

2.5 PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Catastrophic Risks

The greatest catastrophes on playgrounds include:

- ?? Falls from playground equipment
- ?? Unauthorized vehicles
- ?? Abduction, unauthorized visitors

Common Hazards

Frequently reported accidents include:

- ?? Trip/falls onto deficient ground covering
- ?? Students running into one another
- ?? Limbs caught in playground equipment
- ?? Lacerations from rough or sharp-edged equipment
- ?? Struck by/against balls, bats, swings, etc.
- ?? Burns from hot surfaces

Accident Prevention

To minimize the potential for accidents to occur on playgrounds, these procedures should be followed:

- ?? All Risk Control Committees should review the U.S. Product Safety Commission, "Handbook For Public Playground Safety".
- ?? Prior to purchasing new playground equipment, contact the School District Administrative office for additional reference materials, standards and guidelines.

- ?? All Playground Aides/Teachers should review the "Playground Safety Rules" guide within this chapter.
- ?? Teachers should review specific playground rules with students at the change of each season.
- ?? Students and teachers should report unsafe conditions to the school principal/designee. Athletic or maintenance departments should complete the weekly inspections. Equipment inspections should be completed per manufacturers' specifications.
- ?? Inspection checklists should be developed by the athletic and maintenance departments per manufacturers' specification utilizing the attached sample checklist. Completed inspection checklists should be maintained for a period of three years.
- ?? Establish procedures for handling emergencies. See sample procedures in this chapter.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES (sample)

Pre-Emergency Preparation

1. Playground aides/teachers should be trained in basic first-aid techniques and CPR. The designated school physician should provide guidelines for these skills.
2. A method of communication should be established for notifying the school principal/designee that an accident has occurred on the playground. Aides/teachers must not leave the playground unattended to escort an injured student inside the building.

Post-Accident

1. First-aid should be administered to the injured individual by trained staff .
2. The school principal and/or designee should be notified of the accident and determine what action should be taken based on the severity of the accident/injury (e.g., contact medical personnel, call for ambulance, etc.).
3. Aides/teachers should keep other students away from the injured person.
4. If faulty equipment was the cause of the accident, it must be immediately put out of use.
5. An incident report and investigation should be completed immediately. The area is not to be modified, disturbed, equipment moved, etc., until such a review of all evidence is completed.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES

1. An adequate number of aides/teachers (with a minimum of two aides/teachers) should be available so that **all** areas of the playground and equipment are visible to at least one aide/teacher.
2. Aides/teachers should not participate in or umpire any games or activities since their primary responsibility is the *supervision* of all students on the playground.
3. Aides/teachers are expected to intervene immediately if playground rules are being violated.
4. Students are to be sent to the Office if they consistently violate the rules of the playground despite reminders.
5. If the first offense of the student is serious (e.g. breaking a window, fighting, using profane language), refer the student to the Office. The administration will determine discipline.
6. Never allow a student to remain in a classroom or outdoor area unattended.
7. Report any deficient equipment or conditions identified as soon as possible.
8. Follow established procedures for getting medical treatment, completing an accident report, and supervising the playground.
9. Immediately report any unidentified visitors to the office. Unauthorized persons are not allowed on the grounds or near any student(s).
10. Do not permit tackle football, skateboarding, and other hazardous activities. Take prompt action to curtail the activity.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY INSPECTION (sample)

School _____

- | | | |
|---|-----|--------|
| 1. Is playground equipment free from broken or missing: handrails, guardrails, protective barriers, steps or rungs on ladders? | Yes | No |
| 2. Is equipment free from rough and/or sharp points, corners and edges, edges, rust and cracks? | Yes | No |
| 3. Are all fences, benches and signs on the playground in good condition? | Yes | No |
| 4. Does playground equipment have adequate protective surfacing under and around it? | Yes | No |
| 5. Is the surfacing material in good condition (check for compaction and reduced depth particularly around those areas of heavy use)? | Yes | No |
| 6. Is equipment free of protrusions and projections? | Yes | No |
| 7. Are all protective caps and plugs in place? | Yes | No |
| 8. Is equipment free of potential clothing entanglement hazards such as open S-hooks? | Yes | No |
| 9. Have all trip hazards, such as exposed footings on anchoring devices and rocks, roots, or any other environmental obstacles been removed from the play area? | Yes | No |
| 10. Is the anchoring of all equipment stable? | | Yes No |
| 11. Are moving parts such as swing bearing hangers in good condition and free of wear? | Yes | No |
| 12. Are equipment use zones free of obstacles? | Yes | No |
| 13. Are play area drainage problems controlled? | Yes | No |
| 14. Is the playground surface free of divots, holes and other trip/fall hazards? | Yes | No |
| 15. Have all staff reviewed the "Playground Safety Rules"? | Yes | No |

Inspector

Date