Use the proper tool for the work. Inappropriate tool use may cause injury to the user or bystander or damage to the tool, or both
* Rotate tasks between students during long work periods to prevent repetitive motion injuries, as appropriate.
* Students should immediately report broken tools and seek garden coordinator or teacher advice on continued use of tool
* Safe tool use should be modeled by garden coordinators at all times
* Effective tool training and consistently reinforced tool safety “check-ins” with students will develop self-awareness and safety as second nature in new gardeners/farmers

**After using tools:**

* Tools are cleaned and put away in their proper location.
* Tools should be disinfected to prevent cross contamination, as needed.
* Hoses should be rolled up to prevent tripping.
* Broken or damaged tools should be taken out of service until repaired or replaced
* Never repair a broken wooden handle with duct or gorilla tape. Just donʻt.