

POLICY

The Upper Grand District School Board recognizes the need to promote positive play experiences within a safe school environment as per the requirements of current legislation, and in the context of the advice provided by the Board insurer.

Administrative Detail

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief of Operations to administer and monitor this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of the Principals and Facility Services to implement this policy.
3. This policy operates in conjunction with: Policy # 102 School Generated Funds; Policy # 302 Purchasing of Goods and Services; the Canadian Standards Association's Children's Play Spaces and Equipment CAN/CSA-Z614-03 (or most current version); and the Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) Statement on playground Standards, November 7, 2000 (or most current version), and other relevant legislation.

A. NEWLY PURCHASED OR NEW DONATED PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

1. All donated equipment must be new from the manufacturer. No used equipment will be installed on Board property.
2. All newly purchased or donated playground equipment must comply with Canadian Standards Association's CAN/CSA-Z614-03, Children's Play Spaces and Equipment (or most current version). Letters of compliance with this standard from the equipment manufacturer must be retained with all other documents for the equipment.
3. The Principal is the primary communication with the Board and is responsible for defining the needs of the school in considering the purchase of playground equipment.
4. All donated or purchased playground equipment becomes the sole property of the Board.
5. The school, through its School Council or other parent group, is responsible for:
 - a) acquiring the funds to purchase new playground equipment;
 - b) all costs of the installation including equipment, containment, protective surfacing material, signage, and any excavation work required;
 - c) ongoing maintenance, repairs, and upgrading of playground equipment, and
 - d) developing a plan for replacement of playground equipment based on the fifteen (15) year life expectancy of most equipment.
6. The Board encourages schools, through its School Council or other parent group, to establish a contingency fund of at least ten percent (10%) of the purchase price of playground equipment for ongoing maintenance and repairs.

7. The Principal is responsible for selecting a play structure from a manufacturer which must meet or exceed design and performance specifications as established by the Facility Services Department.
8. The Project Co-ordinator of Facility Services is responsible for the final approval regarding standards of design, construction and location of all playground equipment prior to purchase. Preference will be given to lower risk and lower maintenance structures.
9. Schools are encouraged to give consideration to alternative play areas such as naturalized areas, berms, trees, and pathways before purchasing a creative playground structure. All plans require prior approval of the Project Coordinator of Facility Services.
10. Although the Board accepts design standards of reputable manufacturers, it has restricted certain design aspects. The following considerations shall be adhered to when purchasing any playground structure:

Design:

- a) Culverts, tire swings, sewer pipe, teeter-totters, merry go-rounds, pressure treated wood structural members, diggers and track rides shall not be installed.
- b) Maximum fall height of structures is two meters.
- c) Pulleys and similar equipment hazardous to fingers, long hair and loose clothing shall not be installed.
- d) Washed metering stone, conforming to Ontario Provincial Standards (OPS) #1002 is to be used for the protective surface and must conform to the sizing requirements outlined in the current CAN/CSA-Z614 standard.

Location:

- a) The equipment must be situated away from fire exits, fire routes, ploughing routes, potential portable sites, high traffic areas, underground and overhead services, gullies, waterways, rocky terrain, and hard surfaces, and must minimally affect the operations of grass cutting.

- b) The location must be clearly visible from the school and, wherever possible, within public view.
- c) The location must be a well-drained area.
- d) Play structure containments are not to be placed within fifteen (15) metres of an existing sand box.
- e) The Board reserves the right to restrict other design aspects as deemed appropriate.

B. INSTALLATION OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

1. The Principal is responsible for choosing a location on the property for the playground equipment with approval of the Board's Project Coordinator.
2. **Volunteer installations will not be permitted.**
3. A qualified professional (e.g. manufacturer or vendor) must install all structures, equipment, materials and containment (as approved by the Project Co-ordinator of Facility Services). On completion, the manufacturer must provide the Board with a letter indicating that the equipment and installation conforms to the current CAN/CSA guidelines and standards, and the terms and conditions of the guarantee and warranty.
4. Principals shall ensure that all installers of playground equipment on Board property provide proof of liability insurance in the amount of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00) with the Board named as an additional insured. The installer must also provide a Certificate of Good Standing from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Prior to installation, the Principal shall forward all documents to the Project Co-ordinator.
5. The installer is required to barricade equipment on a daily basis until all work is completed (e.g. snow fence).
6. All surface and ground preparation must be provided by qualified personnel in accordance with recommended CSA standards.
7. The Principal and Project Co-ordinator of Facility Services shall ensure that all newly installed equipment and site preparation/ground cover is

inspected prior to use by a certified playground inspector. The Principal will retain the inspector's checklist for future reference, and a copy will be sent to the Project Co-ordinator of Facility Services.

8. All playgrounds must have signage to identify manufacturer's information, the intended age of users (provided by manufacturer), and the manufacturer's contact number.
9. All playgrounds must have signage indicating that they are unsupervised outside of school hours. Refer to Appendix 'A' for signage wording.

C. INSPECTIONS FOR NEW OR EXISTING EQUIPMENT

1. Daily Inspections

The Principal shall implement a daily visual inspection program to look for overnight vandalism to the play structures or harmful debris under the structures (eg. broken glass). Simple documentation of such should be maintained for three years. (Please see attached Appendix 'B' for sample daily inspection form.)

2. Monthly Inspections

The Principal shall implement a monthly inspection program. This shall entail checking for loose bolts, wearing of chains or swing seats, etc. and the general security of the structures. Monthly inspections shall be logged. (Please see attached Appendix 'C' for sample inspection form.)

