

Topic:	Outdoor Learning Spaces
Effective:	March 2019
Cross-Reference:	<u>Sustainability Education and Environment Policy;</u> <u>Community Planning and Partnerships Policy;</u> <u>Donations and Charitable Receipts;</u> HDSB Guidelines for School Ground Greening <u>Landscape and Child Development – A Design Guideline for</u> <u>Early Years – Kindergarten Play-Learning Environments</u> <u>The Illustrated Guide to the AODA Design of Public Spaces</u> CSA (Canadian Standards Association) -- Can/CSA Z614 re: Play Equipment
Revision Date:	February 2023
Review Date:	February 2027
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Facility Services and Planning

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board (HDSB) acknowledges the contribution of play and learning in the outdoor environment to the educational experience of students by supporting creative, social and physical development and well-being. Projects will not be allowed to displace other important and appropriate functional uses of the grounds. The HDSB preference is for naturalized learning and play spaces rather than manufactured play structures.

HDSB has compiled these requirements in the interests of ensuring all changes and/or additions to school grounds are safe, sustainable, low-maintenance, and vandalism resistant.

HDSB does not fund the supply or installation of manufactured play structures, however in the event that an agreement exists or is proposed between a school council and a municipality, procedures below must be followed.

This procedure applies to all Board sites where an outdoor learning and/or play environment exists, or is proposed. Principals are responsible to communicate with Facility Services when considering initiating changes to the school grounds.

Objectives:

The following guiding principles exist to help the school community plan and implement a successful, sustainable project that will:

- Ensure projects will have the support of designated School, Board and/or Municipal staff, as appropriate.
- Ensure approvals and implementation take place within a reasonable time frame.

- Encourage the use of native species and ensure that no poisonous plants or invasive species shall be used in the school greening areas.
- Ensure the project is sustainable through ongoing maintenance in subsequent years or for the duration of the lifecycle of the play structure or other elements.
- Ensure Municipal Site Plan Approval requirements are not negatively impacted.
- Ensure reciprocal agreements with Municipalities are respected, and that any project which may impact municipal or other lands, will involve other parties in the planning and approvals process.
- Ensure projects on HDSB properties meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces and other governing regulations such as the Ontario Building Code and/or the Canadian Standards Association documents such as Can/CSA Z614 for play structures.
- Respect the rights and responsibilities of HDSB Facility Services and respective Municipal Parks Departments.

The Principal or other senior administrator will be the primary contact person for any directions or communications from Facility Services staff.

Procedure:

1. Initiation of changes to school grounds shall be requested through the Principal to the Facility Services Department. Facility Services staff shall provide technical resources and administration of the project, from design through to procurement and construction.
2. The Principal, in consultation with the Facility Services Department, will approve the location of new, seating areas, gardens, tree planting play equipment or other modifications to school grounds, taking into account site supervision and safety, as well as site conditions such as visibility, proximity to residential neighbours, inclusive access, grading, under-ground services, current or proposed portable locations, fire routes or other access routes.
3. In the event of a conflict concerning the location of a project, Facility Services staff will advise if conditions of Site Plan Approval would take precedence over school ground modification projects.
4. Consultation with the school community – parents and staff, and where applicable, local community to meet AODA requirements, will be undertaken as part of the project development.
5. The services of a landscape architect, architect or geo-technical specialist may be required to design and/or address site conditions. In such cases, the cost of the consultant/specialist, and any associated testing or surveys may be charged to the project budget. Consideration will be given to a school community's ability to raise funds to cover the cost of the consultant/specialty services.
6. Outdoor Learning Space proposals must be approved by Facility Services & Planning.

