

# Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

## Winter Playground Safety

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, entanglement is the leading cause of playground fatalities and falls are the leading cause of playground injuries. The cold and icy conditions we often experience during this time of year increase the risk of both.

Cold temperatures require students to dress in warm clothing and can also cause ice to form on the playground equipment and freeze the ground surrounding the equipment. As described below, cold weather and clothing pose certain risks on the playground.

### Entanglement:

- Drawstrings on hoods, hats, or around the waist on some jackets, increase the risk of entanglement and should be prohibited where the student's feet are off the ground. In a worst-case scenario, drawstrings could lead to strangulation.
- Scarves also present an entanglement hazard and should be tucked inside the outer garment or removed.
- Scarves, gloves, and or hats that are sewn/attached to jackets should be prohibited.

### Falls:

- Ice could be present on playing surfaces and/or equipment increasing the risk of slips to both students and staff.

- The impact absorbing surfacing material may be frozen solid in which case it loses its ability to cushion falls, which greatly increases the risk of serious head injuries.
- Gloves may make holding onto the rungs of a climber, or a piece of rotating equipment, more difficult. Students could fall or be thrown from equipment.

To reduce the risk of entanglement, teacher's and playground supervisors should be vigilant for children wearing clothing with drawstrings and scarves. Drawstrings and hats, gloves and/or scarves that are attached to jackets should be prohibited.

To reduce the risk and severity of falls, school staff should inspect the playground equipment daily for ice. Likewise, the surfacing material should also be inspected daily for ice. Should the equipment contain ice, it should be removed or the playground should be closed. Should the surfacing material be frozen, the playground should be closed.

When the temperatures drop, increased awareness and vigilance on the playground can help ensure everyone has a happy and safe new year.

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For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or [sorr@cmregent.com](mailto:sorr@cmregent.com).

