OAK GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLAYGROUND SAFETY PLAN

In a continuing effort by Oak Grove School District to provide quality, well maintained, clean, and safe play facilities for students, Oak Grove School District has developed the following standard operating procedures to protect and preserve its playground facilities and those users. This program may only be accomplished through a commitment to a playground safety program which assures that every attempt will be made to eliminate playground hazards while not totally eliminating the element of risk which is an essential part of any successful children's play and learning environment.

- To guarantee the continued success of this program, the following guidelines will be adhered to by all Oak Grove School District departments and staff:
- All playground sites will be subject to the playground safety program.
- All equipment shall be installed according to manufacturer specifications.
- Oak Grove School District shall provide reasonable resources to ensure prudent and timely inspections and repairs as determined necessary by the playground safety program.
- All play equipment shall be inspected, repaired, and maintained by Oak Grove School District's Maintenance and Operations Department or designee on a regular basis with the necessary documentation.
- All playground equipment purchasers, installers, inspectors, and maintenance employees performing repairs shall be trained in accordance with the playground safety training program.
- All equipment shall be purchased from a playground equipment manufacturer with adequate product liability insurance.

Playground Safety Team:
Individuals who are responsible for purchasing, making playground decisions, scheduling and reviewing inspections and maintaining the playgrounds are:

Name	**Title**
Manager of M&O	Fred Dickey
Manager of Custodians and Transportation	Anthony Valdez
Chief of Operations	Neil Rauschhuber

PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS:
Playground inspections with certifications were conducted by a licensed contractor September 2002. Periodic inspections will be conducted during the year by staff and/or Maintenance and Operations. An annual report will be submitted to the safety committee regarding the safety of the playgrounds.

Play areas that are out of compliance will be made compliant according to the ASTM, CPSC and ADA regulations.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY TRAINING:
A training program will be conducted each fall to train staff members. The training will include playground equipment, including age appropriate guidelines. The program will follow the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and will help identify both design and wear-and-tear hazards on play equipment and grounds.

SOFTFALL:
The softfall will be maintained and will be replenished on a rotating schedule by Operations. The level of softfall will be brought into compliance.

AGE APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE:
Age appropriate signage stickers will be maintained.

INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING SAFE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT:
Safety responsibilities
When playground safety is a team effort, it starts at the earliest design stages and continues through the playground's day-to-day operations.

The Principal at each school site is responsible for:
- Identifying the age range of the intended users
- Selecting age-appropriate equipment and resilient surfacing.
- Allowing circulation patterns around and through the equipment to prevent traffic conflicts.
- Planning for access, drainage, shade, visibility and other factors.
- Soliciting input from children, parents, professionals and others who have an interest in the playground's safety and success.
- Submitting plans to the District before purchases are made.

The District is responsible for:
- Certification that the equipment conforms to ASTM, CPSC, ADA and other recognized safety and accessibility standards.

The Manufacturer is responsible for providing:
- Clean and concise installation instructions.
- A step-by-step maintenance program.
- Product liability insurance to protect the playground's owner against lawsuits that result from equipment failure.

The Installer is responsible for:
- Installation according to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Insurance coverage on the work performed.
- Helps guarantee that the equipment is age appropriate.

District personnel are responsible for:
- Supervision of the playground, when appropriate.
- Posting safe-use instructions, when appropriate.
- Following the manufacturer's instructions for maintaining the equipment.
- Safety inspections (periodic)
- Repairs.

Parents and adult supervisors on the playground are responsible for:

- Supervising children to assure safe play

Students have the responsibility of:

- Playing without hurting others.
- Knowing their limitations.
- Following instructions.
- Obeying parents and other adult supervision.

The most important safety factors in designing a playground are:

- Age appropriateness of sites and play equipment. School age children (5-12) and preschool children (ages 2-5) have different dimensions, skills and play styles. You should provide separate play areas for each group.

- Environmental conditions. Be sure the play area will be adequately shaded to protect against sun exposure, well-drained, visible from nearby paths, away from automobile and bicycle traffic, and separated from water or other natural hazards.

- Equipment design. Playground equipment should be structurally sound, durable and engineered with safety in mind.

- Layout of play area. If you aren't familiar with how children's play patterns affect playground use, consult a landscape architect or a professional designer. Your play structure representative can also help with layout to minimize traffic conflict.

- Protective surfacing. Playground surfacing must have adequate depth of a loose-fill material that is ADA approved.

Selecting equipment

Despite today's emphasis on government and industry safety guidelines, there are significant differences between brands of playground equipment--and some equipment may not meet safety standards at all.

When specifying equipment, you should insist that the equipment conforms to the following:

- The Consumer Product Safety Commission's Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
- The ASTM F1487 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use. All equipment should be certified to conform to their standard according to the procedures established by the IPEMA (International Playground Manufacturer's Association).
- Accessibility requirements of the ADA (American's with Disabilities Act).
- Make sure the protective surfacing around the equipment has been tested by a third party according to the ASTM F1292 Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems under and around Playground equipment.

Engineering and construction features such as:

- Appropriate deck heights for the age group that will use the equipment.
- Structural integrity of posts, decks and other components.
- Secure fastening methods. (e.g. well-designed clamp-and-post systems or through-the-post fasteners.
- Corrosion protection, such as the use of aluminum or galvanized steel components with coatings of polyester or PVC. Bolts and pins should be plated or made from stainless steel.

