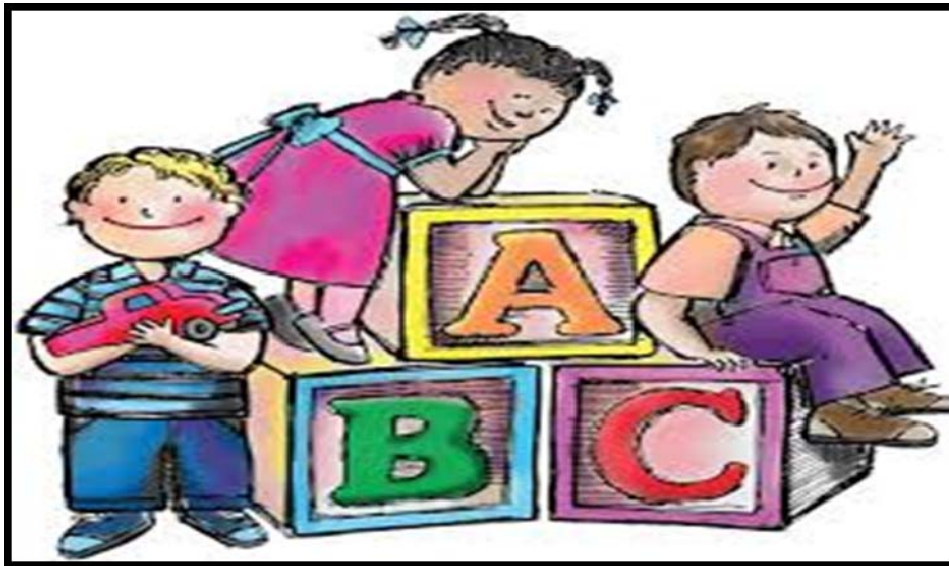




MANUAL
ON
SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CHILDREN
IN SCHOOLS

Developed by
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF
CHILD RIGHTS



5th Floor, Chanderlok Building, 36 Janpath,
New Delhi 110001

2017

Section 1

INFRASTRUCTURE



As teachers and children spend a substantial part of their day in school, it is essential to keep the school environment including building, premises, entrance and surroundings that comprise broader term 'Infrastructure' safe and secure. It is important to see that school buildings are built to be more resilient to hazards and ensure "life safety". In similar way, school administration, staff, teachers as well as students need to be better aware and prepared to respond to any catastrophe, natural or man-made, so that any damage - injury or loss of life and property - can be reduced, if not completely avoided.

School infrastructure includes many components viz., physical structures such as school building, playground, water bodies (if any), electrical and fire safety mechanisms, school transport etc. This section examines some of the existing guidelines to see what are the specifications mentioned in them in order to ensure and maintain a safe school infrastructure, where children will be safe and secure.

1. School building

Many guidelines suggest steps to keep school building safe for children.

- I. Building needs to be certified as safe for housing the students by the local authorities- The school buildings shall preferably be a 'A' Class construction with brick/stone masonry walls with RCC roofing. Where it is not possible to provide RCC roofing only non-combustible fireproof heat resistance materials should be used.
- II. The nursery and elementary schools should be housed on the ground floor and the maximum number of floors in school buildings shall be restricted to three including the ground floor.
- III. The School building shall be free from inflammable and toxic materials, which if necessary, should be stored away from the school building.
- IV. The staircases, which act as exits or escape routes, shall adhere to provisions specified in the National Building Code of India 2005 to ensure quick evacuation of children.

- V. The orientation of the buildings shall be in such a way that proper air circulation and lighting is available with open space all round the building as far as possible.
- VI. Existing school buildings shall be provided with additional doors in the main entrances as well as the class rooms if required. The size of the main exit and classroom doors shall be enlarged if found inadequate.
- VII. School buildings have to be insured against fire and natural calamities with Group Insurance of school pupils.
- VIII. Kitchen and other activities involving use of fire shall be carried out in a secure and safe location away from the main school building.
- IX. All schools shall have water storage tanks, duly covered and protected.
- X. CCTV in schools needs to be monitored and maintained regularly.

