

Extraordinary Meeting Regarding School Security - Feb 15, 2024

With the popularity of the Dude Chilling Park and how it is used by the community, concerns have been raised by MTP parents about the safety of our students when sharing outdoor spaces.

Please see below link to review feedback submitted from both parents and school staff.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rdSL87dW7puqTCaKEUIAOmj9cjN0tgRd-8saDGU_zmE/edit#gid=2068784093

This meeting was called to review solutions and strategies to further decrease any possibility of unsafe use of the school grounds and that student enjoyment of their space do not overlap.

Here are some facts that we should all know to get started:

- The blacktop area between the school and the tennis courts belongs to the VSB.
- The purple playground belongs to the Parks Board.
- There are three Supervision Aids who are responsible for the students during both recesses - they rotate positions. This is in addition to SSW's who are also on the playground and although they are additional adults, their duty is to be with the students they work with.
- Needle sweeps happen every morning (the school Engineer does a circle around the school including the the (orange) school playground.
- Some parents have seen drug paraphernalia outside the school in the morning, on occasion.
- Grade 3 and up are allowed to play at the purple playground.
- The orange school playground is for students under Grade 3.
- The students are allowed to play in the tennis courts unless someone is waiting to play tennis.
- All doors to the school building are locked just after 9am. The only door left unlocked all day is the front door. This door remains unlocked even when no one is present in the office.
- There is a Health and Safety incident report form that should be filled out by staff when an unauthorized person enters the school.

Ideas that were discussed:

- Fence off the West side of the blacktop area so that children can no longer play on the purple playground.
- Can the school Engineer do a needle sweep on the purple playground?
No - he can only do the sweep on VSB property.
- Can we provide space for "hanging out" for the older students on VSB property to stop the use of the purple playground, including the swings?
- We could open a dialogue with the Parks Board to see what they can do as far as moving structures to encourage the drinkers to move.
- We could have the benches and port-a-potty relocated to another corner of the park.

Possible Solutions:

- 311 every incident
- A one month trial period to test keeping students on the blacktop - not playing on the purple playground.
- Jonathan would like to survey the Supervision Aids and the students to see what they see as solutions.
- He can ask if the Supervision Aids can do a needle sweep for the first 10 minutes of their shifts (before kids go outside).
- Ask the Parks Board to move the benches and the port-a-potty to the other side of the park.

After discussion, we came up with a pronged approach - our action plan follows:

- Ask the VSB to add another Supervision Aid given the context of the playground being adjacent to illegal activity, and some incidents having occurred.
Passed: PAC will write a letter on behalf of parents to the VSB and Jonathan will request this from the VSB.
- Move the benches and the port-a-potty to the North West (preferred) or North East corner to encourage congregation away from where the students play.
Passed: PAC will write a letter to Parks Board to request.
- Request that Jonathan draw a boundary so students can no longer play on the swings as it is difficult for the Supervision Aids to monitor activity there.
Passed: Jonathan will draw a boundary at a tree on the hill
- Ask Coastal Health to do the morning needle sweep on the purple playground.
Passed: PAC and Jonathan will both request this.
- PAC will actively make plans for benches/hang out area and will survey the school community to see what is needed and what could work.
Passed
- Ask the VSB to install some sort of buzzer system on the front door of the school to prevent unauthorized access to the school building.
Could be part of our next steps.