

811 PLAYGROUND INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria and procedures for the installation and maintenance of playgrounds on District operated property. This includes when community groups fundraise or apply for grants for playgrounds to be located on District owned property, for playgrounds that are installed by the District, and for playgrounds that are currently in place.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Duluth Public Schools recognizes the intrinsic value of playgrounds as essential components of the educational environment through fostering physical outdoor activities and social development. In alignment with encouraging play with students, the District is also committed to maintaining playgrounds to industry standards to protect the well-being of our students and community.

This policy is to establish the installation and maintenance procedures for playgrounds on District operated property.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Playground(s)" refers to equipment/structures that are created, purchased, and/or placed for use in children's physical play, regardless of the material (plastic, wood, logs, etc.).
1. It may be referred to as playgrounds, play structures, play elements, or play equipment.
 2. It includes the equipment itself, as well as the play surface and surrounding area.
 3. It includes, but is not limited to: climbers, slides, swings, sliding poles, large composite play structures, play houses, sand boxes, kitchens, sand diggers, and open areas for children to run and play.
 4. Nature walking trails are not considered playgrounds, unless there are man-made elements or naturally occurring elements that have been installed to act as play structures (stepping stones, balance beams, etc.) on/in the trail area. Should these elements mimic playground equipment and be installed on the nature trails, the elements are then evaluated using the criteria outlined in this policy.
 5. The policy and definition of "playground(s)" does not include amusement park equipment, sports or fitness equipment intended for children over the age of 12, soft contained play equipment, constant air inflatable play devices for home use, art and museum sculptures, water play equipment, nature garden spaces, loose items such as sand toys, sports equipment such as balls, or outdoor classroom spaces.

- a) Should play items be introduced onto the playground, the items must be maintained outside of the use zone.
 - b) Approval of items that do not meet the District definition of "playground(s)" are directed to Building Principals.
- 6. It may be referred to as playgrounds, play structures, play elements, or play equipment.
- 7. It includes the equipment itself, as well as the play surface and surrounding area.
- B. "Installations" refer to the replacement of old equipment with new, and/or the addition of new equipment entirely.
- C. "CPSI" is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector, a certification program facilitated by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

IV. SAFETY STANDARDS

- A. Duluth Public Schools requires all playgrounds regardless of installation dates to follow the following safety standards:
 - 1. United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, *Public Playground Safety Handbook*
 - 2. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F1487, F2373, F2075, F2223, F2479, F1951, F2049, and F1292.
- B. These standards include rules on surfacing materials, locations of playgrounds, equipment specific safety parameters, fall heights, and more.
- C. Play structures not complying with the above standards must have a certification from the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA).
- D. All play structures on District operated property must be designated and properly designed for commercial use.

V. CURRENTLY INSTALLED PLAYGROUNDS

- A. Currently installed playgrounds are required to comply with this policy. No playgrounds are considered to be exempt due to the installation date.
- B. Initial inspections will be performed by a CPSI at each playground within 60 days of approval of the Playground Installation and Maintenance Policy unless a different timeline is approved by the Facility Manager or Assistant Facility Manager.
- C. Repairs and modifications are required to be made within 90 days from the date of notification of the written report unless a different timeline is approved by Facility Manager

or Assistant Facility Manager. Should the CPSI identify any hazards that are deemed to be more immediate, a shorter timeline for repairs will be assigned.

- D. If repairs are not made within the 90 day allotment due to equipment delays, an order confirmation must be produced with an estimated arrival time.
- E. Once repairs are reported to have been completed, the CPSI will complete another inspection to verify repairs.
- F. If playgrounds are not compliant within 90 days of the initial inspection, the Facilities Department will remove the equipment or block from use unless a different decision or timeline is approved in writing by the Facility Manager or Assistant Facility Manager.