2. Classroom

The guideline issued by the Ministry of HRD, talks about class room safety.

The Class rooms should be white washed at periodic intervals and dusted regularly to maintain the class room hygiene. The windows should be secure and there should be no broken glass or fittings hanging loose. Black board in the class room may be hung, placed in a three legged stand to keep on a chair. Black boards are also attached to the wall of the classroom. In case of loosely placed black board in the classroom, there is a possibility of accidents, both minor and major, to the children while moving around in the class room.

While constructing school building, provision of adequate ventilators and windows in the class should be considered. Air flowing through the ventilators keeps the class room airy and fresh and the children also feel fresh and energetic to get involved in the teaching learning process. Class room floor should not be broken or uneven and may need to be repaired/ maintained from time to time.

3. Laboratory

Laboratories in school must be positioned as per the rules, as mentioned below.

- I. The space for free mobility for students in case of an emergency must be maintained.
- II. The chemicals and instruments must be kept safely beyond the easy access of children and should be used only under supervision.
- III. A first aid box must be made available in the lab.
- IV. There should be an exhaust facility for the gases.
- V. The school team must be trained to meet any emergency in the laboratory.

4. Kitchen

- I. The Kitchen cum Store should be located in a clean and open place and free from filthy surroundings and should maintain overall hygienic environment.
- II. The premises should be clean, adequately lighted and ventilated and have sufficient free space for movement.
- III. Floors, ceilings and walls must be maintained in a sound condition. They should be smooth and easy to clean with no flaking paint or plaster.
- IV. The floor and skirted walls should be washed as per requirement with an effective disinfectant. The premises should be kept free from all insects. No spraying should be done during the cooking of Mid Day Meal, but instead fly swats/ flaps should be used to kill flies getting into the premises. Windows, doors and other openings should be fitted with net or screen, as appropriate to make the premise insect free. The water used in the cooking shall be potable.
- V. Continuous supply of potable water should be ensured in the premises. In case of intermittent water supply, adequate storage arrangement for water used in food or washing should be made.

- VI. Arrangements for cleaning of containers, tables, working parts of machinery, etc. should be provided. vii. All utensils should be kept clean, washed, dried and stored at the Kitchen cum store to ensure freedom from growth of mold/ fungi and infestation.
- VII. All utensils should be placed well away from the walls to allow proper inspection.
- VIII. There should be efficient drainage system and there should be adequate provisions for disposal of refuse.
- IX. Potential sources of contamination like rubbish, waste water, toilet facilities, open drains and stray animals should be kept away from kitchen.
- X. Kitchen should be separate from classrooms, preferably located at a safe, but accessible distance. The current norm for a kitchen shed is 20 sq.m of floor space for every 100 children enrolled and thereafter 4 sq. m for every additional 100 children.
- XI. As far as possible, the layout of the Mid day Meal kitchen should be such that food preparation/processes are not amenable to cross-contamination from washing vegetables/cereals/Pulses/ etc). Floors, ceilings and walls must be maintained in a sound condition to minimize the accumulation of dirt, condensation and growth of undesirable molds.
- XII. Floors should be sloped appropriately to facilitate drainage and the drainage should flow in a direction opposite to the direction of food preparation. Adequate control measures should be in place to prevent insects and rodents from entering the processing area from drains. Windows, doors & all other openings to outside environment should preferably be covered with wire-mesh or insect proof screen as applicable to protect the premise from flies and other insects / pests / animals. xiv. Ventilation systems natural and /or mechanical including air filters, exhaust fans, wherever required, should be designed and constructed so that air does not flow from contaminated areas to clean areas.

