



Student Supervision Guidelines

The goal of student supervision is a safe school environment.





STUDENT SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

Applies on the way to and from school, on playgrounds, in hallways and restrooms, and at recess when under the control of public schools

BACKGROUND

Districts may be liable for non-supervision of students because there is no discretion not to supervise them.

California Government Code Section 815.6 states that “Where a public entity is under a mandatory duty imposed by an enactment that is designed to protect against the risk of a particular kind of injury, the public entity is liable for an injury of that kind proximately caused by its failure to discharge the duty unless the public entity establishes that it exercised reasonable diligence to discharge the duty.”

Certificated employees have a duty to supervise and discipline students on the way to and from school, on playgrounds, in hallways and restrooms, and at recess when under the District’s control. Such discipline excludes corporal punishment.

California Education Code Section 44807 states that “Every teacher in the public schools shall hold pupils to a strict account for their conduct on the way to and from school, on the playgrounds, or during recess. A teacher, vice principal, principal, or any other certificated employee of a school District, shall not be subject to criminal prosecution or criminal penalties for the exercise, during the performance of his duties, of the same degree of physical control over a pupil that a parent would be legally privileged to exercise but which in no event shall exceed the amount of physical control reasonably necessary to maintain order, protect property, or protect the health and safety of pupils, or to maintain proper and appropriate conditions conducive to learning. The provisions of this section are in addition to and do not supersede the provisions of Section 49000.”

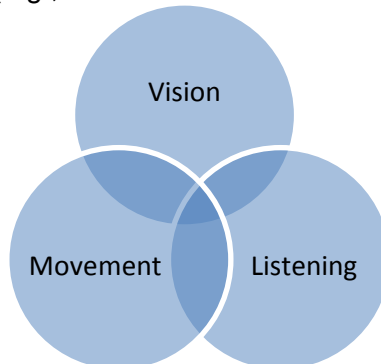
California Education Code Section 49000 states that “The Legislature finds and declares that the protection against corporal punishment, which extends to other citizens in other walks of life, should include children while they are under the control of the public schools. Children of school age are at the most vulnerable and impressionable period of their lives and it is wholly reasonable that the safeguards to the integrity and sanctity of their bodies should be, at this tender age, at least equal to that afforded to other citizens.”

Students have a right to a safe school environment.

Article I, Section 28(c) of the California Constitution provides that all public school students “have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure, and peaceful.”

GOAL

The goal of student supervision is a safe school environment. Proactive student supervision ensures the safety of students in areas and activities that take place on the way to and from school, during playground activities, in hallways and restrooms, and at recess, and, when incidents happen, it helps minimize negative outcomes. Three dimensions of supervisors’ active behaviors are important: attention (i.e., the extent of watching and listening), proximity (e.g., within vs. beyond arms reach), and continuity of attention and proximity (e.g., constant/intermittent/not at all).



GENERAL DUTIES

General supervision of students:

5 CCR 5570 states that, unless otherwise provided by rule of the Board, teachers are required to be present at their rooms and admit students not less than 30 minutes before school starts.¹

In arranging for appropriate supervision on playgrounds or on school grounds before and after school and during recess and other intermissions, the principal or designee shall:

- Where supervision is not otherwise provided, provide for certificated employees to supervise the conduct and safety, and direct the play and activity, of students who are on school grounds before and after school and during recess and other intermissions (5 CCR 5552).
- Clearly identify supervision zones and require all supervisors to remain at assigned locations from which they can observe their entire zone of supervision.
- Consider the nature of the supervision zone, and, as applicable, the size of the playground area, the playground equipment, the number of areas that are not immediately visible, and the age and disability status of the students to determine the appropriate ratio of students to supervisors. Note that there are no set standards available for appropriate ratios of students to student supervisors. Please use the following suggestions when establishing District guidelines:
 - i. Each play area uniquely determines the amount of supervision needed. Student supervisors should be able to visually have control of the play area as well as have vocal control of the children involved. For instance, if all the children are sitting down for an activity, your ratio of students to student supervisors would be higher than if all the children were climbing a tower.
 - ii. You will have to determine what is reasonable and prudent based on the number of children and the areas and types of play. For example, you might have three recreation leaders on duty at the time of the playground activity. In such a circumstance, this may mean that you have determined that:
 1. the younger children will not play on the play equipment at the same time as the older children,
 2. the children can only play on the playground equipment within the sand area,
 3. the staff will spread out around the play area, strategically near a slide or swing, or
 4. the staff will not allow any children to play at the adjoining picnic area because that would take a set of eyes away from the play equipment.