- Special coatings on decks, handrails and other areas that require maximum traction and insulation from temperature extremes.
- Non-toxic coatings such as polyester powder coatings instead of paint (paint must have less than .06% lead for safety).
- Protrusion-free design to avoid puncture wounds, eye injuries, cuts, scrapes and bruises.
- Gap-free decks and other components, to prevent entrapment of fingers, heads and bodies.
- Slides with entrance hoods and runout areas.
- Swing fasteners that use a fully enclosed design, rather than older and more dangerous S-hooks.
- Vandal-resistant hardware that requires a special tool for removal.

Installation

Site preparation and equipment installation should be handled by certified professionals.

Inspections and maintenance:

- Maintain Records. Being able to show who did the inspections, when they were performed, what the results were, and what repairs were made can be important when you're faced with a possible lawsuit. Work orders should be able to show the record of the repair and when it was fixed.

- A safety audit of all new playgrounds shall be performed to ensure compliance with current ASTM, CPSC and ADA guidelines. The audit should be performed by a consultant that has completed the National Playground Safety Institute's Certified Playground Safety Inspector training.

PLAYGROUND SURFACING:

Shock absorbency and critical height

Oak Grove School District has considered the shock absorbency of the different materials available. Our standard playground surfacing material is wood-fiber.

The standard measure of shock absorbency is "critical height", a term that originated in Europe. The CPSC defines critical height for a surfacing material as "an appropriation of the maximum fall height from which a life-threatening head injury would not be expected to occur."

The CPSC Handbook goes on to say that the critical-height value of the surfacing material under and around playground equipment should be no less than the height of the highest accessible part of the equipment. This is interpreted differently for each type of play event: the highest deck on most composite structures; the height of the entrance platform to a slide; or the top rung on a horizontal ladder, etc.

SAFETY AUDITS AND MAINTENANCE INSPECTIONS

The best-designed playground can present hazards if equipment is incorrectly installed, broken, physically worn, damaged by vandals or weakened by the ravages of time. This is why a safety audit and regularly scheduled maintenance inspections are a necessary part of every playground's safety program.

Definition of terms:

The terms "safety audit" and "maintenance inspection" refer to two different things.

- A playground safety audit is a one-time process that focuses on compliance with the current standard of care.
- Maintenance inspections are conducted at regular intervals and focus on immediate hazards caused by aging or damaged equipment -- e.g., worn swing hangers or missing fasteners.

It's important to understand not only the difference between these types of inspections, but the importance of both in minimizing accident risk and liability exposure.

To put it another way, a well-designed playground could pass a safety audit with flying colors, yet fail in a periodic maintenance inspection. Similarly, an impeccably maintained playground could fail a safety audit because of inherent design flaws.

Safety Audits
The purpose of the safety audit is to identify non-conforming products and designs, installation problems and environmental conditions that could pose long-term hazards to children. Current CPSC guidelines and ASTM standards are the prevailing standard of care. Oak Grove performed a Safety Audit on all existing playgrounds in 2002. Playgrounds installed after the initial Safety Audit will be certified by a licensed playground inspector after installation and before used by the students.

Some of the items covered in a safety audit include:

- Entrapment violations. The inspector uses head, torso and neck probes to assess the entrapment risk.
- Protrusions. Protrusions gauges are used to determine whether protrusions are within acceptable limits.
- Layout. Does the equipment promote traffic conflicts? Are fall zones too small? Are there potential hazards from adjacent roads, bicycle paths, water or electrical lines, or sports fields?
- Surface hazards. Is the protective surface appropriate for the height of the equipment used?

During a safety audit, hazards are categorized by their potential for causing severe injury. The resulting report will help you determine which hazards require immediate corrective action, which should be next on the list, and which are minor enough to allow corrective action as time and money permit.

Maintenance Inspections:
There are many factors that contribute to the need for maintenance, such as:

- Physical wear. Swing hangers, bearings and spring assemblies are prime examples of wear-prone parts that require maintenance at regular intervals. School-age children tend to be harder on equipment than preschoolers.
- Environmental factors. Wood may crack and rot over time. Uncoated steel rusts quickly. Plastic may fade or deteriorate when continually exposed to the sun's ultraviolet rays. Freeze/thaw cycles can lead to warping or cracking. Acid soil often corrodes equipment buried in the ground. The use of quality materials can slow the aging process, but nothing lasts forever.
- Vandalism and accidental damage. Unscrewed fasteners, slashed swing seats and graffiti are examples of damages that can affect even the best-maintained equipment. Structural damage from settling and vibration can be less obvious but even more serious.

PLAYGROUND INSPECTION TIMELINE
HIGH FREQUENCY AUDITS

DAILY Custodians, yard supervisors, administrators and teachers conduct a daily inspection for general safety of the playground.

MONTHLY Custodians conduct a monthly inspection to identify safety concerns. The monthly inspection is submitted to Anthony Valdez, Manager of Transportation and Operations.

LOW FREQUENCY AUDITS

ANNUAL

AUGUST	Reports shall be compiled and the annual playground inspection reports collected, reported out and stored with the Safety Committee.

All needed repairs should be sent to Maintenance through a work order, phone call or email. All repairs must be written up on a work order generated from the school site. Maintenance will treat all work orders as an emergency. The person finding the needed repair should yellow tape the area until the Maintenance Department arrives if an immediate safety issue. Maintenance will follow up with the appropriate action after evaluating the area.

Records will be maintained on the repair through completion.

It is important that good communication is maintained between the school site and the Maintenance Department. Laws and regulations change constantly. It is imperative that everyone follows the specifications provided by Americans Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use (F 1487-98) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

GLOSSARY

ADA	Americans With Disabilities Act
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
CPSC	Consumer Product Safety Commission

The Playground Safety Plan was approved by the Safety Committee on April 21, 2015. The plan was reviewed and updated on 8/2015, 8/2016 and 8/2017.