

# Playground Play

After the great success of our two outdoor play days last year and observing the success of unstructured 'play', the staff at HAS have changed the recess 'rules'. In a nutshell, we've back off. This doesn't mean that anything goes, rather we are teaching students what's safe/unsafe, and only stepping in if the latter is a possibility. Here is what we are coaching students about so they can have fun and be safe.



## Rough and Tumble Play

It's good for bodies, and good for social and emotional development.

It is not: fighting, punching, kicking, choking, grabbing hair/head, having tight muscles and frowns/anger on faces. If smiles stop, play stops!

It looks like: Fun, running/chasing, tagging with an open hand, wrestling, tickling, rolling, spinning. It is "Big Moves in Big Spaces!"

Staff use the language: Do you feel safe? Are you having fun? Say stop if you don't feel safe.

[This is one of many articles on the internet about rough and tumble play:  
[www.smith.edu/forthill/documents/CarlsonCombined.pdf](http://www.smith.edu/forthill/documents/CarlsonCombined.pdf) ]

## Climbing on Equipment

Students who would like to can climb on the equipment, and climb 'up' the slide, taking turns with those who are sliding 'down'. What's safe for one student might not be safe for the next student.

Students are coached to use body 'points of contact' for stability. These might be:

- 1 point – 1 foot
- 2 points – 2 feet; one hand/1 foot
- 3 points – 2 feet/1 hand; 2 hands, one foot
- 4 points- 2 feet/2 hands

Staff use the language Do you feel safe?, Do you feel stable?

Staff will ask a child to come down if it appears unsafe. Children are not allowed to use their clothing or skipping ropes to slide down or hang from equipment.

## Hill Play

The hill on the west end of the field is open for safe play. The boundary on the south end is the bus mirror. On the top of the hill and north side, it is the fence.

We coach students about not entering Private property, as this is taking care of others. We also coach to be aware of the gopher holes, and to show them to others so everyone can be safe.

## Snow and Ice

The 'zone' for snowballs is near the backstop (north west corner) for those who want to do this. Snowballs are allowed in this area only.

Students are coached:

- to throw low, avoiding the head in gym classes, and this will apply to the snowball zone.
- frozen snow/ice is like a rock, don't throw it.
- forts: You don't own the snow. Work together, take care of others. The fort is yours for that recess then it belongs to the snow/environment again.
- when on ice: You must be stable. 2 points is not enough unless you are wearing a helmet; 3 or 4 points of contact if not wearing a helmet.

If students don't wear ski pants, there is a natural consequences for their clothing choice (i.e. wet, cold). Students are encouraged to 'Take care of yourself', however, adults can make a call for the student based on temperatures. (Having an extra set of clothes at school in the event of wet conditions is helpful.)