3. Annual Inspections

The Project Co-ordinator of Facility Services shall implement an annual inspection program performed by an external professionally certified playground consultant. The Principal should attend the annual inspection so that first hand knowledge of potential problems can be gained. If during an inspection, a weakness is identified in a structure and it cannot be immediately repaired, the equipment shall be isolated or removed from service until repairs can be made. A copy of the annual inspection will be delivered to the Principal and School Council.

D. ON-GOING MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

1. The School shall assume responsibility for maintaining the structures to required standards and will make repairs to play structures as per "C3. Annual Inspections". Facility Services will provide a list of approved playground repair contractors, and all repairs will be completed by one of the pre-qualified contractors. If the equipment poses a safety hazard and the school funds are not available, the equipment shall be taken out of service and/or removed.
2. Some minor repairs may be performed by Facility Services. The Principal is responsible for contacting Facility Services to determine what work, if any can be accomplished in-house.
3. If Facility Services becomes aware of a maintenance issue when the Principal and/or School Council are not available (i.e. summer months) Facility Services will take action to make the play structure safe.
4. The Board shall assume responsibility for maintaining the protective surfaces to required standards for each creative play structure.

E. PLAY STRUCTURE REMOVAL

1. Once a school and School Council have received an inspection report that designates aspects of a play structure as unsafe and not conforming to the CSA guidelines, the school will have a period of three (3) months to develop a plan to rectify the situation. If a playground action plan is not submitted to the Project Co-ordinator the structure can be removed from the site by Facility Services staff.
2. If at any time, the School determines that their play structure is not worth repairing, Facility Services can be contacted to remove the structure.
3. Equipment taken out of service shall not be given to the community due to the potential for an unsafe condition (e.g. liability).

F. WINTER USE OF PLAYGROUNDS

It is the position of the Upper Grand District School Board that all playground equipment cannot be safely operated during the following winter conditions:

- a) freezing temperatures,

- b) snow build-up,
- c) ice or freezing rain,
- d) frozen ground cover, and
- e) periods when students wear winter clothing.

All playground equipment is off limits from November 1 to March 31, at the discretion of the Principal. Notice of this will be posted with appropriate signage (see Appendix 'A') and communicated to parents (e.g. newsletters).

G. SAFETY RULES

Teachers, students and volunteer supervisors should be introduced to the following rules with periodic reminders – e.g. September and March:

1. No pushing.
2. No running around play structures.
3. Take turns.
4. No fighting.
5. In case of injury – DO NOT MOVE THE PERSON. Report to supervisor immediately.
6. No throwing sticks, stones, or other objects.
7. No eating while on playground equipment.
8. Playground equipment is off limits during rainy weather or when conditions in section "F" are apparent (freezing temperatures, frozen ground cover, snow build-up, ice or freezing rain, and periods when students wear winter clothing).
8. Skipping ropes, ropes or strings are not permitted on playground equipment.
9. No scarves or loose drawstrings are permitted on playground equipment.

10. Schools should set rules for specific pieces of play equipment, e.g. define maximum number of students and age levels permitted.

H. ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Parents are to be notified by the school that the Board does not carry accident insurance for students. Student Accident Enrolment forms for coverage are available at the start of each school year.

The Board reserves the right to remove or relocate any playground equipment in the event of safety, accommodation or other reasonable concerns.



OSBIE Position Statement - Playground Standards – November 7, 2000

The Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) has long held the position that member school boards should have policies and procedures in place which incorporate a centralized, systematic approach to playground installation, inspection and maintenance.

The introduction of the CSA Guidelines (CAN/CSA-Z614-M90) in June, 1990 was the first step towards a standardized approach to equipment design, installation, maintenance and inspection of playground equipment. In May, 1998, the guidelines were formalized into a voluntary standard under CAN/CSA-Z614-98.

One of primary components of OSBIE's Mission Statement is: "To benefit member school boards through co-operation in risk management." Risk management is a systematic process that includes, but is not limited to, risk identification, identifying various risk management strategies and developing and monitoring an implementation plan.

With respect to playground safety, OSBIE has identified playground equipment as a frequent source of school yard injuries in Ontario. In addition to proper supervision, implementing and following a systematic installation, maintenance and inspection program, such as that provided under the CSA standard, is an effective strategy to avoid or minimize playground equipment injuries.

The CSA standard does not apply to equipment installed prior to May, 1998, nor is there a requirement for equipment to be removed that pre-dates the standard. However, it is OSBIE's recommendation that member school boards conduct an assessment of their playground equipment to evaluate the age, condition and level of compliance with the CSA standard. Equipment should be ranked in accordance to age and safety factors, with unsafe equipment being removed from service immediately. With proper maintenance and inspection programs, non-conforming equipment can continue to be operated safely until it can be systematically replaced with new equipment which conforms to the CSA Standard. Member school boards are encouraged to migrate towards the standard in a systematic manner over a specific time period (e.g. 5 to 7 years) with the oldest or unsafe equipment being replaced first.

School boards are held to a standard of care of a prudent parent to protect children from injuries during school hours - including playground activities. OSBIE commends those school boards who have developed policies and procedures which incorporate the CSA-Z614-98 standard - in spite of the opposition they have faced when unsafe equipment has been removed. We believe that following the standard will reduce the frequency and severity of playground injuries on Ontario school grounds.