

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 544 SECTION: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	
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Contact	Corporate Services; Human Resources

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND NATURAL PLAY SPACES

BACKGROUND

Renfrew County District School Board (District) recognizes the value of play in the healthy development of all children. Independent and cooperative play helps to foster social, creative, emotional and physical development.

Funding for new playground equipment, play structures or natural play spaces and the purchase of components to upgrade existing structures is the responsibility of the local school community in consultation with the Principal. School Principals may make an application to the Superintendent of Corporate Services, in accordance with Administrative Procedure 516 to utilize the School Loan Program. Once installed, playground equipment becomes Renfrew County District School Board property and the District assumes the responsibility and liability for inspections and maintenance.

PROCEDURE

1. The Standard

- a. All newly purchased playground equipment, replacement parts and natural play spaces must comply with the current Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standard for Children’s Playspaces and Equipment.
- b. Preference should be given to plastic or metal structures rather than wood.
- c. Wood and metal slides are not permitted as new purchases.
- d. Platform heights are not to exceed six (6) feet.
- e. Swing set heights are not to exceed eight (8) feet.
- f. Washed pea gravel or washed sand must comply with Ontario Provincial Standards.
- g. Equipment installed prior to the implementation of standards shall be maintained and modified to provide a safe play experience.
- h. The Health and Safety Assistant Manager is responsible to the Director of Education to ensure that all newly purchased equipment meets the current CSA standard.

2. Planning

- a. The Principal is responsible for providing information about the process to local community members interested in purchasing playground equipment or developing a naturalized play space. When a project involves the development of natural play spaces the Principal shall provide the local committee with the document, *Natural Play Space Design Guidelines for School Yards in the Renfrew County District School Board*. This document can be obtained from the Health and Safety Office.
- b. The local committee is responsible for all costs related to the purchase, site preparation,

- and installation of playground equipment. The purchased equipment becomes the property of Renfrew County District School Board.
- c. During the process of developing a detailed proposal, the local committee shall consult with the public (Principal's newsletter or school website may be used for this purpose) and persons with disabilities regarding accessibility needs of children and caregivers with disabilities. The Principal must also consult with the Health and Safety Assistant Manager regarding strategies to ensure the design is compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.
 - d. The local committee will develop a detailed proposal including:
 - i. type of equipment to be purchased (with drawings)
 - ii. detailed site plan for location of equipment with attention to accessibility issues
 - iii. costs, including site preparation and installation plan
 - iv. timeline for construction and
 - v. financial plan
 - e. Proposal approval must be received from the school's Principal, the Health and Safety Officer and the Superintendent of Business – Corporate Services.
 - f. The Principal shall contact the District's purchasing department prior to requesting information from any manufacturers or suppliers (as per adherence to AP 515 Purchasing and Tendering). Further, the Principal shall request the purchase order be issued by the District's Assistant Manager - Procurement on behalf of the school to ensure compliance with Ontario public sector procurement requirements.
 - g. The equipment, installation and site must meet or exceed the current Canadian Standards Association standard CSA-Z614 - current *Children's Playspaces and Equipment*.

3. Construction

Installation of playground equipment will be according to the manufacturer's specifications and the CSA standard. Assembly of playground equipment must be performed by qualified personnel. The Principal or the Health and Safety Assistant Manager reserves the right to inspect the site and equipment at any point in the installation process. Final inspection and approval must be provided by the Health and Safety Assistant Manager prior to the equipment being used.

All manufacturers installing playground equipment shall provide proof of vehicle and liability insurance of not less than five (5) million dollars and a certificate of good standing with the WSIB. Prior to any installation, the contractor shall complete the *Renfrew County District School Board Contractors' Pre-Qualification Form* and be approved by the Health and Safety Assistant Manager prior to any work commencing. Upon completion of the installation, the District is to be provided with a copy of the guarantee and warranty from the manufacturer/installer.

4. Inspections

- a. Daily Visual Inspection:

The Principal or designate is responsible for performing a quick, daily inspection of playground equipment. This check is to identify obvious hazards such as broken glass, broken handrails, and damaged equipment. If an immediate hazard is discovered, steps must be taken to protect the students from harm (repair immediately or prevent

access). If the problem does not present an immediate safety hazard to students, a work order should be sent to the plant department with a copy to the Health and Safety Assistant Manager for verification. Record of the daily inspection must be kept at the school. During the months of July and August, playground equipment will be inspected once per week by custodial staff.

b. **Monthly Inspection:**

The Principal or designate is responsible for performing a monthly inspection of playground equipment, using a checklist provided by the Director's designate. The records of the monthly inspections must be kept at the school for three (3) years.

c. **Annual Inspection:**

The Health and Safety Office is responsible for providing an annual inspection by a qualified inspector. The Health and Safety Office will provide a copy of the inspection report to the school.

5. **Unsafe Equipment**

If playground equipment is determined to be unsafe, the Principal or designate will prevent access, post warnings and contact the plant department to arrange for repair.

If it is determined that the playground structure is beyond repair, the equipment will be removed and disposed of as appropriate in the circumstances.

The school Principal is responsible for placing playground structures off-limits during winter when the surrounding surface is frozen and at other times when weather conditions make the use of the structures unsafe.

6. **Supervision**

The Principal or designate will ensure that students and staff members supervising the schoolyard are instructed in the proper use of playground equipment at the start of the school year. Yard supervisors will strictly enforce playground safety rules.

LEGAL REFERENCES

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, O. Reg. 191/11

Education Act S. 265; S. 286

Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standard for Children's Playspaces and Equipment.

RCDSB REFERENCES

AP 515 Purchasing and Tendering

AP 516 School Loan Program

Procedure History

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