



## Operational Policies

### 7.20 Playground Safety Policy

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**Classification:** Health and Safety  
**Applies to:** All Staff  
**Approved by:** General Manager

**Date:** October 2023  
**Review Date:** October 2024

#### **Purpose:**

- To ensure that all playgrounds are well designed, well maintained, innovative and challenging. All playgrounds are required to comply with NZS 5828:2004 and NZS 5828:2015 and to be as safe as necessary not as safe as possible.

#### **References:**

- Standards New Zealand - NZS 5828:2004 and NZS 5828:2015.
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Services 2008
- Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
- Kaitiaki Kindergartens Sun Smart Policy (7.21)

#### **Definitions:**

- Kaitiaki Kindergartens – is referred to as ‘The Association’
  - Service Leader
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## **Policy**

1. To ensure The Association provides safe and challenging playgrounds which are well maintained and regularly inspected.
2. That they meet the requirements of relevant legislation and guidelines.

## **Procedures**

Playground equipment is defined as equipment and structures including components and constructional elements with, or on which, children can play outdoors or indoors, either individually or in groups, according to their own rules or own reasons for playing which can change at any time. This includes artwork and sculptures in the playground.

#### **All equipment**

- All equipment including tunnels must be designed to ensure that adults can gain access to assist children.
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- 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.
- Chains, bolts, carabineers etc must be replaced when 40% worn.

## **Fixed equipment**

- 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 e.g. climbing boxes, planks, A frames, cargo nets, tyres:**

- Constant supervision is required when movable equipment is in use.
- Play or climbing boxes have a maximum height of 1.2m.
- 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.
- Equipment with a free height fall over 600mm:
  - Requires an approved impact attenuation surface (such as soft fall or artificial turf with shock pads).
  - Requires a minimum 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.
- Must be suitably secured to prevent unauthorised use outside of supervised play (locking of kindergarten grounds suffices).
- Must be regularly checked for splintering, sharp protrusions/edges and openings that may form entrapments.
- 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.
- Tyres should not have metal components and require drainage holes on both sides.
- Semi enclosed pieces such as tyres must also be checked for pest nests.
- Items that may collect rainwater (e.g. boats, kayaks, etc) require drainage holes.
- Crash pads with a depth of 50mm must not be used on top of the approved impact attenuation surface.

## **Soft fall surfaces**

- Well maintained natural turf is 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 probably unsuitable as an impact-attenuation surface.
- Cushionfall should be supplied with a certificate of compliance to NZS 5828 which will stipulate the depth required. However, the Association requires a minimum depth of 300mm.
- Cushionfall does not need to be turned over but must be raked daily to ensure an even spread, and to ensure no foreign objects.
- Specifications for tile systems, rubber etc can be found in NZS 5828.

## **Sand**

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



## **Water**

- Each service must produce a Risk Assessment and Supervision Plan for water play experiences.
- Water play experiences can include (but are not limited to) things such as water troughs, large containers/buckets, holes dug into the sandpit.
- The Risk Assessment and Supervision Plan must be reviewed annually, and an updated signed copy sent to Support Office.

## **Swings**

- Swings may be of different types and be combined with other suspended equipment.
- Swings may have more than two swings per bay, but there must be a side clearance of the swing seat and the swing structure of 500mm
- 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 400mm.

## **Slides**

- Slides must be checked daily to ensure no risk of toggle entrapment.
- Slides require a free fall end zone of at least 2m.
- Slides 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 Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Supervision Plan will result in the equipment being removed.
- The Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Supervision Plan must be reviewed annually, and an updated signed copy sent to Support Office

## **Inspections**

*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 has been developed for this purpose.

- The 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 service leader's attention as soon as possible.



- The service leader must review and sign the form at the end of the week.

*Operational Inspection:* These are more detailed inspections, conducted every term 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 12 month, 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.

### Records

The service leader will keep records relating to playground safety. 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.

Signed:

*A Selman*

Date:

*21/12/23*

General Manager

### Endorsed by

Signed:

*A Thompson*

Date:

*21/12/2023*

*Vice* President of the Board