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Playground Safety Policy

Purpose

We have integrated an outdoor free play philosophy at Angus Valley Montessori Schools by providing an age-appropriate playground to nurture the bodies of children through daily exercise. We believe that developing the children's physical skill is a foundation for cognitive abilities and they learn through their play while we provide a safe, stimulating environment as well as developmentally appropriate activities.

Angus Valley Montessori has defined the purpose of this policy, which is to set out the responsibilities of the licensee, staff, students and volunteers in ensuring that the outdoor and playground spaces provide a safe and well-supervised environment for children's play and meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a playground safety policy for childcare centers.

General

- Angus Valley Montessori will ensure that there are enough play materials available that are age appropriate and their learning and developmental needs are met during outdoor play.
- The maximum capacity of the playground will not be exceeded at any time.

Playground Inspections/Checks

- Outdoor play space, fixed play structures, fencing and surfacing checks will be conducted on a daily, monthly and annual basis.
- Daily, monthly, and annual inspections of the playground will be completed as outlined in the Safety Log Section.
- The **Head or Assistant Teacher will be designated for the logging of the daily and monthly maintenance inspections**. This person will be noted by initial or name on the respective inspection forms.
- **Action plans will be noted and followed** as outlined on the **inspections**.
- The **Accident Report** form will be completed for any injury to a child while on the playground.
- Should the injury be of a **Serious Occurrence** nature, the **Accident Report** form will be attached to the **Serious Occurrence submission forms** and the policies and procedures for **Serious Occurrences** will be followed.



- **Annual Inspections** will be completed by **the Supervisor** to ensure that the ground surfacing is in good condition and free of tripping hazards, holes and rips etc.

Gaining Ministry Approval prior to any changes:

- Prior to any changes of the playground, The Ministry of Education must first approve any new equipment, renovations, repairs or replacements.

Supervision on the playground:

- Each Staff member has a designated area on the playground to provide optimum supervision of all children using playground equipment.
- Staff will position themselves throughout the playground and rotate their position where required to ensure children can be visually supervised while engaging in play.
- All ratios are maintained at all times, in event staff require additional support the Supervisor will be available to assist the playground staff.
- If there is no time/staff to assist staff on the playground, the staff will maintain their ratios by splitting their class into smaller groups. Reduced ratios are never used outdoors.
- Infant and Toddler (Pre Casa) children will be separated from other children during outdoor activities.
- Staff will ensure that there all gates are securely closed at all times.

Outdoor plans will be posted:

- Angus Valley Montessori will develop **outdoor program plans** that provide for games and activities to enhance gross motor play, as noted in the Program Plan Section will be **posted and available** for staff and parents.

Outdoor Safety:

- Bikes, Trikes, Planter boxes cannot be used by any student to climb the perimeter fencing.
- Riding toys or toys of any sorts are not to be under any climbing structure including any slide. Each student shall utilize a slide one at a time, sitting down and not sliding down headfirst.
- Students are to use and share the sand box and not dig pea gravel and or any surfacing fibres.
- The teachers / staff will inspect the playground to see if there is any debris / broken glass, hazardous materials that can cause bodily harm. Also, will check the slides for any debris and broken glass.



- In an event of a playground / outdoor emergency staff member can use the designated “emergency phone” located at the exit door. The emergency phone is connected to contact 911 and also can contact the schools with individual extensions.

Restrictions for weather conditions (snow, heat & smog alerts):

- Discontinue the use of climbing equipment during winter months, or while snow covered.
- Take a walk around the school instead of using the playground.
- Keep the children indoors, open the windows and do gross motor activities from “Rainbow Fun” during heat alerts and weather advisories.
- Check the weather forecast for any heat advisory to ensure the safety and health of the children.
- Track in the classroom Daily Log when students if students remain indoors, and why.

Rooftop Playground Emergency Procedures (where applicable)

UPON HEARING A FIRE ALARM SIGNAL

Where safe to do so, quickly line up children at playground door with one (1) teacher / staff member at the front of the line to lead the children to the designated assembly area and one (1) teacher/staff member at the back of the line to ensure that no children are left behind. All Staff must read and comply to the FSP (Fire Safety Plan) and refer to Staff Fire Procedures posted in all classrooms includes designated assembly area.

- All Staff will use the nearest designated exit areas (stairwell)
- Obtain the attendance records and bring with you to the designated assembly area.
- All Staff must be familiar with Emergency Playground Evacuation Map, posted at entry points of the playground door(s)

Staff’s review of playground policy:

- All staff will review the policy prior to commencing employment and annually thereafter. The staff as well as the Supervisor must sign a written record of the review.

Repairs and Maintenance

- All items identified in the checklists as requiring repair will be documented in the repair log and repaired or addressed in a timely manner (the form in Appendix C may be used for this purpose). Note: the amount of time required will depend on the scope of the work and who is required to conduct the repairs.



