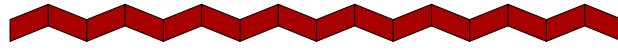




Playground Supervision Guidelines



Office of Safety and Security Fact Sheet

Playground Supervision is a Priority for Playground Safety

In recent years, Fairfax County Public Schools has spent thousands of dollars to upgrade shock-absorbing ground cover on school playgrounds and to replace playground equipment that did not meet current safety standards. Despite numerous improvements, the majority of injuries at elementary schools still occur on the playgrounds. The following suggestions for improving supervision may reduce the number of injuries at your school:

- **Rules.** *All playground areas have large blue signs posted that state the basic playground safety rules. Most schools have added signs listing individual safety procedures that relate to specific on-site equipment. Make sure all students know and understand the rules and how to use the play equipment that is appropriate for their age group. Review these guidelines periodically.*
- **Clothing.** *Pay attention to student clothing, particularly hood strings, which can get caught in playground equipment and can entrap students. Children should not wear items with dangling parts while the children play on equipment because the possibility of accidental strangulation is a real threat.*
- **Adult-Student Ratio.** *One adult for every 30 students is a good rule of thumb for adult-student supervision. The best person to oversee students is someone who knows each student's name and his or her typical behavior.*
- **Proximity to Students.** *An effective adult supervisor stands close to the students as they are playing. By being close to the students, the adult can hear student activities better and is able to anticipate a dangerous activity before it happens. When an adult is within close proximity, he or she serves as a visual reminder to students that they are being supervised. If a dangerous situation occurs, the student can then easily hear the adult's verbal warning.*
- **Viewpoint.** *Adults should avoid standing together as a group while supervising students. When supervision is distributed among students, there is a greater chance of observing any unsafe activity. Move throughout the play area in an unpredictable pattern. Students will then be less likely to participate in or try to hide inappropriate behavior because they will find it too difficult to follow your constant movement.*
- **Eye Contact.** *Stay focused on the students and maintain eye contact so students know that they will be noticed if they experiment with unsafe activities.*
- **Observations.** *Take note of how the playground equipment performs and how the students use it. Take any equipment in need of repair out of service immediately and submit a work order. Identify unsafe equipment with well-marked signs and bright yellow hazard tape. Inform administrators and teachers about problems with equipment or student behavior.*
- **Enjoyment of Playtime.** *When used properly, playground equipment offers positive physical and social challenges. Encourage students to enjoy themselves as they develop gross motor skills and to remember to have fun while maintaining playground safety!*

If you need assistance, call the Office of Safety and Security at 571-423-2010.