



1.4 Playground and Equipment Procedure

Linked Policy: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Classification: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Applies to: All employees

Approved by: Chief Executive

Date Approved: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Purpose:

To ensure that all playgrounds are well designed and maintained and are innovative and challenging.

All Association playgrounds are required to be regularly inspected and comply with NZS 5828:2015.

Te Ao Māori Considerations:

Communicate with whānau in a culturally responsive way and involve the Pou Ahurea if additional support is needed.

Definitions:

	Description
Playground equipment	Any fixed or movable structure or apparatus designed for children's outdoor play, which must meet the safety, design, and surfacing requirements set out in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and NZS 5828:2015.
Fixed equipment	Equipment that is not movable and requires: • Has a maximum height of 1.5m and a fall zone of 1.5m if over 600mm high • Guardrails at a height between 600 and 850mm are required for fixed equipment over 1m.
Movable equipment	Equipment that is movable and requires: • Constant supervision when in use. • Play or climbing boxes have a maximum height of 1.2m. • Equipment with a free height fall over 600mm: ○ Must have approved impact attenuation surface surrounding it. ○ must have 1.5m free fall zone surrounding it: ○ Must be stable on soft or hard base and placed in such a way to prevent it tipping or falling. ○ If the equipment is purpose built for climbing, the attachments that connect to the box must do so securely and be unable to move or slip out when in use.





	○ Tyres should not have metal components and require drainage holes on both sides and be regularly checked for pest nests.
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Roles and responsibilities:

Classification	Description and Required Action
Kindergarten Leaders/Person responsible	Ensure Daily Hazard Checklist is completed, prior to children attending kindergarten, and that all hazards are reported and managed. Ensure water play supervision plan is reviewed annually
Kaimahi	
Kindergarten Support Leads (PPL, H&S Lead, Operations Lead or Specialist Support Lead)	

All Equipment

1. All equipment including tunnels must be designed to ensure that adults can gain access to assist children.
2. Rough surfaces must not present any risk of injury e.g. splinters. Nuts, bolt heads etc must project no more than 8mm. Welds must be ground smooth.
3. Chains, bolts, carabineers etc must be replaced when 40% worn.
4. Recycled resources e.g. cable reels, tyres, milk crates will have a limited life and must be replaced when showing signs of wear and tear.
5. Crash pads with a depth of 50mm or more must not be used on top of the approved impact attenuation surface.
6. In line with **Criteria PF104 of the Licencing Criteria** all indoor and outdoor items and surfaces, furniture, equipment and materials must be safe and suitable for their intended use.

Impact attenuation

Required when using all Equipment (over 600mm high)

1. Requires an approved impact attenuation surface (such as soft fall or artificial turf with shock pads).
2. Requires a minimum 1.5m free fall zone surrounding it.

Surfaces

1. Turf - Well maintained natural turf is only acceptable for up to 600mm fall height. However, turf must have an established grass cover. If the grass area has large cracks, the ground would be hard and be unsuitable as an impact-attenuation surface.
2. Cushionfall (bark) – will be supplied to a minimum depth of 300mm with a certificate of compliance to NZS 5828.
3. Rubber tiles – must comply with the specifications found in NZS 5828.
4. Sand is not to be used for impact attenuation purposes.





Inspection

All equipment must be regularly inspected for entrapment hazards (head, neck, limb, finger, clothing) and be assessed in accordance with NZS 5828:2015 entrapment criteria.

Inspection Timeframes

Routine visual inspection: These are the daily inspections by the teacher responsible for the outdoor environment to identify and respond to any obvious hazards from vandalism, use or weather conditions.

The daily hazard checklist on 1Place has been developed for this purpose and **inspection must be carried out before children have access to the outdoor area.**

- any hazards identified must be addressed in accordance with hazard management process to isolate, mitigate or eliminate.
- hazards should be brought to the kindergarten leader's attention as soon as possible.
- semi enclosed pieces such as tyres must also be checked **daily** for pest nests.
- items that may collect rainwater (e.g. boats, kayaks, etc) require drainage holes and must be checked after rain fall or after water play in the item.
- cushionfall (bark) does not need to be turned over but must be **raked daily** to ensure an even spread, and to ensure no foreign objects.
- slides must be checked **daily** to ensure no risk of toggle entrapment.

Termly Inspections

These are conducted by the kindergarten leader or delegate and are more in depth than the day to day inspections. A checklist is on 1Place and should be completed mid/end of each term and include checks of play equipment including frames, shackles, etc.

This inspection also covers the indoor and building checks.

Operational Inspection: These are more detailed inspections, conducted **annually** by a Level 2 inspector, to check the operation and stability of the equipment, especially for any wear and tear. A report is completed including a record of any fault and the action to be taken.

Main Inspection: This is an inspection, at intervals not exceeding 24 months, by a level 3 registered inspector (of Playground Safety Standards), to review the overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces. These inspections can also take place when deemed necessary or when major changes have been made to the playground. A report is completed including a record of any fault and the action to be taken.

Inspectors must be competent contractors under HSWA

Equipment Use

Sand

- is not to be used for soft fall purposes.
- in sand play areas should be grade 1 mortar sand.
- should be raked over each evening and either covered or and an animal deterrent used.
- should be checked each morning for hazards including evidence of animal activity and faeces.





Swings

- may be of different types and be combined with other suspended equipment.
- there must be a side clearance of the swing seat and the swing structure of 500mm.
- There may be more than two swings per bay, if the side clearance is maintained.
- The free fall zone must be 1.5m from the maximum free fall height or fall at 60°.
 - This free fall zone **cannot overlap** with any other free fall zone.
- Swings should have a minimum ground clearance (when laden) of 350mm for single person attachments and 400mm for multi person attachments.

Slides

- require a free fall end zone of at least 2m.
- require a free fall impact area of 1.5m from the centre of the slide.

Overhead Equipment (such as monkey bars)

- the height of overhead equipment (such as monkey bars) shall be no higher than 1.5m from the highest hanging point.
- tamariki must not be allowed to climb on top of overhead equipment if the height of the climbing will exceed the maximum height for movable equipment (1.2m).

Cableways/Flying Fox

- service playgrounds do not meet the criteria to be able to have long cableways/flying foxes. However, the Association is aware that such equipment is in place within services.
- all cableways/flying foxes must have **an individual Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Supervision Plan** in place. This plan must be approved by Support Office.
- use of this equipment must always be in accordance with the above plan. Failure to meet the plan will result in the equipment being removed.
- the plan must be **reviewed annually**, and an updated signed copy sent to Support Office KSL team
- Each service must produce a Risk Assessment and Supervision Plan for water play experiences. This is to be reviewed annually, and an updated plan sent to the Health and Safety Lead after review
- The Risk Assessment and Supervision Plan must be reviewed annually, and an updated signed copy sent to Support Office.

Records

The kindergarten leader will forward records relating to playground safety to the Health and Safety Lead. These include:

- certificates of inspection and testing if applicable.
- suppliers' inspection and maintenance instructions.
- operating instructions if applicable.
- records of inspections and maintenance undertaken.
- any design or tender documents.
- records of any accidents and corrective action taken.