Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre

Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment

Activity Details

			CARA Creation Date: 04-Dec-2025
Activity:	**Gardening with Hand Tools**		
Activity Scope:	Guideline review date: 24 September 2025 This guideline demonstrates the minimum safety standard for student participation in gardening with hand tools as an activity to support curriculum delivery. Gardening with hand tools includes the use of gardening tools such as forks, spades, shears, saws and other aids for relatively simple gardening activities. **Note:** This CARA guideline does not include the use of electrical gardening or motorised gardening equipment. The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that curriculum activities are planned for and managed in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of students, staff and others. Depending on the scope of this activity, other risk assessments may be required when planning. Curriculum activities encompassing more than one CARA guideline (e.g. science investigation, experiments and activities) must comply with the requirements of all CARA guidelines appropriate to the activity. For activities conducted at a non-Department of Education venue, and/or when engaging external expertise, request written risk assessment advice and attach it to this CARA record. For activities conducted off-site, schools must comply with the school excursions procedure.		
Guidelines:	https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/CARA/activity-guidelines/gardening-hand-tools		
Activity Description:	Bushcare takes place in Bunyaville Conservation Park. Students weed, plant, water and distribute mulch around the planting area, in small groups with adult supervision using age-appropriate gloves and watering cans.		
Inherent Risk Level:	Medium		
Inherent Risk Level Description:	Use of larger hand tools (e.g. spades, rakes)		
Start Date:	Tuesday, 27 January, 2026	End Date:	Friday, 11 December, 2026
On School Grounds:	No	Is parental permission required for this activity?	Yes

Activity Requirements	
• A registered teacher must be appointed to maintain overall responsibility for the activity. • Teachers, in collaboration with other adult supervisors of the planned activity, determine additional risks, hazards and control measures relevant to the activity and the specific school/group circumstances in order to lift the safety standard above the minimum identified in the CARA guideline. • Consult review comments from previous CARA records to improve safety standards based on the advice from the previous supervisors of the activity at the school. • Prior consultation and collaboration with local expertise (e.g. property owner/manager) is required for local advice, emergency support mechanisms and additional supervision requirements to ensure participant and public safety. • Refer to children and young workers code of practice 2006 when planning this activity to determine student suitability to undertake relevant work activities. • Refer to Plant diseases, insect pests and invasive plants for advice (e.g fire ant map) when planning this activity. • Follow the standard operating procedures (SOP) for equipment and machinery resources and manufacturer instructions. • Assess and manage risks associated with working at heights.	☑
Students • Schools must consider age, maturity and skill level of students when planning curriculum activities. • Adjustments are required for students with disability to support access and participation in the curriculum. Consult with the parents/carers of students with disability, or when appropriate the student, to ensure risks related to their child's participation in the activity are identified and managed. • Schools must consult current student medical information and/or health plans in accordance with the managing students' health support needs at school procedure. Record information about any student condition (e.g. physical or medical such as epilepsy) that may inhibit safe engagement in the activity and include specific support measures within emergency procedures. • For activities with students with a medical condition or disability that may impact on safety during the activity, consultation with parents is required prior to allocating supervision to determine the impact of students' medical condition or disability on safety during the activity. • For participants with known allergies, schools must comply with the supporting students with asthma and/or at risk of anaphylaxis at school procedure and the school's anaphylaxis risk management plan, including an adult supervisor of the activity with anaphylaxis training.	☑

Emergency and first-aid
 	
• Emergency plans and injury management procedures must be established for foreseeable incidents (e.g. raising alarm, provision of CPR and first aid) and incorporate the advice from local authorities (e.g. location of AED).
• Adult supervisors must have:
  ◦ emergency contact details of all participants
  ◦ a medical alert list and a process for administering student medication
  ◦ communication equipment suitable to conditions (e.g. mobile phone) and a process for obtaining external assistance and/or receiving emergency advice.
• Safety procedures must be determined for the location (e.g. out-of-bounds areas), and incorporate advice from local expertise, if relevant and are to be informed by information provided as manufacturer 's instructions, product labels, vendor SDS and SOP as relevant.
• Access is required to first aid equipment and consumables suitable for foreseeable incidents.
	☑

Induction and instruction • Induction is required for all adult supervisors on emergency procedures (e.g. evacuation) and safety procedures (e.g. active and direct supervision for each supervisory role) and correct techniques. This must include, but is not limited to, procedures outlined in the equipment manufacturer's instructions and Equipment and machinery resources - Agricultural Science (plant and equipment). If the activity is conducted at an off-site facility, induction is to be informed by advice provided in consultation with expertise at the venue. • Instruction is required for students on safety procedures and correct techniques (e.g. safe tool use). Rule-reminders are to be provided throughout the activity.	☑
Consent Parent consent is required for all activities conducted off-site and all extreme risk level activities conducted onsite. It is strongly recommended that parent consent is obtained for high risk level activities conducted on-site	☑

