



ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

PLAYGROUND SAFETY | 8001.4

Recess time supports healthy lifestyles by strengthening and enhancing physical fitness and mental, social, and emotional well-being. Exercise has been shown to boost mood. It is expected all elementary students will participate in recess. Recess is not to be used a regular intervention to address student behavioral issues.

Scheduling

In order to allow enough time for school nurses to properly triage, assess, and treat injuries prior to dismissal, all schools should end their recess at least one hour before school dismissal. Furthermore, schools are encouraged to schedule recess to take place before lunch in order to promote adequate nutrient intake at lunch, which is associated with enhanced learning in the afternoon hours.

Playground Equipment and Surfacing

At all schools, playground equipment will be thoroughly inspected on a routine basis to identify hazards in the equipment and the playgrounds and to correct those hazards. Custodial staff must complete a weekly playground inspection using a playground safety checklist, which must be submitted to the Office of Maintenance and Facilities upon completion.

Supervision

Schools should divide their playground into four zones, with at least one staff member supervising each zone based on the age of students, the number of students, the mental and physical abilities of students, and discipline issues. As a general rule, for maximum safety, playground supervision rates should equal classroom teacher-student ratios (approximately 1:28).

Staff members supervising the playground must be properly trained and must have reviewed playground rules.

While on duty, playground supervisors must stand in locations where they have straight-line visibility and must have with them a communication device (e.g., radio, phone) and whistle. Playground supervisors should move around their zone in order to monitor it thoroughly.

In the case of a serious injury, the playground supervisor must contact the school nurse via the communication device to report the injury and either send the child to the school nurse's office with an escort or stay with the child if the child needs to be stabilized until the school nurse arrives at the site.

Minor playground injuries should not be overlooked as these injuries provide valuable help in determining potential hazards on the playground. For documentation purposes, playground supervisors should report minor injuries to the school nurse. Playground supervisors should be instructed on what to refer to the school nurse.

A school administrator should monitor recess on a weekly basis to ensure that playground supervisors are fulfilling their duties.



RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

Playground Rules

To ensure the safety of students, students should be instructed on how to properly play on the playground equipment. Written playground safety rules will be established in the beginning of the school year in collaboration with staff and students. The rules should include topics such as general safety rules, expectations for student behavior, consequences for infractions, equipment use detailed by each piece of equipment, playground games, and special circumstances.

Playground rules should be taught to all students at the beginning of the school year and reviewed with them throughout the school year, reviewed with parents, and consistently enforced.

A copy of playground rules should be posted in the classroom and, if possible, on the playground for easy reference. In addition, a copy of playground rules should be provided to parents and students. Playground rules will be published in school or student handbooks.

Weather Conditions

In cold weather, children should be encouraged to dress in layers. They should wear a warm coat, hat, and gloves to go outside.

There are times when, because of the temperature, it is unsafe to be outside for any length of time, especially if not dressed appropriately. If the outdoor temperature is 20 degrees or less, or feels like 20 degrees or less because of the wind chill factor, recess must be held indoors. If the air quality index or heat index is determined to be unhealthy according to EPA standards, students should have limited outdoor physical activity.

Staff Training

All school staff must complete annual training on playground safety and the benefit of recess on student learning. Each year, schools will train staff on playground safety at the August in service with an update provided in early spring when outdoor play resumes. The school nurse will deliver the training using district-developed materials. School nurses must submit to the District Lead Nurse a list of staff who completed the playground safety training sessions.

Questions about the information contained in this administrative memorandum should be directed to the Deputy Superintendent.