

**Subject:** Outdoor School Play Areas  
**Effective:** January 31, 2003  
**Revised:**

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**1.0 PURPOSE**

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- 1.1 This policy establishes procedures for the acquisition, installation and maintenance of safe outdoor school play areas.
- 1.2 This policy defines the roles and responsibilities of parent and community groups, District Education Councils and the Department of Education.

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**2.0 APPLICATION**

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This policy applies to all outdoor play areas on public school property.

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**3.0 DEFINITIONS**

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**Equipment** refers to all objects/structures (falling within the parameters of the CSA standard) in a play area that are provided to be used for play by children, whether or not they were produced for that purpose.

**Protective surfacing** is material to be used as a ground cover within the safety zone of play area equipment as specified by the CSA standard.

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**4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY**

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[Education Act](#), sections:

45(1) All school property is vested in the Minister.

45(4) The Minister

(b) shall determine the physical plant standards for a safe and healthy school facility,

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**5.0 GOALS / PRINCIPLES**

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- 5.1 The Department of Education believes that student safety will be enhanced by defining requirements and safety standards pertaining to outdoor play areas and equipment.

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**6.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS**

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- 6.1** District Education Councils shall ensure that play area conditions on school property conform, at minimum, with CSA standard *CAN/CSA-Z 614-98* entitled *Children's Playspaces and Equipment*, and any subsequent update to this standard. This document specifies safety standards for play areas to be used by children aged 18 months to 12 years. Reasonable additional steps to ascertain the safety of equipment when it is to be used by children over the age of 12 must be taken (e.g. checking with equipment manufacturer, consulting the playground safety inspector).
- 6.2** The standards for the acquisition, installation, inspection, and maintenance of play areas and related materials are effective as of the effective date specified in this policy. District Education Councils will ensure compliance of existing equipment with the CSA standards by August 31, 2005.

**Acquisition / Installation**

- 6.3** Acquisition and installation of play area equipment and protective surfacing by outside groups is subject to DEC policy and may only proceed under supervision of the school district.
- 6.4** Upon request of the school district, and to the extent possible, the Department of Education will fund the initial upgrading of existing protective surfacing to meet CSA standards. Funding will be a one-time allocation, to a maximum of \$10,000 per school. School districts should advise the Educational Facilities Branch of the Department when protective surfacing is required. Should more requests be received than can be accommodated in any year, accommodation will be based on the order in which requests are received, while ensuring an equitable proportion of requests are met in each district.
- 6.5** Once installed, play area equipment becomes the property of the Minister of Education and is therefore subject to all conditions to which school property is subject.

**Inspection / Maintenance**

- 6.6** District Education Councils shall implement, in compliance with the CSA standard, a regular inspection program conducted by a certified inspector and a maintenance program.

**Disposition**

- 6.7** District Education Councils assume responsibility for the costs and labour associated with the removal of outdoor play area equipment and protective surfacing. Disposal of surplus equipment/materials must conform to [Policy 402 – Disposal of Surplus Equipment](#), and steps must be taken to ensure that any equipment that does not meet CSA standards is not released for use by children.

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**7.0 GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS**

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None

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**8.0 DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL POLICY-MAKING**

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- 8.1** District Education Councils may establish complementary policy in this area. District Education Councils may wish to define the respective roles of parent/community groups and the school/school district in relation to play area planning/modification as well as stating any related processes they wish to implement.
- 8.2** District Education Councils should develop and implement policy regarding school ground supervision.

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**9.0 REFERENCES**

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CAN/CSA-Z 614-98 of the [Canadian Standards Association](#)

**Related Department of Education Policy:**

[Policy 402 – Disposal of Surplus Equipment](#)

**Other Legislation:**

[Crown Construction Contracts Act](#)

[Public Purchasing Act](#)

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**10.0 CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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Department of Education – Educational Facilities Branch  
(506) 453-2242

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