



BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
<i>ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE</i> Playground Equipment Installation and Maintenance	<i>ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NUMBER</i> 619
<i>Directional Policy</i> Stewardship of Resources - 600	

TITLE OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:

Playground Equipment Installation and Maintenance

DATE APPROVED:

February 26, 2019

PROJECTED REVIEW DATE:

August 2024

DIRECTIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT:

Stewardship of Resources - 600

ALIGNMENT WITH MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington Catholic District School Board recognizes the inherent value of physical activity and supports school based projects that provide for the installation of playground equipment on school sites. This administrative procedure outlines the Board's obligations surrounding current and future playground structures. It has been written to reflect our priority for promoting positive play experiences within a safe environment.



Strategic Priorities 2017-2020

Vision

Achieving Excellence in Catholic Education
LEARN • LEAD • SERVE

Mission

To educate students in faith-filled, safe, inclusive Catholic learning communities by nurturing the mind, body and spirit of all.

LEARN

Achieve excellence in instruction and assessment to enable all students to become reflective, self-directed, lifelong learners.

LEAD

Foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, to enable all students to realize their God-given potential.

SERVE

Inspire engagement and commitment to stewardship for creation to enable all students to become caring and responsible citizens.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

Application:

This procedure applies to all school sites and all school playground equipment whether provided by the Board as part of a capital project, or purchased with funds donated to the Board as part of a local school initiative. School playground equipment includes structural equipment (e.g. shade structure).

Elements of diversity, accessibility, flexibility, child-scale, sensory stimulation and safety will be included in the schoolyard design. Playground equipment suitable for students with special needs shall be considered when the selection is made.

Funding of new play structures, the upgrading of existing structures (new parts), ground cover, and cribbing is the responsibility of the local school community.

1. New Equipment and Playground areas:

All schools and school communities are responsible for raising the funds for the purchase and installation of playground equipment. Once installed, the Board assumes the ownership for the play structure and equipment and the responsibility for maintaining the structure as set out in this administrative procedure.

The Principal shall act as the school's primary resource person for the duration of the project. The principal, in co-operation with the Manager of Purchasing, Planning and Facilities Administration, staff from Facility Services and the community representatives, shall prepare a development proposal incorporating the following:

- plan for location of equipment
- type of material
- estimate of costs (including site preparation and installation plan)
- timeline
- financing plan

The proposal shall adhere to the following guidelines. New equipment and playground areas should:

- be closely related to the existing site
- not interfere with large open play space areas
- be designed to elicit a wide variety of responses and appeal to children's sense of creativity
- have a variable environment in terms of texture, levels and heights as a means of providing for individual differences
- provide the opportunities for both individual and group activity

The design, construction and installation of playground equipment must conform to the standards from the Canadian Standards Association CSA- Z614, Children's Playspaces and Equipment in effect at the time of installation.

The Board's Facility Services Department must be included in the planning and installation process. It is recommended that a third party qualified and/or certified person work with school committees (at their cost) during design and installation and, if possible, would coordinate site specific concerns with appropriate Board staff.

Although the Board accepts design standards of reputable manufacturers, it has restricted certain design aspects:

- wood structural members are not acceptable
- platform height not to exceed six (6) feet
- swings not to exceed eight (8) feet
- wood fibre with a current International Play Equipment Manufacturing Association (IPEMA) certificate is the minimum standard be used for the protective surface.
- plastic border material or pressure treated wood shall be used as the material for the enclosure of the protective surface.

The Board reserves the right to restrict other design aspects as deemed appropriate.

In order to be support students with accessibility issues, installations must reflect

- Minimum accessibility requirements
- Accessibility specifications for element with the play space
- Amount of play spaces within the structure that must be accessible.
- Elevated component as well as ground level components
- Requirements for accessible routes within and leading to the play structure

2. Existing Equipment

- The Board will provide resources for minor maintenance (e.g. approximate value of \$500 for items such as removal of protrusions, removal of equipment pieces). It is the responsibility of the school community to fund extensive maintenance repairs (including from vandalism), the supply of required replacement parts and ground cover. Facility Services will assist school principals regarding contractors available to make authorized repairs.
- School council/parent groups are responsible for consideration of a plan for replacement based on the expected life of the equipment.
- Additions to existing playground equipment must be approved by the Board's Facility Services Department prior to any in-depth planning.

