Playground Safety

POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Ocean Grove Primary School - 52551340

Overview

The major cause of playground injury is falling from playground equipment, with fractures and sprains the most common injuries from playgrounds. This policy has been developed to assist schools to improve safety for the students who use the playgrounds and play equipment.

Common playground hazards

- Inadequate safe fall zone – the area beneath and around playground equipment where a child might land if they fall. The size of the fall zone can depend on the height of the equipment and its use
- Poorly maintained equipment
- Height of the equipment
- Raised surfaces without guardrails – such as platforms, ramps and bridges should have guardrails and barriers to prevent falls
- Surfacing of playground areas – areas beneath and around playground equipment where there is a potential of a fall requires impact absorbing material
- Trip hazards
- Areas of entrapment – equipment should be built and installed in a way so that a child's head, neck, limbs or fingers cannot become trapped
- Sharp edges
- Equipment is located within 2.5 metres of buildings, fences or trees
- No close access to phones or radios in the event of an emergency

Strategies to reduce the risk of injuries on playgrounds

- Ensure that **new** playground equipment meets Australian Standards
- Install soft fill material (e.g. tan bark) that is at least 250mm deep in the general play area, or 300mm deep under high use areas
- Ensure that any soft fill material is maintained and inspected on a regular basis (e.g. raked frequently)
- Create and maintain clear fall zones around equipment where a child can fall without hitting objects such as fences, seating, pathways and trees
- Depth of soft fall should be checked frequently to ensure surfacing has not displaced significantly, especially in areas under fall zones. Use of depth markers to indicate softfall.
- Ensure that any synthetic surface (and its installation) is maintained and meets Australian Standards
- Install different equipment for students of different ages
- Ensure that playground equipment rails and barriers are vertical so they cannot be used as footholds for climbing
- Instruct staff and students in the safe use of playgrounds and equipment
- Provide adequate supervision to prevent injuries by ensuring students use playground equipment properly and don't engage in unsafe behaviour
- Design playgrounds to allow visualisation of students throughout the playground area, with visual barriers minimised as much as possible
- Painted surfaces should be maintained to prevent flaking paint, corrosion and deterioration
- Ensure all tyres used as playground equipment do not collect water and debris
- Ensure that any concrete footings for the playground equipment are at least 20cm below ground level and covered over

Reporting Hazards, Near Misses and Incidents

- Playground Hazards, Near Misses and Incidents must be reported on the local school register, and or EduSafe Plus.
- Hazards, Near Misses and Incidents identified must be risk assessed and suitable controls implemented.

Playground inspection schedule:

- Conduct regular inspections, repairs and maintenance of playground equipment and surroundings
- Inspect all playground areas and equipment for excessive wear, deterioration and any potential hazards
- Develop a comprehensive maintenance program for each playground area
- Ensure all repairs and replacements of equipment parts are completed following the manufacturer's instruction
- Ensure records of all maintenance, inspections and repairs are retained, including any checklists used.

Inspection Frequency	**Designated Person**	**Task**
Daily	Teachers on yard duty	Visual inspection of all equipment for obvious hazards
Weekly	Maintenance staff	Inspection and maintenance of equipment components (including bolts, nail heads, raking of soft fall and sandpits)
Weekly	Leadership Safety Walk	Weekly Checklist, focusing on identified hazards (including play equipment and soft fall)
Each Term	Principal and workplace Health and Safety Representative (if available)	Thorough inspection of all playground equipment
Annual – or as per the manufacturers recommendation	Structural/Playground expert	Formal review of the structural elements of the play equipment/shade sails

Incidents reportable to WorkSafe

Schools must report the following types of health and safety incidents to WorkSafe:

- death
- employees or persons who require either:
- medical treatment by a doctor (e.g. fractures, administration of a drug or medical treatment)
- immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital

WorkSafe must be notified immediately by calling **132 360** and then in writing within 48 hours using one of the following forms:

- Online Incident Notification Form

Resources

- *Weekly Playground Inspection Checklist*
- *Playground equipment and structures safety inspection checklist (DOCX)*
- *Reporting Notifiable Incidents to WorkSafe*

Related Topics

- *First Aid for Students and Staff : Policy | education.vic.gov.au*
- *Managing and Reporting School Incidents (including emergencies) : Policy | education.vic.gov.au*

Legislation

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Equipment Public Safety Act 1994*

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2027