As instruction, most courts agree that, in typical school age (ages 6-12) playground environments, an appropriate student to supervisor ratio ranges between 40:1 and 90:1.² The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that teachers, teacher aides, playground supervisors, yard aides, and volunteers who supervise students receive training in safety practices and in supervisory techniques that will help them to forestall

¹ With respect to classroom presence before the start of school, this aspect of the supervision of students also may be addressed in the District's collective bargaining agreement (CBA) by rule of the Board. If so addressed, the underlined portion of following sentence may be revised and incorporated to specify the agreed longer or shorter time period: "*Teachers shall be present at their respective rooms and shall open them to admit students not less than 30 minutes before the time when school starts. (5 CCR 5570).*"

² See, for example, Bruya, L.D and; Wood, G , "Achieving a safe ratio on the playground," *Parks & Recreation*, Vol. 33, Issue 4, p. 74 (April 1998). These guidelines apply to school age children (ages 6-12). For school age children with disabilities, the appropriate ratio is 16:1. For children five years of age or younger, a ratio of between 4:1 and 10:1 is appropriate. For teens, supervision transitions to roles more akin to monitoring and security. As such, higher student to supervisor ratios (modified based upon unique local characteristics such as crime rates, gang activity, numbers of disabled students, etc.) are appropriate (and may be leveraged with technologies such as restricted campus access points and security cameras).

problems and resolve conflicts. Such training shall be documented and kept on file. (*References to Board Policies conform to CSBA sample guidelines*), (cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance), (cf. 3515.2 - Disruptions), (cf. 4131 - Staff Development), (cf. 4231 - Staff Development), (cf. 5131.4 - Student Disturbances), (cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)

Key players:

- **Principal/administrator**—the ultimate leader of the school with the overall responsibility of enforcement of the policies within the organization.
- **Teacher/certificated personnel**—classroom leader and rule enforcer on the playground.
- **Nurse/health clerk or technician**—personnel with medical training to respond to playground injuries and team member familiar with emergency response.
- **Out-of-classroom supervisor**—personnel with the most practical understanding of the supervisory preventative actions on the playground or other designated supervision zones.
- **Custodians/maintenance personnel**—personnel responsible for the building and grounds that include the playground equipment and its proper repair.
- **Parent/guardian/volunteer**—external observers and participants, fundraisers, and playground supervision volunteers.
- **Student**—the focus of the supervision.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Warning and informing.
- Providing proper instruction.
- Providing proper supervision.
- Disciplining and rewarding.
- Providing safe facilities.
- Providing safe equipment.
- Providing prompt and appropriate post-injury care.

Parents/guardians expect that their children:

- Will be returned to them without injuries.
- Will be kept safe.
- Will have fun.
- Will be treated with respect.
- Will be provided safe play equipment.
- Will be provided a variety of activities.
- Will receive fair discipline.

SAMPLE POLICY (AS NEEDED, TO BE REVISED AND ADOPTED BY DISTRICTS)

This District will strive to achieve adequate supervision of students:

- on the playground whenever it is occupied during the school day and
- on the way to and from school, in hallways and restrooms, and at recess when under the control of the District.

The District policy includes the following components:

1. Written duties of out-of-classroom supervisors.
2. Training for all out-of-classroom supervisors.
3. Written playground and other out-of-classroom rules.
4. Written playground emergency procedures.
5. List of required safety equipment.
6. Regularly scheduled maintenance of all play structures.
7. Playground equipment fall protection, as needed.

This policy shall be consistent with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation. Copies of the rules may be distributed to parents/guardians and shall be readily available at the school at all times. (cf. 5142 – Safety), (cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan), (cf. 5131 - Conduct), (cf. 5144 - Discipline).

1. Written Duties of Out-of-Classroom Supervisors

Since a supervisor cannot focus on all of the students all of the time, the supervisor should rank the risks, prioritizing attention to the areas where accidents are most likely to occur. For example, station the supervisor nearer the higher risk equipment or activities. High risk activities include climbers, sliding boards, composite (multi-function) play equipment and high (over seven feet) play equipment. Lower risk equipment and activities can be further from the supervisor. Lower risk activities may include field sports, games, or basketball. The supervisor must actively monitor his or her attention, proximity, and continuity to the playground or other supervision zone environment.

Students should always be supervised to avoid playground injuries and monitor for appropriate behaviors. Proper playground supervision can be divided into four components:

A. Presence and attentiveness

*The supervisor should arrive at the playground before the students start playing and inspect the playground for obvious hazards (see **Pre-Playground Use Checks**).*

The supervisor should correct any conditions that are within his or her means to correct as soon as he or she finds them (e.g., untwisting the chains of the swing seats, etc.).

The supervisor should inform the appropriate administrator or maintenance person of any hazards identified that he or she could not eliminate on the spot and take steps to remove any hazardous equipment or playground sections from use until repairs can be made. This may be accomplished by roping off the area, putting up signs, or by some other means as determined by the site administrator.

The supervisor should not permit the use of wet, hot, or icy equipment.

The supervisor should stay in a reasonable proximity to the areas of activity.

The supervisor should always be able to see the activity.

The supervisor should ensure the students are being properly supervised. Once students arrive on the playground, use the perimeter method. Circulate around your assigned area, and cast a wide eye throughout your assigned area. Be aware of the total area and the students using it. Direct eye contact with a child can help prevent inappropriate behavior.

The supervisor should not become distracted from assigned duties. Do not become involved with small groups and do not play with the children. A child can move from a low risk activity to a high risk activity in less than one minute. Do not visit with other supervisors, teachers, or students. Never leave your area unsupervised.

The supervisor should stay engaged when playground transitions occur (for example, when students line up to go back into classrooms).

The supervisor must circulate throughout all areas of the playground and its perimeter.

The supervisor must be sensitive to areas of supervision that require privacy or tact such as restrooms.

The supervisor must be concerned for the safety and welfare of all children.

B. Student behavior monitoring and intervention

School rules and policies must be enforced.

- Supervisors must intervene when children behave aggressively.
- Supervisors must follow-through on reports of playground aggression and bullying.
- Supervisors must communicate and coordinate with other school staff about children's behavior at recess.

Activities with extraordinary safety risks are often prohibited by Districts. The following is list of activities that Districts prohibits because of high risk to student safety. **[This list should be revised to reflect your District's approved practices.]** Because of concerns about the risk to student safety, the principal or designee shall not permit the following activities on campus or during school-sponsored events unless the activity is properly supervised, students wear protective gear as appropriate, and each participant has insurance coverage and a signed waiver on file with the District:

- Trampolining ³
- Scuba diving
- Skateboarding or use of scooters
- In-line or roller skating or use of skate shoes
- Sailing, boating, or water skiing ⁴
- Snow trips
- Motorcycling
- Target shooting

³ The ASCIP General Liability Memorandum of Coverage (MOC) has specific exclusions for trampolines, mini-trampolines, or similar rebounding devices. Please contact ASCIP to determine coverage for such activities prior to allowing on campus or during school sponsored events.

⁴ The ASCIP General Liability Memorandum of Coverage (MOC) has specific exclusions for watercraft. Please contact ASCIP to determine coverage for such activities prior to allowing on campus or during school sponsored events.

- Horseback riding
- Rodeo
- Other activities determined by the principal to have a high risk to student safety (cf. 5143 - Insurance) (cf. 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)
Students must be restricted from roughhousing, horseplay, or other inappropriate behavior on or near an apparatus.
Bullying behavior is not tolerated.
Use the school's (District's) established procedures for discipline.
Communicate rules often with students.
Act to control repeated violators of playground rules.
Never allow bullying in any of its forms.
Controlling the play environment is essential. Keep in mind the student's behavior before allowing him/her to enter the play area:
 - Was the student just disciplined?
 - Is the student feeling ill, or is there some other obvious reason for hostility?
 - Is the student prone to violent behavior?

Hallway monitoring—Teachers should stand by their doors before and after class observing and conversing with students as they enter and leave the classroom. Teachers can use this time to prompt and remind students about matters such as homework, being on time, and coming prepared to class. Hallways and exits/entrances to the school should be supervised before and after school to encourage appropriate school behavior.

Restroom monitoring—Teachers should walk through bathrooms during transition times. Restrooms should be supervised intermittently during classes, also.

Bus rules—Supervise students getting on/off the bus or during the bus ride.

Lunch monitoring—Post and enforce lunchroom rules.

Protection against insect bites—Protect students against insect bites or stings that may spread disease or cause allergic reactions, students shall be allowed to apply insect repellent provided by their parents/guardians, under the supervision of school personnel, and in accordance with the manufacturer's directions, when engaging in outdoor activities.

Sun safety protection—California Education Code Section 35183.5 requires that the District to allow, for outdoor use during the school day, articles of sun-protective clothing, including, but not limited to, hats. Students shall be allowed, year-round, to wear articles of sun-protective clothing, including hats, when outdoors, to use sunscreen, and to use sun-protective lip balm. When students are outdoors, they shall be allowed, year-round, to wear sunglasses that protect the eyes from UV rays. Specific types of sunglasses, clothing, and hats may not be permissible on campus as indicated elsewhere in Board policy.

C. Hazard surveillance and intervention

Check the playground daily and address ground and equipment hazards.
Look for hazards after weekends, holidays, or break periods.
Correct a hazard if you can. Otherwise, report all hazards, no matter how small, because small hazards uncorrected can and will lead to larger hazards.

- Check equipment for broken pieces, sharp edges, worn parts, etc.

- Check wood equipment for splinters, rotten wood and cracks.
- Check the grounds for large holes, broken glass and other foreign objects that may injure a student.
- Gaps in the fence surrounding the playground.
- Access points from the play area directly to a street.
- Low-hanging branches or shrubs that prevent or limit adults' ability to see children, especially around the edges of the playground.
- All individuals supervising students shall remain alert in spotting dangerous conditions, promptly report any such conditions to the principal or designee, and file a written report on such conditions as appropriate. (cf. 3530 - Risk Management/Insurance)

D. Responding appropriately to emergencies

Every supervisor must follow the District's plans and procedures for responding to emergencies and accidents.

Be alert at all times. Act promptly and decisively. (cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan), (cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

2. Outline of Training for Supervisors

Supervisors should have a basic understanding of:

- Goals for Supervisor Training.
- Intended use of each component of the play structures.
- Causes of injuries on school playgrounds.
- School's method of playground discipline.
- Difference between discipline and punishment.
- Conduct **Pre-Playground Use Checks** as follows:
 - Remove foreign matter from play areas
 - Dirt
 - Feces
 - Trash
 - Water
 - Remove foreign objects from pay areas
 - Glass
 - Rocks
 - Trash
 - Check the following equipment safety conditions:
 - Damaged / broken components
 - Missing or protruding fasteners
 - Sharp edges or points
 - Hot surfaces
 - Missing components
 - Excessive wear, rust
- The established playground rules.
- Enforcement of the rules.
- How to positively alter a student's behavior.
- The need for an unobstructed view of their assigned area.
- The need to avoid standing and talking with other Supervisors or adults.
- Equipment use design (e.g., which is for younger students).

- M. How to respond to emergencies on the playground.
- N. The procedures for visitors at the school and on the playground.
- O. The layout of the entire school grounds.
- P. The locations of first aid kits, telephones, fire extinguishers, and the school nurse or designated emergency aide.

3. Rules for Students

Playground and Outdoor Rules (See **Sample District Form 1** at the end of this Chapter)

- A. Obey directions given by all playground supervisors.
- B. Stay within playground boundaries and away from off-limit areas.
- C. Follow play equipment and the intended use of all game.
- D. No toys and equipment from home.
- E. No loose jewelry.
- F. Avoid wearing clothing with draw strings.
- G. No pens or pencils in the playground.
- H. Leave dirt, sawdust, stones, sticks, rocks or other objects alone.
- I. Leave surfacing materials on the ground.
- J. Stay away from structures such as fences, trees or other things not intended as playground equipment.
- K. Respect other people's space. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- L. Be courteous and a good sport.
- M. Speak respectfully to each other.
- N. Stop playing immediately when the signal is given **[(list type of signal, such as a whistle being blown twice)]**.
- O. Report bullying to a teacher or playground supervisor.

Hallway Rules

- A. Obey directions given by all hallway supervisors and teachers.
- B. Respect other people's space. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- C. Be courteous.
- D. Speak respectfully to each other.
- E. Walk to the right.
- F. Do not block traffic.
- G. Enter next classroom immediately before the late signal is given. *(List type of signal, such as a second chime or bell)*
- H. Report bullying to a teacher or hall supervisor.

Restroom Rules

- A. Obey directions given by all restroom supervisors and teachers.
- B. Respect other people's space.
- C. Be courteous.
- D. If a restroom is being attended by a custodian or maintenance staff, do not enter the restroom. Use another restroom or wait until the cleaning or other maintenance is complete.
- E. Do not loiter in the restroom after using the facilities.
- F. Report any toilet or sink malfunctions to a teacher or restroom supervisor.
- G. Wash your hands with soap and water before exiting.

H. Report bullying to a teacher or restroom supervisor.

4. Special Rules for Custodians or Maintenance Staff who are Attending to Acute Repairs or Clean Ups

Notify teachers. When feasible, notify adjacent and nearby teachers whenever a restroom, classroom, or other facility is being serviced at a non-scheduled time. Explain the reason and timeframe.

Open doors. If a custodian is attending a restroom, classroom or other facility room during times when students are or may be present, the room's door should be in an open and locked position during the entire cleaning or other maintenance process.

Use signs. A sign should be placed outside the room indicating that the room is closed for maintenance/cleaning.

Do not re-open the facility until it's safe. The room should not be re-opened until the custodian or maintenance staff deems it safe (i.e., the clean-up is complete, floors are not slippery).

5. Playground Emergency Procedures

Follow the District's plans and procedures for emergency responses. The playground emergency procedures are subordinate to and a supplement to the District Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan. (cf. 3516 – Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)



Inclement weather playground use plan:

- A. In freezing weather, many types of playground surfaces freeze, losing their resilient and protective properties. Warm skin may stick to freezing metal surfaces. Ice can make surfaces slippery.
- B. In wet weather, surfaces that students walk on and hold on to become slippery and can cause them to fall. Puddles may form and students cannot use the equipment without walking in these puddles.
- C. In hot weather, restrict the play on surfaces that get too hot. If the surface is too hot for your hand, it is too hot children to play on.
- D. In inclement weather (including heat waves), consider restricting equipment use.
- E. During thunder or lightning, shut down outdoor activities, and return students to an indoor recreational area, if available, or their classrooms.

Heat index

By using the following embedded Excel spreadsheet, you can quickly get a student activity recommendation by entering three variables—the current Fahrenheit temperature and relative humidity at a school site along with the school type (elementary, middle, or high school) selection:

HEAT INDEX CALCULATOR

Click Here 	Current Temperature (F) 80	Current Relative Humidity (%) 50
Your School Type	Middle	
Current Heat Index	80.8	
Current Recommendation	5-10 minutes of rest with a water break for every 20-25 minutes of activity. Encourage water intake of 8-10 ounces each break. Move activity indoors or to shade, if feasible.	

Note that these heat index activity recommendations⁵ are rough guidelines only. This guidance is advisory in nature and informational in content. It is not a standard or regulation, and it neither creates new legal obligations nor alters existing obligations under federal and California law. Also note that these heat index guidelines do not factor in air quality considerations. Smoke, pollen, and/or other air pollutants impact outdoor activities in addition to heat index considerations. Any advisories from public health authorities should supersede any guidelines herein.

Playground release of students' policy:

Normally, students are released to their classroom teachers or the principal or designee. In the event of an emergency that occurs during students' recess activities wherein release to their teachers is not possible, the following procedure applies:

During an emergency (cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan), students shall be released during the school day only to the custody of an adult if:

- The adult is the student's custodial parent/guardian. (cf. 5021 - Noncustodial Parents)
- The adult has been authorized on the student's emergency card as someone to whom the student may be released when the custodial parent/guardian cannot be reached, and the principal or designee verifies the adult's identity. (cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)
- The adult is an authorized law enforcement officer acting in accordance with law. (cf. 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting) (cf. 5145.11 - Questioning

⁵ The computation of the heat index in this chapter is a refinement of a result obtained by multiple regression analysis carried out by Lans P. Rothfus and described in a 1990 National Weather Service (NWS) Technical Attachment (SR 90-23). The regression equation of Rothfus is $HI = -42.379 + 2.04901523 * T + 10.14333127 * RH - .22475541 * T * RH - .00683783 * T * T - .05481717 * RH * RH + .00122874 * T * T * RH + .00085282 * T * RH * RH - .00000199 * T * T * RH * RH$ where T is temperature in degrees F and RH is relative humidity in percent. HI is the heat index expressed as an apparent temperature in degrees F. If the RH is less than 13% and the temperature is between 80 and 112 degrees F, then the following adjustment is subtracted from HI: $ADJUSTMENT = [(13 - RH) / 4] * SQRT\{[17 - ABS(T - 95.)] / 17\}$ where ABS and SQRT are the absolute value and square root functions, respectively. On the other hand, if the RH is greater than 85% and the temperature is between 80 and 87 degrees F, then the following adjustment is added to HI: $ADJUSTMENT = [(RH - 85) / 10] * [(87 - T) / 5]$ The Rothfus regression is not appropriate when conditions of temperature and humidity warrant a heat index value below about 80 degrees F. In those cases, a simpler formula is applied to calculate values consistent with Steadman's results: $HI = 0.5 * \{T + 61.0 + [(T - 68.0) * 1.2] + (RH * 0.094)\}$ In practice, the simple formula is computed first and the result averaged with the temperature. If this heat index value is 80 degrees F or higher, the full regression equation along with any adjustment as described above is applied. The Rothfus regression is not valid for extreme temperature and relative humidity conditions beyond the range of data considered by Steadman. Source: http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/html/heatindex_equation.shtml

and Apprehension by Law Enforcement)

- D. The adult is taking the student to emergency medical care at the request of the principal or designee.(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

6. Required Safety Supplies and Equipment:

Supplies and equipment assist playground supervisors in doing their job. Appropriate supplies and safety equipment may include:

- A. A whistle or other means of quickly communicating with students.
- B. A clipboard, paper, and pen for note taking/reporting.
- C. A means of emergency communication with the site office (two-way radios or cell phones).
- D. Minor first aid supplies, including protective gloves.
- E. Brightly colored vests for easy identification in an emergency situation.
- F. During the time span of March 1 to October 31, the principal or designee shall optimize shade options for students and supervisors and shall encourage the utilization of existing shaded or indoor areas. As resources permit, outdoor activities shall be scheduled to occur before 10:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. However, scheduling constraints shall not reduce the total time students engage in physical education or activity.

7. Regularly Scheduled Maintenance of Play Structures:

Playground equipment and play areas should be inspected regularly to ensure that they are clear of hazards. It is recommended that each school develops its own inspection schedule.

For example: See the sample table below.

Any piece of equipment found to be unsafe should be secured against use until it is repaired. Hazards should be reported and repairs made a priority.

The checklists are not exhaustive and each school should assess its own play areas and identify its specific hazards.

Inspection records, required actions and the names of responsible officers should be documented.

Inspection Frequency	Designated Officer	Responsibilities
Daily	Playground Supervisor	Visual inspection of all equipment for obvious hazards (including dangerous objects, animal fouling, vandalism)
Weekly	Custodian/grounds person	Inspection of equipment components (including bolts, nail heads, pinch points, sharps, raking of impact absorbing material and sandpits)
Each Term	At least two experienced officers (e.g., engineer, principal, or CSPI)	Thorough inspection of all play equipment and using manufacturer specifications, and CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook guidelines and specifications

Health and Safety Code 115725-115735 requires that playgrounds conform to the standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 115725, all public agencies operating playgrounds must have a certified playground safety inspector conduct an initial inspection to aid compliance with the safety standards.

In addition, Health and Safety Code 115725 defines "playground" to include fall zones, surface materials, access ramps, and all areas within and including the designated enclosure and barriers. As of December 31, 2014, all new or replacement playground equipment, components, or modification of components inside an existing or new playground shall conform to standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

See the guidelines as set forth by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in the [Public Playground Safety Handbook](#).

8. Playground equipment fall protection, as needed:

The surface under and around playground equipment can be a major factor in determining the injury-causing potential of a fall. A fall onto a shock absorbing surface is less likely to cause a serious injury than a fall onto a hard surface. Because head impact injuries from a fall have the potential for being life threatening, the more shock absorbing the surface, the more likely that the severity of the injury will be reduced. However, it should be recognized that all injuries due to falls cannot be prevented no matter what playground surfacing material is used.

The most important thing to determine when trying to decide on a fall protection barrier is the Critical Height of the different pieces of playground equipment. Critical Height is an approximation of the maximum fall height from which a life-threatening head injury would not be expected to occur.

The surfacing material used under and around a particular piece of playground equipment should have a Critical Height value of at least the height of the highest accessible part of the equipment.

Determining the Highest Accessible Part of Equipment

Recommendations for the "highest accessible part" for various pieces of playground equipment are as follows.

- **Swings** - The highest accessible part of a swing structure is the height of the pivot point where the swing suspending elements connect to the supporting structure.
- **Elevated Platforms Including Slide Platforms** - The highest accessible part of a platform surrounded by guardrails is the height above the playing surface of the top of the guardrail. The highest accessible part of a platform surrounded by protective barriers is the height of the platform surface above the ground.
- **Climbers and Horizontal Ladders** - The highest accessible part is the maximum height of the structure.
- **Merry-Go-Rounds** - The highest accessible part is the height above the ground of any part at the perimeter on which a child may sit or stand.
- **See-Saws** - The highest accessible part is the maximum height attainable by any part of the see-saw.

- **Spring Rockers** - The highest accessible part is the maximum height above the ground of the seat or designated play surface.

Acceptability of Various Surfacing Materials

Hard surfacing materials, such as asphalt or concrete, are unsuitable for use under and around playground equipment of any height unless they are required as a base for a shock absorbing unitary material such as a rubber mat. Earth surfaces such as soils and hard packed dirt are also not recommended because their shock absorbing properties can vary considerably depending on climatic conditions such as moisture and temperature. Similarly, grass and turf are not recommended because their effectiveness in absorbing shock during a fall can be reduced considerably due to wear and environmental conditions.

Acceptable playground surfacing materials are available in two basic types, unitary or loose-fill.

Unitary Materials are generally rubber mats or a combination of rubber like materials held in place by a binder that may be poured in place at the playground site and cures to form a unitary shock absorbing surface. Persons wishing to install a unitary material as a playground surface should request test data from the manufacturer that should identify the Critical Height of the desired material. In addition, site requirements should be obtained from the manufacturer because, as stated above, some unitary materials require installation over a hard surface while for others this is not required.