3. Natural Play Areas: Considerations

The board promotes the importance of providing all students with the opportunity to play in the natural world. Loose parts play with natural elements such as sticks, pinecones, logs, stumps, mud kitchens, sound or water walls, learning gardens etc. provide experiences for further exploration and open-ended play. Natural playscapes provide unlimited opportunities for inclusiveness and creativity, are gender-neutral and accessible to a wide range of ages and abilities.

Careful consideration must be made when offering natural materials to students. Principals and staff must carefully consider students' competencies and provide due diligence in inspections, supervision and safety when providing loose parts to students.

Any natural materials that are permanently installed must follow the new equipment protocol. This would include loose parts that get frozen into the ground in the winter. Objects higher than 36" tall must be barricaded off if frozen into the ground. The suggestion would be to limit loose parts to under 36" tall to avoid this situation.

4. Inspection Procedures

Where weather conditions have resulted in an inability to complete adequate inspections, the principal shall place the play structures off-limits for use. (see Section 9: On-going use of playground equipment)

- a) **Daily Visual Inspections:** A visual inspection shall be performed on all playground equipment used by students by the Principal or designate at least once one each school day. This inspection is intended to identify obvious safety concerns and needed repairs, such as glass, broken boards, loose or missing handrails or anything that could cause injury to a student. When a deficiency is identified in the daily inspection, the Principal shall follow the steps set out in this procedure. A daily maintenance log book must be kept on file at the school.
- b) **Monthly Inspections:** Monthly inspections of the playground equipment shall be done by one of the school principal or the school custodian. The monthly inspection will be completed using e-base and retained for 2 years.
- c) **Annual Inspections will be facilitated by the Facility Services Department:** A detailed annual inspection of playground equipment located on Board property shall be performed each year by an inspector who has received appropriate training in the inspection and maintenance of playground equipment. Using these reports, the Principal, through consultation with Facility Services department and the school council, can prepare recommendations as to whether the equipment is adequate, or should be removed, renovated or upgraded. In the event the school community cannot provide sufficient funds for the required repairs and maintenance of the playground equipment, the Board will reserve the right to decommission the structure.

The inspection findings and actions shall be recorded and kept on file in the Facility Services Department for two years. Repairs that have been identified will be completed as soon as possible after the report is received.

- d) **Inspection Checklists:** The monthly inspections will use the checklists provided in the facilities manual (*also attached – Appendix A*).

5. Maintenance and Repairs

- a) When a staff member identifies a safety concern or an item in need of repair, it shall be reported immediately to the Principal (or designate) who will notify the Facility Services Department immediately. When a defect is reported it shall be repaired as soon as possible, and, in the interim, the Principal shall make the equipment out of bounds to students.
- b) When repairs are made on site, the Facility Services staff are to log the work completed and retain it on file. The work order for repairs completed by the facilities staff will be the record of repair.
- c) Should a repair that involves a safety hazard take more than one day to complete, the children shall be prevented from using the equipment through the use of appropriate fencing and a “keep off” warning sign.
- d) When the cost to repair a piece of playground equipment is excessive, the Manager of Facility Services, after consulting with the school principal, may decide that the equipment should be taken out of service and removed from the school grounds.

6. Equipment on Local Recreation Authority Property

In some cases, playground equipment that is used by the students of a school is located on non-Board property adjacent to the school property. In these cases the daily inspection procedures shall be carried out by the Principal or designate, as detailed above and the Principal shall follow the same procedures for reporting a concern to Facility Services.

The Principal shall make the equipment out of bounds to students until the equipment is repaired.

Facility Services shall advise the local recreation authority of the need to repair playground equipment located on recreation property and shall monitor the progress of repairs and advise the School Principal when the repairs are completed.

7. Finance

- a) All schools are responsible for raising funds for the purchase of playground equipment, and the funds must be in place prior to the commitment to purchase and install of the equipment. (Schools may apply centrally for funds of up to \$15,000 to support the cost of ground cover suitable and in accordance with accessibility requirements for play structures.)