- Staff must inspect all fencing to ensure it free from rust, damage or is leaning in any area.
- Documentation on the repair log will also include:
 - the date the issue was identified;
 - documentation of what steps and efforts have been taken to address any identified items which cannot be repaired immediately due to circumstances out of the childcare centre's control; and
 - the date the related repairs were completed.
- Where outdoor space or playground repairs cannot be completed immediately, the area or space requiring repairs will be sectioned off to prevent children from using that area to protect their safety and reduce the risk of injury.
- Any repairs requiring alterations or renovations to the playground premises will not begin until a Ministry of Education Director approves site or playground plans.

Playground Safety Procedures

Timeline	Steps to Follow
Daily: before using the outdoor play space/ playground	1. Teachers must: i. walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the daily playground inspection checklist (the form in Appendix A may be used for this purpose); ii. remove any garbage, hazards or defects using gloves; iii. complete the playground inspection checklist, sign and date it; and iv. file the playground inspection checklist in the Admin office. Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, must: i. Report the hazards or defects to Admin who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. ii. Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children. 2. In preparation to exit the child care centre to use the outdoor play space or playground, teacher must: i. ensure all emergency medication accompanies children, where applicable; ii. ensure all emergency contact information is readily available for children; iii. ensure the attendance record is readily available; iv. ensure that the allergy and dietary restriction lists are readily available; v. ensure appropriate steps related to environmental factors have been implemented (e.g.: children are appropriately dressed for the weather, there are no entanglement risks, bug nets are in place, etc.); and



Timeline	Steps to Follow
	vi. conduct head counts prior to leaving the indoor play activity area, and while transitioning them to the outdoor play space or playground.
Daily: while using the outdoor play space/ playground	1. Staff must: i. position themselves in areas that ensure that all children and areas of the playground can be properly supervised at all times; ii. ensure that there is access to drinking water at all times; iii. complete head counts of children every 10 minutes; iv. implement the goals and approaches of the program statement, such as engaging with the children in play; and v. refrain from using personal cellular phones (except in emergency situations) or using outdoor time to socialize with other staff, students or volunteers during outdoor play. Where a child is injured on the playground, staff must: i. administer first aid, where appropriate; ii. contact emergency services, where appropriate; iii. notify the parent of the child; iv. complete an accident report and provide a copy to the child's parent; and v. follow the serious occurrence policy and procedures, where appropriate.
Daily: When returning from the outdoor play space/ playground	1. Staff must: i. conduct head counts prior to returning indoors from the outdoor play space or playground, while transitioning indoors, and upon returning to the indoor play activity space. ii. Ensure that attendance records, emergency medication and children's emergency contact information is brought indoors with the group.
Monthly	1. Teacher must: i. walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the monthly playground inspection checklist (the form in Appendix B may be used for this purpose); ii. remove any hazards or defects, where possible; iii. complete the monthly inspection checklist (including verification of seasonal issues), sign and date it; and iv. file the playground inspection checklist in the playground binder near the window. Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, must: i. report the hazards or defects to who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. ii. Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children.



Timeline	Steps to Follow
	2. must: - review outdoor injuries and accidents that have occurred to look for trends; - take appropriate action to prevent similar injuries and accidents from happening in the future. 3. must: - review the repair logs and follow up on any outstanding identified issues still requiring repair.
Annually	1. Where the playground has fixed equipment, must: - ensure a certified playground inspector conducts an annual playground inspection; - discuss the findings of the playground inspection with the certified playground inspector, including items that need to be repaired or replaced; and - obtain a copy of the playground inspection report. 2. Where the playground does not have fixed equipment must: - walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the annual playground inspection checklist; - remove any hazards or defects, where possible; - complete the annual inspection checklist, sign and date it; and - develop a written plan to address any hazards and/or defects, including a timeline to address the issues identified during the inspection. 3. Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, must: - report the hazards or defects to who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. - section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children.

Compliance with the CSA Standards

- Any outdoor play space, fixed play structure or surfacing under those structures that is constructed or renovated will meet the requirements set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard CAN/CSA-Z614-14, "Children's Play spaces and Equipment".
- Written confirmation of compliance with the CSA standard will be obtained from a Certified Playground Safety Inspector, upon completion of any repairs or renovations which have resulted in a non-compliance with the CSA standard as outlined in a playground inspection report.



Documentation and Report Retention

- All documentation and reports related to the outdoor space or playground will be:
 - Kept for three years from the date they were created and/or updated (whichever date is most recent); and
 - Made available for Ministry of Education staff to review at all times.

Glossary

Canadian Standards Association (CSA): a non-profit, voluntary association engaged in standards development and certification activities. The current standard in Ontario for licensed childcare center playgrounds is CAN/CSA Z614-14 - Children's Play spaces and Equipment. This standard specifies design and maintenance criteria to reduce the risk of injury.

Certified Playground Inspector: An individual who holds a current certification with the [Canadian Playground Safety Institute](#).

Fixed play structure: a **structure** anchored to the ground that is designed for children to climb on (e.g. a climber).

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the license issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the childcare center.

Staff (Employee): Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).