

City of Costa Mesa
Development Services Department
Policy and Procedure

Policy No:	P-20-01	Effective Date:	3/4/2002
Subject:	Private Outdoor Play Area Development Standards and Conditions		
Implements:	CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION		
Approved by:			

Background:

At the meeting of March 4, 2002, City Council adopted standards conditions and requirements for private play areas both at private schools as well as private play areas not associated with private schools. This was in response to concerns with the children's vulnerability and protection when playing in an outdoor area.

Policy:

The conditions and requirements listed below are to be applied whenever a private outdoor play yard is proposed.

Procedure:

PRIVATE SCHOOL – OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS FOR CHILDREN

The following review criteria shall be applied:

1. The location of outdoor play areas should be sensitive to residential and other adjacent land uses. Further, the play areas located adjacent to the residential uses should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and berms, and/or wall or similar treatment as buffering mechanisms for visual and noise purposes.
2. Outdoor play areas with stationary play equipment or permanent seating are encouraged to be shaded by a canopy structure, awnings, or landscaping.
3. If the outdoor play area is located adjacent or in proximity to a street, driveway, loading area, or any other traffic circulation area, a street barrier with a minimum height of 42 inches (i.e. steel reinforced bollards, reinforced block walls, etc.) should be used to enclose the play area for adequate protection from vehicular traffic. Any other type of comparable street barrier which may provide adequate protection shall be subject to review and approval by the final review authority. Fences and block walls shall be in

conformance with development standards for the zoning district in which they are located.

4. The Playground Plan should demonstrate compliance to State of California Playground Safety Regulations R-39-97, (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 22, available from Barclay's California Code of Regulations (800) 888-3600. State safety regulations are based on the ASTM F1487-98 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification of Playground Equipment for Public Use, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground #325, both available from the California Department of Health Services, (916) 654-0381.
5. At least one of each type of ground level play equipment should be handicapped accessible.
6. When two or more playgrounds are provided on one site, there should be distinct separation between preschool age playgrounds (2-5 years) and school-age playgrounds (5-12 years) through the use of walkways, seating areas, or landscaped buffers to separate the two distinct areas.
7. No metal slides or merry-go-rounds are allowed.
8. A variety of play experiences and graduated play challenges should be provided, including crawling, pulling/pushing, balancing, swinging, climbing, spinning, sliding, and creative/social play opportunities.
9. The playground should be located a minimum of 50 feet in all directions from any such hazards such as streets, parking lots and bike paths, barbecues, water features, and tripping hazards.
10. The playground should be visible from the street for surveillance.
11. A minimum of one shaded seating area should be provided nearby to foster adult supervision of children.
12. Minimum exterior space for a private school play area should be provided at the following rate:

Elementary (K-6):	116 square feet per student
Junior High School (7-8):	160 square feet per student
High School (9-12):	182 square feet per student

Outdoor play areas for preschool children (0 – pre-kindergarten) are subject to review and approval by the Planning Division, on a case-by-case basis.

13. Areas included in this calculation are outdoor play areas, turf areas, open play fields, paved play areas, apparatus areas, and areas used for physical education or active outdoor recreational use. Areas excluded from this calculation are areas used for parking, loading, and traffic circulation, landscaped areas in parking lots, service areas, eating areas, and any required street setbacks.
14. The number of students on the playground at any one time; the hours of recess and outside play; the design and precise location of the outside play area; shall be subject to review and approval by the final review authority. Also, the final review authority may, at its discretion, limit the number of students that may be engaged in outside play if it finds that outside play is causing a noise nuisance for the neighborhood. The outdoor play area is subject to the exterior noise standards of the City of Costa Mesa as set forth in Section 13-280 of the zoning code.

