
*Rescinds Policy Number: JGFAA**Issued: 11/06/1995, 10/04/2004*

Recognizing the potential hazards inherent in the use of playground equipment such as protrusions, pinch points, sharp edges, hot surfaces, heights and playground debris, the Orange County Board of Education seeks to improve the safety of the playgrounds located on the campuses of its elementary schools. Further, recognizing that the majority of playground injuries occur as a result of falls from playground equipment, the Board seeks to address the issue of appropriate surfaces beneath those equipment, proper installation and maintenance are important issues in playground safety, the Orange County Board of Education does hereby adopt as guidelines for the playgrounds located on the elementary school campuses in the Orange County School system the Handbook for Public Playground Safety issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. New purchases or renovations/modifications of play equipment or grounds shall be approved by the Safety Coordinator for Orange County Schools.

The Orange County Board of Education adopts the ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) specification F1487 as a guideline and resource point as it seeks to upgrade, improve and safely maintain the playground equipment located on the playgrounds of its elementary school campuses. The existing equipment and each new piece of equipment located on playgrounds of elementary school campuses shall be audited using the ASTM/CPSC Playground Audit Guide or other comparable audit guide based upon ASTM F1487. An Audit sheet or appropriate audit information shall be completed for every piece of playground equipment and for each playground located on elementary school campuses. Audit sheets shall be kept on file in the Central Office or other designated location during the life of the particular piece of equipment.

As the audits are completed for existing pieces of equipment, these shall be reviewed based upon three levels of priority:

1. Any condition or piece of equipment, which is life-threatening or can cause severe, permanent injury.
2. Any condition, which can cause serious or non-disabling injury.
3. A condition which may cause slight injury; a condition which may not have caused injury but does not meet the requirements in ASTM F1487 Standard Consumer Performance Specifications for Playground Equipment for Public Use and the 1991 CPSC Handbook for Public Playground Safety.

In addressing these priorities, priority (1) items shall be immediately removed or remedied as appropriate, followed by priority (2) and priority (3) in that order.

The Superintendent or his designee shall be responsible for conducting the audit to upgrade, improve and safely maintain the playground equipment located on the playgrounds of the elementary school campuses. The principal at each elementary school or his designee shall be responsible for conducting periodic inspections of playgrounds and playground equipment. Any equipment, condition or debris found on a playground which may create a hazardous situation, likely to result in life-threatening or severe, permanent injury or serious or non-disabling injury shall be immediately removed.

Playgrounds on the elementary school campuses shall be routinely inspected for protrusions, loose bolts, playground debris, and other similar potential hazards and to monitor the integrity of the protective surfacing.

The Board of Education shall provide continuing education in the construction, audit, maintenance and inspections of playgrounds. Continuing education opportunities shall be provided for the elementary school principals, the persons conducting audits and inspections of playgrounds and playground equipment and for those persons repairing and maintaining playgrounds and playground equipment.

The play experience is vital to the growth and development of children. As children work to achieve a mastery of skills they may venture into high-risk behavior. Students should always be supervised by an adult who can respond to unsafe behavior, improper use of equipment and/or emergencies. Playground safety should be an ongoing conversation among school administration and staff.