Risk Management Details

Supervision	
Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults, make final supervision decisions* for the activity that considers the local context.	
Appropriate adult supervision must be provided to manage the activity safely i.e. prevent an incident from occurring and manage an incident if one were to occur, including managing emergency situations. The principal must give active consideration to the minimum standards set in the CARA guideline for the activity, the CARA planner and the risk assessment when determining the appropriate level of supervision. *See Number of adult supervisors (below).* Before the activity, all adult supervisors: • must be familiar with the contents of the CARA record, including the Emergency and Supervision Plans. During the activity, all adult supervisors: • must provide active and direct supervision – be constantly vigilant, attentive and rescue ready • must comply with control measures from the CARA record and adapt as hazards arise The activity must be suspended if the conditions become unfavourable (e.g. extreme temperatures) **Number of adult supervisors** Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults of the activity, determine the final number of supervisors to fulfil instructional, emergency and supervision roles for the local context that consider the nature of the activity, students' ages, abilities and specialised learning, access and/or health needs. In some instances, the final supervision ratio may be 1:1. If the minimum safety standard cannot be met, modify the activity (or elements of it) and use the hierarchy of controls to implement alternative control measures to meet or exceed the minimum safety standard (e.g. reduce the number of students participating at any one time).	☑
*See FAQ's for further support.	
Before this activity, Bunyaville EEC staff are familiar with the contents of the CARA record. CARA's are available on Bunyaville EEC website for viewing.	

Supervisor Qualifications	
Qualifications support the minimum safety standard for this activity. Principals make final decisions* in determining supervisor capability (competence, relevance and currency) and whether the activity leader meets an appropriate teaching standard. *See FAQ's for further support.	
All adult supervisors must comply with the working with children authority—Blue Cards procedure.	☐

Qualified adults for the activity **Recovery/emergency – CPR, First aid, Rescue**	
An adult with current emergency qualifications is required to be quickly accessible to the activity area. Emergency qualifications include: • HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) • HLTAID011 Provide first aid • HLTAID012 Provide emergency first aid response in an education and care setting; or equivalent competencies.	☑
At least one adult supervisor is:	
a registered teacher with competence (knowledge and skills) in gardening and the use of gardening hand tools and the potential hazards; or	☑
an adult supervisor, working under the direct supervision of a registered teacher, with competence (knowledge and skills) in gardening and the use of gardening hand tools and the potential hazards.	☑
*See FAQ's for further support.	

Facilities and Equipment	
The qualified adult supervisor of the activity, in consultation with the principal, determines the requirements for facilities and equipment appropriate to the local context.	☑
Location must be suitable for the activity being undertaken, including sufficient space, adequate lighting and ventilation to ensure safe participation and that safety rules and procedures can be followed. Undertake a reconnaissance of new or infrequently used locations to ascertain suitability.	☑
Consult chemicals in curriculum activities for support in assessing the risks of chemicals used with/by students in curriculum activities.	☑
If a CARA record is required in OneSchool, a summary of chemicals (e.g. herbicide), plant, equipment and/or materials (e.g. potting mix) used in the activity must be provided by entering directly onto the CARA record in OneSchool or by attaching a summary. Sample templates are provided on chemicals in curriculum activities and plant, equipment and materials in curriculum activities.	☑

Participants must wear personal protective equipment as relevant (e.g. appropriate enclosed footwear, safety glasses with glasses, gloves, appropriate face protection against airborne particles, such as pesticides or fungicides, dust or organisms in compost or potting mix).	☑
Equipment must be sized to match the ability and strength of students.	☑
All equipment must be conform to Australian Standards, comply with the relevant codes of practice and standard operating procedures (SOP) and be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.	☑
A maintenance schedule (e.g. checking for damage, repairing, sharpening) must be established and enacted for all plant and equipment used in the workspace. Consult Equipment Maintenance Records (EMR) documents.	☑
A retirement schedule must be developed to replace plant and equipment by manufacturers' nominated expiry date or when significant wear causes a hazard.	☑
A process for checking for damage for all equipment used in the activity must be established and employed.	☑
All participants including BEEC staff to wear gloves when planting.	