VI. ONGOING MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS, AND INSPECTIONS

- A. Once the initial playground inspections are completed and playgrounds on District operated property are determined to be compliant, a regular inspection process is necessary to support safety.
- B. A CPSI will inspect each playground on a biannual basis, producing a written report within 45 days of inspection.
 - 1. Written reports are available upon request to the District Safety Coordinator.
 - 2. Inspections will take place in the months of April or May and again in October or November, unless another timeframe has been approved by the Facility Manager or Assistant Facility Manager.
- C. Should any recommendations be noted, they will be submitted to the Facility Manager or Assistant Facility Manager for approval and coordination of repairs or modifications. It is expected that repairs are made within 90 days from the date of notification of the written report, unless the CPSI determined any hazards to be more immediate.
- D. Certain play elements may require varying types of maintenance. Maintenance plans are to be developed during the installation process.
 - 1. Maintenance on the playgrounds is facilitated by the Utilities Department.
 - 2. The Facility Director or Assistant Facility Director will determine if the repair or maintenance work is best suited for volunteers willing to assist, in house staff and/or contractors.
 - 3. If an external group has indicated interest in being involved in ongoing maintenance and repairs to the playground, the Facility Director or Assistant Facility Director will collaborate with the group's point of contact if the work needing to be completed is suitable for volunteers.
- E. When replacement equipment is necessary:

1. For commercially made equipment, it must be ordered from the correct manufacturer to match the current play structure
2. Records of purchase and installation must be maintained by the Facilities Department
3. Replacement components must be approved by the Facilities Department.
4. Repairs must not create additional hazards during the repair process.

VII. NEW INSTALLATION PROCESS

- A. New installations may stem from necessity through inspection, change in school composition or other reasons and may be requested by internal staff or through community groups.
- B. Requests are reviewed by the Facilities Department.
- C. A request for new installation must include the following documentation:
 1. Playground designs, specific equipment, and a site plan.
 - a) For IPEMA certified equipment, include certifications
 2. A quote from a manufacturer of the proposed designs, including the following details:
 - a) Length of time the quote is valid
 - b) Indication that installation is included
 - c) Inclusion of surfacing material
 - d) Anticipated length of life of the playground
 3. A maintenance plan from the manufacturer, including anticipated repair and/or maintenance costs for the next 10 years.
 - a) Include indication if the group is interested in assisting with future maintenance.
 4. A breakdown of where the funds plan to be generated
 5. A timeline of the installation process
 6. Should the request come from a community group, include the group's point of contact.
- D. Once the above documents are ready for submission, they are submitted to the Facilities Director to start an internal review of the request.
- E. A District-contracted CPSI will review the submitted documents and provide written feedback from a regulatory standpoint.

- F. The Facility Manager will provide written feedback to ensure the playground can be properly maintained, and that the structure is in a location that does not impede future building plans, utilities, or maintenance activities, such as snow removal, drainage, etc.
- G. Written responses will be reviewed with the interested party. The Facility Manager will make a final determination within 90 days of submission through consideration of the CPSI review, impact on District facilities, cost to the District for ongoing maintenance, and liabilities of such installation. The final determination will also include a revised cost estimate to include an estimated 10% of the project cost in change orders.
- H. Should approval be denied, interested parties may appeal to the School Board through a written request.
- I. If the installation is approved:
 - 1. Internally funded projects will be coordinated entirely through the Facilities Department.
 - 2. Externally funded projects may start fundraising efforts. Once 100% of the goal set during the approval is met and found to be secured through a District audit, installation can begin.
 - a) Installation of externally funded projects must be coordinated and approved through the Facilities Department to ensure representation is on site during site visits, preparations, etc.
- J. Once installation has been completed, a District-contracted CPSI will conduct an audit of the playground.
- K. Once the playground has passed the audit, it can then be commissioned for use.
- L. For projects that were externally funded, once the playground is audited and commissioned for use, the playground will become district property and all future maintenance will be the responsibility of the District.

Legal References: United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, *Public Playground Safety Handbook*
American Society for Testing and Materials F1487, F2373, F2075, F2223, F2479, F1951, F2049, and F1292.

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Second Reading: