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Management Plan for Playground Safety

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Northfield Public Schools

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Appendices: – Maintained in the Building and Grounds office with the Health & Safety Files

- A Monthly Inspection Form
- B Student Injury Form

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1.0 Purpose

Northfield Public Schools is committed to providing safe learning and play spaces for our students and the community. This management plan was developed to reduce the potential for debilitating injuries on our district playgrounds, maintain quality play equipment, and comply with the with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F1487 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use and the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC's) Handbook for Playground Safety.

2.0 Guidelines for Playground Safety

District departments and staff adhere to the following guidelines:

- Playground equipment is installed according to manufacturer specifications, with manufacturer's labels intact.
- Playground equipment is inspected, repaired, and maintained by employees trained in accordance with the current standards on a regular basis with the necessary documentation.
- Inspections, repairs, maintenance, and accidents are documented and retained for self-regulation and insurance against litigation.

3.0 Safety Audits and Inspections

Audits and inspections are an integral part of this *Management Plan for Playground Safety*. To reduce the frequency and severity of injuries on the playground, the district systematically inspects the playground environment to identify hazards based on ASTM and CPSC standards.

- The safety AUDIT is a one-time initial inspection to perform an in-depth analysis of the playground in its entirety. An audit may also occur after modifications have been made to any component of the playground. The safety audit helps to prioritize repair or removal of equipment, and will assist in the development of a long-term strategy for playground safety. The Minnesota Department of Education requires the audit to be performed by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector in order to use and maintain Health and Safety Funding. An audit of the district's playgrounds was completed after initial installation. Reports are maintained at the District Office.
- Safety INSPECTIONS are a routine method of preventative maintenance to limit the occurrence of accidents and injuries. Inspections cover a wide variety of subjects, from surfacing material to vandalism and damaged pieces of equipment. The district performs these inspections monthly to document that equipment is safe and properly maintained. Inspection forms can be found in the appendices of this program. These forms are maintained in the District Grounds Office for a minimum of three years.

4.0 Employee Training

Employees involved in the playground safety program are trained in the current standards and guidelines published by CPSC and ASTM. The level of training depends on their position and tasks performed related to playground safety (e.g., auditor vs. high frequency inspector). District employees or consultants who perform the playground audits are Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSIs) as authorized by the National Playground Safety Institute. Employees responsible for monthly inspections are trained initially in the *Management Plan for Playground Safety* and in the inspection process by a CPSI, and thereafter as deemed necessary. All training is documented and maintained at the District Office for a minimum of three years.

5.0 Accidents and Incidents

Although the purpose of this *Management Plan for Playground Safety* is to reduce playground accidents and incidents; accidents will still occur. It is necessary to fully document the nature of the incident and investigate to determine its immediate cause. This investigation should include a site visit and documentation of witness statements and of any repairs made to the equipment. An accident report form, which can be found in the appendices of this program, is filled out and retained for each accident that occurs. These forms are maintained at the District Office.

6.0 Program Review

This program is reviewed on an annual basis. If changes are necessary, they are immediately communicated to employees involved in the program.

7.0 References

Christiansen, Monty L. (1993) *Points about Playgrounds*, Third Edition; Alexandria, VA; National Recreation and Park Association

Kutska, Kenneth S., Hoffman, Kevin J. and Malkusak, Antonio (1998) *Playground Safety is No Accident*, Second Edition; Alexandria, VA; National Recreation and Park Association

1997 Handbook for Public Playground Safety, Publication Number 325, Consumer Products Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207

ASTM F 1487-05, *Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use*, Reprinted from the Annual Book of ASTM Standards, 2005