Loose-Fill Materials can also have acceptable shock absorbing properties when installed at a sufficient depth. These materials include, but are not confined to, screened sand, pea size gravel, and shredded wood products. Loose-fill materials should not be installed over hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

Critical Heights of Tested Materials

The table below lists the critical height (expressed in feet) for each of seven materials when tested in an uncompressed state at depths of 6, 9, and 12 inches. The table also reports the critical height when a 9 inch depth of each material was tested in a compressed state.

The table should be read as follows: If, for example, uncompressed wood mulch is used at a minimum depth of 6 inches, the Critical Height is 7 feet. If 9 inches of uncompressed wood mulch is used, the Critical height is 10 feet. It should be noted that, for some materials, the Critical Height decreases when the material is compressed.

MATERIAL	UNCOMPRESSED DEPTH			COMPRESSED DEPTH
	6 inch	9 inch	12 inch	9 inch
Wood Chips ⁶	7	10	11	10
Double Shredded Bark Mulch	6	10	11	7
Engineered Wood Fibers ⁷	6	7	>12	6

⁶ This product was referred to as Wood Mulch in older versions of the Handbook for Public Playground Safety. The term Wood Chips more accurately describes the product.

⁷ This product was referred to as Uniform Wood Chips in older versions of the Handbook for Public Playground Safety. In the playground industry, the product is more commonly known as Engineered Wood Fibers.

Fine Sand	5	5	9	5
Coarse Sand	5	5	6	4
Fine Gravel	6	7	10	6
Medium Gravel	5	5	6	5
Shredded Tires⁸ (Rubber Mulch)	10-12	N/A	N/A	N/A

Health and Safety Code 115725 defines "playground" to include fall zones, surface materials, access ramps, and all areas within and including the designated enclosure and barriers. As of December 31, 2014, all new or replacement playground equipment, components, or modification of components inside an existing or new playground shall conform to standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

For further information, see the guidelines as set forth by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in the [Public Playground Safety Handbook](#).

⁸ This data is from tests conducted by independent testing laboratories on a 6 inch depth of uncompressed shredded tire samples produced by four manufacturers. The tests reported critical heights which varied from 10 feet to greater than 12 feet. It is recommended that persons seeking to install shredded tires as a protective surface request test data from the supplier showing the critical height of the material when it was tested in accordance with ASTM F1292.

SAMPLE DISTRICT FORM—STUDENT SUPERVISION 1



PLAYGROUND RULES



- 1 Follow instructions of playground supervisors at all times while on the playground.
- 2 Safe, courteous behavior is expected at all times.
3. Students must abide by safety equipment rules that are posted on various pieces of playground equipment.
4. The following behaviors are not tolerated on this playground:
 - Bullying
 - Wrestling, fighting, or threatening to harm others
 - Pushing
 - Throwing rocks, sticks, dirt, grass, or similar objects
 - Teasing, name calling, swearing
 - Hair pulling
 - Spitting
 - Eating or gum chewing
 - Walking near or under moving equipment (for example, swings)
 - Equipment overcrowding
 - Throwing of sand or other surface protection materials
5. Students should stay within the boundaries of the playground during recess. Leaving the playground without permission is a serious infraction of school rules.
6. Written permission is needed to re-enter the building during recess. Adult supervision of students is required at all times.
7. Students are expected to use sports equipment and fields appropriately:
 - Jump ropes are to be used only for jumping
 - Basketballs are for basketball. They may not be kicked or thrown at others.
 - Softballs, footballs, and soccer balls are permitted only on their appropriate fields
 - Playground balls may be kicked only on the fields
 - No balls or other equipment or objects are to be thrown at other students
 - No use of skates, skateboards, long strings, cables, (non-medical) helmets, or toys
8. Students are expected to follow the rules established for individual games and equipment.
 - No tackling is allowed.
 - Any student who wants to participate in a team sport shall be allowed to participate.
9. Students are expected to line up and prepare to leave the playground immediately when directed to do so.
10. Students are expected to walk when entering or exiting the playground.
11. Any student who is injured or bleeding or who sees someone else injured or bleeding must report this to a playground supervisor immediately.
12. Stop playing immediately when the designated signal is given.
13. Students who fail to follow these rules are subject to disciplinary action!