

Frequently Asked Questions

SPPS School Garden Standards and Procedures

As of August 2019

A) *What does it mean that a school garden is “created for use by students for educational purposes?”*

School Gardens are designed for the School to meet its educational purpose such as for engaging school families or the community, enriching academic teaching, or providing mental wellness opportunities. The School Garden may be used primarily by one or more component of the school, such as afterschool programming, support staff, a grade team. These components may be operated in partnership with an external organization at the discretion of the school's principal, such as PTO or organization or business.

The school principal and staff will ensure that the garden is operated in a manner consistent with SPPS educational guidelines: Students are safe and in an environment that supports their social emotional learning and academic achievement.

B) *How are partner organizations included in the new School Garden Standards and Procedures?*

School gardens are gardens designed with the school, to meet the purpose of the school and involve school in having students interact with the garden. A number of schools collaborate with community partner organizations and consultants. The School Garden Proposal should include information on which partners the school will work with and what they will do. If a community partner is not working with school staff and students, then the community partner would be considered a community garden applicant and would need to follow the SPPS [Community Garden Standards and Procedures](#) accordingly.

C) How do you see current school gardens that existed before this policy fitting into this?

School Gardens should be safe for people and property first and foremost, but we recognize that several were built before these policies were developed — particularly about how foods and other consumables are grown on school grounds, and how raised beds should be built.

We expect all schools to take immediate steps to improve their school gardens in order to meet these standards to ensure safety and care of people and property. Please contact Chelsea Moody, Facilities-ESG to learn what resources are available to help your school.

D) Why does it take 6 months or more for the school garden planning before it can be installed?

A planned and sustained school garden requires multiple stakeholders who have a vested interest in the school garden for multiple years. There is a history of “quick gardens” — quickly put together without sufficient input from community, school, and planning and engineers who are responsible for caring for the school and school grounds.

E) What if the garden we want does not meet the parameters for both design and placement on the campus?

We recognize that each school, its campus and its community both within and in which it resides is unique. The policies are there to protect the School District for both risk of liability, risk to personnel and students and prevent creating a situation where the District must maintain or clean up a project that was not sustainable, or create further work for maintaining the school campus. School gardens are not new to SPPS and there are many examples of gardens or landscaping projects that were quickly created and never maintained.

By following the proposal development process, your team will be engaged with Facilities early on and throughout the process. If the desired garden placement or design conflicts with policies and is jointly determined to be a good fit for both

school and care and safety of students and staff, it is possible for a variance to be granted. Variances are not guaranteed and only arrived through mutual communication and weighing of multiple considerations.

**F) What food safety guidelines and requirements do we need to follow?
How can we learn more about these?**

These guidelines and requirements are currently being developed for school year 2019-2020. They are called the **SPPS Garden to Cafeteria and Food Safety Guidelines** and will be posted on the [Grow Our Own webpage](#). Join the School Garden email list for updates.

***Don't see your question here?
Please forward your question to Chelsea.Moody@spps.org.***
Thank you!