7. Proposals must contain:

- Detailed site plan for the project including location of the project on a current site plan for school, property lines, potential portables and/or additions, snow clearing and piling, drainage and utility locates.
- Details of community consultations meeting AODA requirements, if necessary
- Identification/details of any hardscape materials.
- Identification/details (including dimensions and component(s) meeting AODA requirements) of any proposed CAS approved play equipment, structures, hardscape materials, AODA surfacing, location (distance from other structures, property lines, sports fields, play structures, etc.) and materials.
- Identification of Plant materials by common and scientific name. HDSB School Ground Greening Guidelines identify approved, native, drought & compaction resistant tree/shrub species for HDSB properties. Annuals/perennials must also be native & non-toxic species. Exceptions must be pre-approved.
- A budget and funding breakdown
- Changes to existing asphalt surfaces.
- School Ground Project Approval Form (signed by Principal)
- A comprehensive maintenance plan to ensure survival and sustainability of project. Maintenance costs equal to 10% of the project budget must be committed for a specified time as determined by project scope of work.

8. After completion of the project, a Final Construction Inspection will be performed by Facility Services or by a Municipal/HDSB approved 3rd party certified inspection company for play equipment as required by CSA Z614.

Volunteers

1. All projects on HDSB property must be pre-approved by Facility Services, regardless of whether the work is tendered or goods/services and/or materials are donated. This includes the donation of trees by individuals/commercial institutions/foundations and/or Conservation Authorities.
2. Non professional volunteers are not permitted to use power tools or equipment on school board property.
3. Any volunteer tradespeople must be registered with the Purchasing Department as a Vendor of Record and provide documentation of WSIB and Liability Insurance as requested by Purchasing in order to operate any power equipment.
4. All volunteers working with students must have a Criminal Reference Check that includes a Vulnerable Sector Screening on file.

Safety

1. No restricted substances are to be kept, used or brought onto the grounds. Only permitted insecticides or pesticides are to be used in accordance with Board policy and municipal/provincial requirements and, then, only by licensed applicators and with permission from the Facility Services department.
2. Distances from schools, structures, sports fields, approved materials, placement of hardscape (such as armour stone) are outlined in HDSB Guidelines for School Ground Greening.
3. Identify & avoid vandalism opportunities (including rocks that could be tossed, skateboarding edges, easily broken sculptures, elements that give access to school building roofs).
4. Area must conform to security best practices (keep sight lines open, well lit, no dense plantings or secluded area, and provide two ways out of fenced areas).
5. During construction phase, all legislated safety requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act must be met.
6. As per Section above regarding Volunteers, non-professional volunteers (non-tradesperson) are not permitted to use power tools on school property.
7. Components requiring CSA Z614-07 inspections are not permitted in Kindergarten Play Areas.
8. Projects involving excavation require locates for underground services. Contractors are responsible for requesting locates from the appropriate municipality. Facility Services staff, specifically the Area Supervisor for the school, must be advised when there is any excavation work planned for the project.

Responsibility

Ultimately school property and buildings are the responsibility of Facility Services. The decision to remove or reclaim an outside greening project will be made in consultation with the school staff and Facility Services. It is expected that effort will be made to maintain greening projects in line with the original approved project scope. Costs for restoration of the area will be the responsibility of the school.

1. School Greening Committee must include school administration.
2. Child Care Centre tenants may only add or install playground equipment or natural components on Board property with the prior approval of the Board, as per the terms of the lease agreement. The costs for any upgrades/expansions and the maintenance of the childcare play areas are the sole responsibility of the childcare operator. Where the Board permits such additions or installations, the Child Care Centre will ensure that all equipment (natural and manufactured) is kept in a good state of repair, and will promptly remedy any defects identified by Board or government inspection.

3. Specifications around locations, natural and built components of School Ground Greening projects are detailed in HDSB Guidelines for School Ground Greening.
4. Modification of blacktop play area and parking lots has an effect on site drainage, site maintenance and traffic patterns as well as increasing the “heat island” effect of paved areas in the vicinity of school and neighbourhood areas and therefore must be approved.
5. If the conditions specified in this procedure are not adhered to, the Board may require that the adequate corrective measures be taken at the expense of the School.