



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for Playground Equipment.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that playground equipment on its school properties has historically been provided through the participation of school and community groups raising funds for their purchase, installation and ongoing maintenance in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association Standard Z614:20 for Children’s Playground Equipment and Surfacing.

The Facilities Services Department recognizes its role in the health and safety of students, staff and the greater community and will assume responsibility for the ongoing operations and maintenance of playgrounds on school properties.

Schools will continue to work with their communities and will seek partnerships as appropriate to support new playground equipment.

DEFINITION

“Playground Equipment” is defined as a play structure, anchored to the ground, or two or more play structures that are attached or functionally linked that provide one or more play activities, and are approved for use in the play areas of Niagara Catholic elementary schools.

NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

1. All proposed new installations of playground equipment must be reviewed and approved by the Facilities Services Department prior to any type of commitment of its procurement. Facilities Services will review the age appropriateness of the proposed play structure, location, drainage, underground utilities (gas, water, telephone, cable, hydro, drainage pipes), compliance with standards and regulations, and the estimated ongoing costs of the operation and maintenance of the structure.
2. All equipment must comply with CSA Z614:20 (Latest Edition):
3. All playground equipment and installation must be purchased through Niagara Catholic Purchasing Services and shall follow the Purchasing and Supply Chain Management Policy 600.1.
4. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislates all public buildings and grounds to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. School playgrounds are included in the Act. All new playground equipment installations must be AODA compliant (site to be accessible and equipment to include ground-level accessible equipment for the participation of all students).
5. The protective ground surfacing on all new playground installations must be poured-in-place seamless chemical-binder/rubber-filler synthetic surface to a sufficient depth to achieve critical height protection per CAN/CSA Z614-(Latest Edition). Loose-fill surfacing is not acceptable.

6. Location of the equipment and construction/installation will take place under the direction and supervision of the Facilities Services Department.
7. All installed equipment shall become the property of the Board.

WINTER USE NOT PERMITTED

The playground equipment is NOT safe for use if there is/are:

- Freezing temperatures - 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. Snow build-up can cause two problems on a play structure: it can make play surfaces very slippery; and 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.
- Playground equipment cannot be operated safely under the winter conditions as described above. Schools shall place this equipment "Closed" during these conditions, with appropriate caution tape, pylons and signage as required.

PLAYGROUND RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Niagara Catholic shall adhere to the OSBIE Playground Safety Recommendations and CSA Standard Z614:20 the Canadian Standards for Children's Playground Equipment and Surfacing with respect to all usage, operations and maintenance of play structures located on Niagara Catholic property.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The ongoing operations and maintenance of school playgrounds is the responsibility of the Facilities Services Department. Inspections shall be completed and documented on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis.

Daily, Weekly, & Monthly Inspections

The Facilities Services Department shall ensure the full-time Caretaker of each school is trained by a Certified Canadian Playground Safety Institute Instructor, on the requirements for daily, weekly, and monthly inspections of school playground equipment and surfaces. A review of all requirements will be provided to all Caretakers during the yearly summer professional development in-service held by the Facilities Services Department. Newly appointed Caretakers will be trained immediately upon on-boarding with the Board.

Inspections must be conducted every school day, prior to the students' arrival, with the general condition and any observed deficiencies recorded and corrected. A more extensive inspection is to occur on a weekly and monthly basis. All inspections are to be carefully documented. The Caretaker shall complete and log a daily and weekly Playground Equipment Daily/Weekly and Monthly Inspection Report as per the Canadian Playground Safety Institute (see link below).

If the daily, weekly, or monthly inspections identify any damage or defect that may not be repaired prior to the school day, the Caretaker shall promptly remove the playground from service using caution tape, pylons and signage, and shall advise the Principal, their Coordinator, and the Facilities Services Department immediately via work-order (eBase).

Yearly Inspections Conducted by Certified Playground Safety Inspector

Yearly inspections of playground equipment and surfaces shall be conducted and recorded by the Facilities Services Department as per CSA Standard Z614:20 Children’s Playground Equipment & Surfacing. All yearly inspections shall be completed by a Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) Certified Inspector. A yearly report shall be completed and copies provided to the school Principal, and the Controller of Facilities Services. The timing of the yearly inspections is to coincide with the start of each school year to ensure the safety of students.

Reference Publications:

- [*CAN/CSA-Z614-\(Latest Edition\) \(Canadian Standard Association for Children’s Playspaces and Equipment\)ASTM F 1292-99 \(American Society for Testing Materials-Standard Test Method for Shock-Absorbing Properties of Playing Surface Systems and Materials\)*](#)
- [*Ontario School Boards’ Insurance Exchange – Advisory Bulletins*](#)
- [*Canadian Playground Safety Institute*](#)

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