- b) The Principal must notify the Manager of Purchasing, Planning and Facilities Administration of the school's plans (i.e. type of equipment, cost, fundraising projects, etc.) during the planning stage and submit a plan for review.
- c) When the school is ready to send collected funds to the Board, the Principal shall notify the Finance department.

8. General/Procurement

The Principal, on behalf of the parent groups, should contact the Board's Manager of Purchasing, Planning and Facilities Administration before requesting information from the manufacturers/suppliers to avoid unnecessary legal issues. For example, when contacting a manufacturer, tender should not be requested, but rather an estimate.

Once the project is ready to proceed, the Manager of Purchasing, Planning and Facilities Administration will ensure that the correct purchasing process is used (i.e. quotes, request for proposal, request for tender, etc.)

Installations by volunteers is not permitted.

9. On-going use of playground equipment

Each school should conduct playground safety sessions to reduce the risk of student injury, outlining the playground rules applicable to the specific location. This should include discussion of appropriate footwear to be worn while playing on the structures.

These sessions should be held for students and staff at the beginning of each school year. In addition, on an annual basis, the Principal will determine the impact that winter conditions are having on the playground equipment. The following winter conditions can impact on the ability to complete appropriate inspections and make equipment that is otherwise in compliance with the CSA standard, unsafe for use:

- At temperatures below 0 C, very few types of protective ground surfacing remain resilient enough to offer any degree of protection to a falling child – regardless of depth. If the ground cover is frozen, the play equipment cannot be operated safely.
- Snow build-up can cause two problems on a play structure – play surfaces can become very slippery, and it can create suffocation hazards if the openings at the end of tube slides or similar structures become closed in by drifting snow

- Ice or freezing rain can make play surfaces, hand grips and stairways very slippery, increasing the risk of slip and fall injuries.

Where weather conditions have resulted in an inability to complete adequate inspections, the principal shall place the play structures off-limits for use.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment with the Stewardship of Resources Directional Policy

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure;
- Reviewing this Administrative Procedure annually;

Superintendents are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff are aware of this Administrative Procedure

The Manager of Facilities is responsible for:

- Ensuring a third party qualified and/or certified person is involved during design and installation
- Ensuring all play structures and equipment are installed by an approved manufacturer
- Facilitating the recorded annual inspection for each school every spring of each year
- Ensuring repairs completed by Facilities staff are logged in the record of repair.

The Manager of Purchasing, Planning and Facilities Administration is responsible for:

- Working collaboratively with Principals to ensure purchasing processes are adhered to;
- Ensuring all manufacturers installing playground equipment on Board property provide proof of insurance coverage for a minimum of two million dollars, liability insurance with the Board named as co-insured, as well as a certificate of good standing from Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Principals (or designates) are responsible for:

- Performing daily visual inspections;
- Maintaining the daily maintenance log book;
- Performing monthly inspections (using checklist provided in Appendix A);
- Reporting safety concerns or items in need of repair to the Manager of Facilities;
- Preventing children from using equipment when repair involves a safety hazard and takes more than one day to complete;
- Notifying the Superintendent of Business and Manager of Purchasing of plans to purchase equipment;
- Conducting playground safety sessions at the beginning of each school year;
- Forwarding collected funds to accounting;
- Ensuring school councils are aware of the details of this administrative procedure.

Staff are responsible for:

- Reporting safety concerns or items in need of repair to their Principal (or designate).

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

The design, construction, installation and maintenance of PVNCCDSB playgrounds complies with the Canadian Standards Association Z614, Children's Playspaces and Equipment, thereby creating a foundation for safety and minimizing injuries.

DEFINITIONS:**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

PVNC Custodian Manual: Playground and Equipment Inspections

REFERENCES:

[PVNC Catholic District School Board Vision and Strategic Priorities 2017-2020](#)

Annex "H" of the CAN/CSA Z164-07 *Children's Play Spaces and Equipment Standard*

Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange: Risk Management Advisory – Playground Safety: Winter Use Advisory