Hazards and Control Measures	
Environmental hazards	
Animal bites/diseases - Stings, poisoning, infection • Allergen and disease risks associated with working with dust, dry matter and airborne organisms, e.g. Q fever, must be controlled. • Adhere to established practices regarding the use of insect repellent, outlined in insect viruses and allergies. • Ensure the location is clear of obstacles and wildlife (e.g. snakes) that may pose hazards.	☑
Environmental conditions - Weather, surfaces, surrounds • Assess weather conditions prior to undertaking the activity, inspecting the intended location in order to identify variable risks, hazards and potential dangers. • Follow the school's sun safety policy, including appropriate clothing, sun protection (e.g. sunscreen) and shade facilities when outside. • Follow the managing excessive heat in schools guidelines when participating in very hot or extreme heat conditions. • Manage allergen and disease risks associated with dust, compost and other soil enrichment products, dry matter and airborne organisms (e.g. Legionella), such as moistening the contents of potting mix bags to avoid creating dust. • Prevent hazards by ensuring appropriate control measures are in place for unfavourable weather conditions (e.g. dampen dust during high wind, control slipping hazards after rain).	☑
Facilities and equipment hazards	

Faulty or dangerous equipment • Check equipment for damage before and during the activity (e.g. checking tool heads for splits or cracks and security of handle, checking handles for splits, cracks and splinters). • Equipment situated where it does not pose potential hazards.	☑
Heights/ falling objects - Falling from height • Assess and manage risks associated with working at heights. • Exclusion zones clearly marked to prevent falling objects striking participants when working at heights.	☐
Sharp implements or objects • Safety guidelines enforced when using sharp implements (e.g. keeping fingers out of the way, carrying sharp implements appropriately).	☐
Student considerations	
Injury • Students aware of the location of emergency and first-aid equipment.	☑
Manual handling - Lifting equipment • Use correct manual handling processes when lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. • Establish appropriate lifting equipment is used to lift heavy objects or materials.	☑
Physical exertion - Exhaustion and fatigue • Continually monitor participants for signs of fatigue and exhaustion. • Establish rest breaks, considering the age and fitness level of students.	☑
Student issues - Student numbers, special needs, high risk behaviours, medical conditions, separation from the group • Remove accessories (e.g. jewellery, lanyards) before participating. • Ensure fingernails and hair do not pose a hazard. • Safety zone established and maintained around the area where potentially hazardous activities are conducted (e.g. use of mattock). • Students supervised in a safe location when not actively receiving instruction. • Drink breaks to occur regularly. Make water available for individual participants between drink breaks. • Follow appropriate hand washing procedures after the activity.	☑
Visibility • Have students wear easily identifiable clothing • Ensure staff can easily recognise those students with health support needs and are familiar with their needs.	☑

Additional links Queensland Poisons Information Centre	
BEEC staff wet all tube stock prior to planting to reduce air born particles.	

Planning Considerations

Which students will be involved?

- Consider the number of students, size of student groups and students' capabilities e.g. age, experience, competence, fitness, maturity.
- Consider any individual student needs e.g. personalised learning, support provisions (including behaviour support plans), health management (including health plans and prescribed medication requirements).

Where will the students be?

- Consider the location of the activity e.g. remote/easily accessible, public /private, school/classroom/workshop/other.
- Is the number of students appropriate for the available space?
- If outdoors – sunsafe strategies are implemented; weather and environmental conditions are assessed before and during activity (e.g. temperature, storms, water currents, tides); and strategies to reduce the likelihood of viruses, allergies and skin infections caused by insects (e.g. ticks, mosquitoes, spiders) and other animals are applied.
- The site is checked for hazards (e.g. poisonous plants, dangerous animals, uneven terrain, barbed wire,) and necessary controls implemented.
- Activities are appropriately situated in relation to buildings, pedestrians, members of the public, vehicles and other activities e.g. designated areas for activity, spectators and vehicles are established.

What will the students be doing?

- Consider the nature and duration of the activity i.e. need for drinking water, food, rest, appropriate clothing, warm-up and warm-down.
- Instruction in rules and pre-requisite skills is provided.
- Student skills are developed in a progressive and sequential manner.
- First aid and emergency medical treatment provisions are appropriate for the type of activity and location e.g. first aid kit, first aid trained personnel, Ventolin®, Epipen®, and students' personal prescribed medications as required in health plans are available.
- Emergency response strategies are in place e.g. communication plans (e.g. mobile phone, walkie talkie), safety induction, evacuation plans.
- Hair, clothing, footwear and jewellery are worn in a manner that is appropriate and safe for the activity.
- Personal items, e.g. drink bottles, towels and mouthguards, will not be shared between students.

What will the students be using?

- Instruction in safety procedures and safe handling of equipment is provided.
- Equipment is suitable for the activity, properly maintained, appropriately used and complies with the relevant safety standard.
- Relevant department procedures and guidelines are adhered to for the use of equipment and work processes.

Who will be leading the activity?

- A registered teacher has overall responsibility for the activity.
- Sufficient adult supervision is in place to manage the activity safely (including in emergency situations).
- The activity leader has the competence (knowledge and skills) to plan, induct, instruct and manage the activity safely for students and others.
- There are sufficient adults present with current First Aid qualifications (including CPR) or ready access to qualified first aid personnel.
- Blue Card requirements are adhered to for leaders/volunteers.

☑	I have incorporated the above factors when planning my risk management strategies for this activity.
☐	Additional activity-specific requirements for students with specialised learning needs are provided in the Other Details box below.