The following conditions of approval shall be included:

1. Stationary play equipment shall be located on turf, sand, or other treated surface to the satisfaction of the Director of Economic & Development Services. Outdoor play areas shall include a combination of both hard and soft surfaces.
2. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a final playground plan for review and approval, which includes detailed playground specifications of manufactured play equipment. The playground plan shall depict safety fall zones, safety surfacing materials and construction specifications, manufacturer and model numbers of equipment and equipment deck. On a project-specific basis, the Director of Economic & Development Services shall require that the playground plan adequately serve the anticipated number of users and their activities.
3. Prior to occupancy, the applicant shall submit a letter stating that the play equipment installation has been inspected by a person authorized by the manufacturer, that the equipment has been installed per manufacturer's specifications, and that it complies with the minimum playground safety regulations adopted by the State of California (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 22).
4. All nighttime school activities in the outdoor play yard areas shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of Economic & Development Services.
5. There shall be no nighttime lighting, except for security purposes, of outdoor play areas after school hours. Any lighting under the control of the applicant shall be directed in such a manner so as to not unreasonably interfere with the quiet enjoyment of nearby residences.
6. Chain link fence visible from a public street or residential property is prohibited.
7. The outdoor play area shall be enclosed with a six-foot high fence or wall with a lock or latching device that is not accessible to children. All fences or walls shall provide for safety with controlled points of access.

PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES – OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS FOR CHILDREN

The following review criteria shall be applied:

1. The location of common outdoor play areas (i.e. turf areas, open play fields, paved play areas, apparatus areas, and active outdoor recreational areas) should be sensitive to neighboring residences and other adjacent land uses. Further, the play areas located adjacent to the residential uses should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, and berms, and/or hardscape treatment as buffering mechanisms for visual and noise purposes.
2. Outdoor play areas are encouraged to be shaded by a canopy structure, awnings, or landscaping.
3. If the common outdoor play area is located adjacent or in proximity to a street, driveway, loading area, or any other traffic circulation area, a street barrier with a minimum height of 42 inches (i.e. steel reinforced bollards, reinforced block walls, etc.) should be used to enclose the play area for adequate protection from vehicular traffic. Any other type of comparable street barrier which may provide adequate protection shall be subject to review and approval by the final review authority. Fences and block

walls shall be in conformance with development standards for the zoning district in which they are located.

4. The Playground Plan should demonstrate compliance to State of California Playground Safety Regulations R-39-97, (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 22, available from Barclay's California Code of Regulations (800) 888-3600. State safety regulations are based on the ASTM F1487-98 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification of Playground Equipment for Public Use, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground #325, both available from the California Department of Health Services, (916) 654-0381.
5. At least one of each type of ground level play equipment should be handicapped accessible.
6. When two or more playgrounds are provided on one site, there should be distinct separation between preschool age playgrounds (2-5 years) and school-age playgrounds (5-12 years) through the use of walkways, seating areas, or landscaped buffers to separate the two distinct areas.
7. No metal slides or merry-go-rounds are allowed.
8. A variety of play experiences and graduated play challenges should be provided, including crawling, pulling/pushing, balancing, swinging, climbing, spinning, sliding, and creative/social play opportunities.
9. The playground should be located a minimum of 50 feet in all directions from any such hazards such as streets, parking lots and bike paths, barbecues, water features, and tripping hazards.
10. The playground should be visible from the street for surveillance.
11. A minimum of one shaded seating area should be provided nearby to foster adult supervision of children.

The following conditions of approval shall be included:

1. Stationary play equipment shall be located on turf, sand, or other treated surface to the satisfaction of the Director of Economic Development Services. Common outdoor play areas shall include a combination of both soft and hard surfaces.
2. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a final playground plan for review and approval, which includes detailed playground specifications of manufactured play equipment. The playground plan shall depict safety fall zones, safety surfacing materials and construction specifications, manufacturer and model numbers of equipment and equipment deck heights. On a project-specific basis, the Director of Economic & Development Services shall require that the playground plan adequately serve the anticipated number of users and their activities.
3. Prior to occupancy, the applicant shall submit a letter stating that the play equipment installation has been inspected by a person authorized by the manufacturer, that the equipment has been installed per manufacturer's specifications, and that it complies with the minimum playground safety regulations adopted by the State of California (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 22).
4. There shall be no nighttime lighting, except for security purposes, of common outdoor play areas. Any lighting under the control of the applicant shall be directed in such a manner so as to not unreasonably interfere with the quiet enjoyment of nearby residences.
5. Chain link fence visible from a public street or residential property is prohibited.