



## Preschool Outdoor Learning Environment Procedures

The following points are the agreed procedures for all preschool classes at Maribyrnong Primary School. These procedures relate to safety, supervision and OH&S requirements. Please ensure these points are followed and conveyed to relief staff on arrival at the preschool as part of their site induction.

### Swings

- Children must access the swing independently. Educators are not to lift children up onto the swing. They can support a child by explaining the steps involved or providing a narrative of what another child is doing to access the equipment in a learning experience model.
- The needs of both groups must be considered when setting up the swing play area.
- Children waiting for a turn on the swings sit on the brick wall. There are no other toys in this area as they could be a trip hazard for children entering or leaving this play area. Educators may decide to use sand timers if appropriate or count down the swings left before swapping over.

### Slide

- Children are not to walk up the slide. Educators use the language of “up the stairs, down the slide” to reinforce this approach. The exception to this statement is when it is a planned learning experience (such as using rope to climb the slide etc).
- Children are supported to go down the slide one at a time and not wait at the end of a slide where they can bump into each other.

### Ladders

- Children are taught that we do not stand on the top rung of the ladder. The second highest rung is as high as they can climb while maintaining their stability. Educators explicitly teach children how to climb and how to ascertain if the ladder is balanced safely thereby minimising risk.
- Educators explicitly teach children how to angle the ladder and provide additional supervision for children who are still grappling with this concept.
- Children are able to place ladders against the fences (when flight risks are not a concern) but only use trees where the immediate environment is stable. Educators support children in identifying safe ‘ladder areas’ where the ground is flat and free of tree roots.
- Children can put ladders against trees, providing they have ascertained that it is a safe area, if they are able to climb out and climb back independently. Educators do not lift students onto the ladders or trees. If a child needs support in climbing back, a narrative of how to do this should be provided by the educator.

### Bikes

- Children are to ride the bikes by themselves. No pushing by other children or educators.
- Children are supported in turn taking and taught how to ask to sit in the back of the double bikes.
- Children are supported in their development with bike riding skills and reminded that deliberate crashing into each other or objects is not safe.

## **Tree Climbing**

- Children are allowed to climb trees if they are able to do so independently (including climbing out and back).
- If a child is unable to climb back educators do not lift students down. If a child needs support in climbing back, a narrative of how to do this will be provided by the educator.
- This procedure is reviewed on a needs basis. If needed the educators can place a ribbon or elastic marker on the tree to indicate to the children that they cannot climb higher than the marker.

## **Sticks**

- Children can play with sticks as long as they are no bigger than the size of their hand. Using natural materials is a valuable play experience and can form the basis of pretend or dramatic play in both indoor and outdoor environments. Children are supported in their play with sticks with reminders where needed; including that they cannot run with the sticks or use them as weapons or projectiles due to safety reasons.

## **Beam**

- Children are taught that there should be one person on a jumping board at a time.
- When the walking planks are set up more children (up to two) can be on it at one time. This allows the children to bounce off the low board without bumping into other children. If the walking plank is set up at a higher level then only one child is to be on the beam at a time.

## **Packing Away**

- Children are encouraged and supported to help with packing away.
- Educators rotate through packing away items so that the load is shared.
- Children are not to enter the shed without adult permission and supervision.
- Children are able to ask an educator for an item from the shed and this will either be provided or the child will be supervised getting this item.
- The last educators to put an item in the shed when packing up will also lock the shed.

## **Sandpit**

- Sand stays in the sandpit. It is not put into the backs of the bikes as this can potentially cause a slip hazard in other play zones.
- The sandpit is swept twice a week to ensure containment and to allow educators to check for any foreign objects in the sand.
- A daily visual check is done to ensure safe play is maintained and any risks minimised.

## **General Safety Considerations**

- Shed doors must be locked open (using the external latch) or kept closed to minimise risk and support our vision impaired children.
- Trip hazards such as uneven concrete and exposed tree roots will be painted bright yellow to indicate their presence while awaiting repairs or service.

## **Seasonal Considerations**

- After rain the slide and freestanding equipment must be wiped down.
- In Winter an inspection of the grounds must be completed prior to each session as ice can form on the concrete and in puddles.
- In Summer the slide will need to be covered when not in use and checked prior to use as it can reflect the heat onto children.

If you require further clarification about these procedures please talk to a preschool educator, the preschool team leader or the principal.