

Playground Safety Committee
Montessori School in Kleinburg
Playground Safety Rules for MSK Students and Staff
2022-2023

In August of 2012- The Montessori School in Kleinburg installed a new outdoor playground structure. As of November 2017, a new playground in the west facing, fenced-in play area was constructed and completed. The following guidelines will serve as procedures and policies for staff to follow to ensure proper use and safety of the playground apparatuses when used by students of MSK.

Please enter through the new gate, located in front of the paved patio stones. The double gates are NOT TO BE USED.

A. Safety Inspections

The staff and/or administration of MSK will ensure that the following safety inspection forms are completed regularly:

- Teachers will complete a **daily** playground safety inspection form each day, prior to the children entering the play area. A co-teacher will watch the children as the other teacher checks the play structure;
- Administration will ensure that a **monthly** playground safety/maintenance inspection and a written plan of action to address hazards and defects, is completed where required;
- Administration will complete a **seasonal** maintenance inspection report;
- Administration will complete an **annual** comprehensive inspection report that includes a plan of action with time frames to address each specific issue;
- a log outlining repairs, removal or installation of equipment will be kept on file;
- an injury log and/or playground injury reports will be kept on file.

B. Safety Rules

The **new** play area has several new play zones, with nature and natural materials as its focus.

- These domains consist of:
 - The original Play Structure/Climber with Slides
 - The natural Amphitheatre with Log seating area at base of hill
 - Patio area with patio stones and benches
 - An art area with Chalkboard
 - Tree-trunk structure, teepee
 - Instruments Wall
 - Logs on ground for walking, balancing, etc.

- In addition there is an area with newly planted saplings and plants
- Safety when manoeuvring around these new play zones is the utmost focus during outdoor play times. Staff must supervise student activity at all times.
- One staff member must be posted at each play zone/or between 2 zones when possible.

The staff of MSK will ensure the safety of all children in the playground area and in using the playground structure by:

- Ensuring that all students will learn about the rules of the new play area including what is acceptable and unacceptable play, how to play safe and what the purpose is of each of the new areas.
- Ensuring that all volunteers as well as parents will be made aware of the new play space area and information will be shared accordingly.
 - Standing at spots around the playground structure and play zones where each staff can have the ideal vantage point enabling them to watch all areas of the playground including the gate, the hill and tree, the far area and the structure;
 - 1 Teacher minimum must stand where they can supervise the slides and climbing apparatuses of the playground structure; and play zones
 - Allowing only one Casa class group to use the structure at a time;
 - Completing the daily safety inspection chart and being mindful of the condition of the playground structure and surrounding play zones

The staff will implement and enforce the following safety rules for children's use of the playground structure and play zones:

- No pushing, pulling on other children's clothing, hitting, kicking, or shoving while playing on the structure/any play zones;
- Only one child is permitted to go down the slides, steps and stool-steps at a time;
- The child must go down the slide feet-first and on his bottom- no sliding down backwards, head-first or walking up the slides;
- No child is permitted to push another child down the slides nor on any of the logs, nor around the log areas;
- No running on the structure, nor up/down the slides and steps, nor on the logs;
- No throwing or picking up the wood chips;
- If the structure is icy or wet due to weather, children will not be permitted to use the structure/zones until the structure is dried or until the ice is removed;
- The structure will not be in use if the wood chip ground covering is icy or slippery;
 - No running into or pushing others into the Tree trunks/teepee area
 - No climbing, jumping on, running on the amphitheatre seating logs-students may sit on the amphitheatre steps; the students **may not climb or go beyond the steps or up to the tree without direct teacher supervision**
 - No removing "instruments" from their play zone

- Students are not allowed in or around the plant area. No pulling, stepping on, nor removing plants

All staff members must be aware at all times for:

- Sightings of wild animals eg. fox, deer, wild turkeys, etc. See Wild Animal Policy
- Strangers approaching the school, playground area, or round-about
- Vehicles approaching, driving up driveway into round-about
- Dangerous weather

Playground Committee reporting on: Recent Sightings of wild/forest animals and birds (eg. wild turkeys) on MSK property

During outdoor play/recess time, if there is an animal sighting the staff member who initially sees **any animal** must blow the whistle 3 times and call for emergency LINE UP. All students must evacuate the play areas immediately and head for safety INDOORS. A staff member must report the animal sighting to the office via WALKIE-TALKIE immediately.

A couple of different scenarios are possible depending on which play area we are playing at---- and depending on where the animal/wild bird is located.

If the students are playing on one of the enclosed playground areas and the animal is walking in the round-about area or on the retaining wall- staff should try to keep the children as far away from the location of the animal/wild bird as possible. Please ensure that the gates are closed. If there is an entrance where the children can safely enter the school building, please have the students go indoors.

1) If students are playing on the side grassy area and the animal/wild bird is seen in the round-about or on the retaining wall, try using the door that leads down to the basement/French/ nap area (knock on the door to get kitchen staff's attention). Alternatively, we can try using the fire escape door, up the stairs leading to Elementary.

2) If students are playing on the back play structure area/ playground structure, lead them indoors through the back door (near the Casa Yellow bathroom). This is why it is important if your group of students is using the play structure area; the back door is to be unlocked for the duration of recess; to allow for ease of access to the indoors.

3) Elementary or if students are on a nature walk- use your senses- call for immediate help using the WALKIE-TALKIES or your CELL PHONES. Keep your distance from the animal and be very cautious. If the animal/wild bird is aggressive or poses immediate danger call 911. Take your cell phone outdoors if possible.

Follow the SMART Recess Approach:

Be aware and remember

- S - Seasonal Changes
- M- Monitor Equipment
- A - Accident Prevention
- R - Rotate in Zones
- T - Teach rules

Staff members must carry a walkie-talkie and or cell phone and a whistle.

The 3- whistle signal is to be used for the Emergency Line up Procedure to ensure the students leave the playground premises and come indoors and out of danger, through the nearest school entrance door.

COVID19 Protocol

Overview

As part of the MSK protocol, the Playground Committee is responsible for updating the Health & Safety measures that have been set in place to ensure the health & well being of our students and staff while still being able to enjoy and utilize the outdoor spaces at MSK.

Use of Equipment

Play Structure has been re-inspected for the 2022-2023 school year and is allowed to be operational for use by students. This will be used by individual cohorts or with one other classroom in accordance with the recess rotation schedule.

Each Cohort Group will continue to have their own designated equipment and outdoor toys to use. These items will be cleaned after use. All cleaning will be logged on the Playground Equipment Cleaning Log sheet. The Cleaning Log sheet will be kept in the Playground Binder.

Playground Checks

A member of the playground committee will conduct the morning check and Casa will do the afternoon playground check each day to ensure a safe and secure environment outdoors for students and staff. **This is logged in the Playground Binder on the Playground Checklist Sheet.** Should there be information to be notified to staff on the grounds conditions, this will be shared via email and printed off for staff to acknowledge and sign off on.

Items to note are

- Excessive garbage
- Damaged Equipment or fencing
- Nature debris (such as tree limbs)
- Deceased animals
- Fungi or Animal excrement