- XIII. A display board mentioning do's & don'ts for the CCHs should be put up inside at a prominent place in the premise in local language for everyone's understanding.
- XIV. Properly constructed chimneys are required in the kitchens. Chimneys should not be the entry point of insects; reptile's etc. Fuel (kerosene/fuel wood/ charcoal/LPG) should be stored/installed safely, so that there is no fire hazard. Smokeless chulhas should be used to the extent possible. The Kitchen should have full visibility with sunlight or artificial light.
- XV. If kerosene/gas is used for cooking, the CCHs should be specifically trained in safe handling of stoves, gas cylinders, etc. Raised platform for cooking, adequate light, proper ventilation and arrangement for drainage and waste disposal. The dustbin should have a lid and should be always covered.
- XVI. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 provide the legal framework for the quality education in India and mandates minimum norms and standards for infrastructure in schools including kitchen cum store.

5. Toilets

Many documents including RTE Act, 2009 and MHRD circular to the States talk specifically about toilet standards to be maintained in schools.

- I. Toilets must be located within the school premises
- II. There must be separate toilets for girls and boys
- III. Separate toilets for children, staff, support staff
- IV. There must be separate toilets for visitors
- V. Every school needs to maintain number of toilets as per prescribed norms (according to affiliation by laws of respective board)
- VI. Toilets must be kept open for the use by children
- VII. Separate toilets, as per the norms, must be available/ accessible for children with disabilities.
- VIII. All the toilets preferably need to have running water facility.
- IX. Availability of soaps etc. for washing hands-should be ensured by the school.
- X. All the toilets must have doors for ensuring safety and privacy of children

- XI. The school needs to have clean and working method of disposing waste materials, especially for girls.
- XII. Toilets must be cleaned on daily basis.

6. Drinking Water

Guidelines by CBSE, MHRD circulars and Navodaya School highlight the importance of provision of clean drinking water in schools.

- I. Safe and adequate drinking water should be made available to the children within the school premises.
- II. Safety/quality of water must be checked on regular basis by the concerned authority.

7. Electrical System and Safety

Several guidelines point out the importance of electric safety measures that need to be ensured in schools.

- I. All the electrical systems in school must be checked periodically.
- II. Ensured limited access to the area of electrical installation only to those who are required.
- III. The electric wiring and points are to be kept in order. In case of any uncovered live wires find, the wiring must be changed and electricity disconnected till such defects are set right.
- IV. The electrical distribution boxes should be locked and the keys should be kept only under the custody of electrician or the person in charge.
- V. Immediate necessary measures should be taken to repair the loose wiring/connections.
- VI. In case of any such need electric gadgets should be handled by responsible employee of the School.
- VII. In few cases trees are placed just below the electric line whenever the branches grow it touches to the LT line and sparks dangerously. It should be checked regularly and branches should be dressed off in such a way that it will not touch to the electric wire any time.
- VIII. Students should be warned not to touch electric poles.

8. Fire Safety Management

Fire Safety is another important safety aspect covered under many guidelines.

- I. Every school must have a fire safety certificate, which must be validated periodically by concerned authority
- II. School must have fire fighting systems in place to meet any emergency, including the alarm system or smoke detection system.
- III. With the help of fire fighting agencies mock drill and training must be carried out in each school on periodical basis.
- IV. Trained management team should be available in the school for initial fire hazard management.
- V. The School must put on display the Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan to be followed in case of emergency.

9. Earthquake Management

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has come out with specifications for schools prone to various natural calamities. If schools are situated in the earthquake risk zone, following steps must be taken

- I. Necessary steps must be taken during construction of the building for earthquake safety
- II. If required, school must modify structure in consultation with local authorities.
- III. A trained disaster management group should be available in school for initial response.
- IV. School must maintain a contact with the local disaster management authorities for training and retraining
- V. The School must put on display the Earth Quake Management & Evacuation Plan to be followed in case of emergency.

10. Playground

RTE Act recognizes play ground as a mandatory part of school infrastructure, in view of the physical well-being of the students. It says as follow.,

- I. The school should have a playground.
- II. The playground should be maintained properly.
- III. The children must get the games/ sports materials to play.
- IV. The School should have a boundary wall.

The schools that are providing specific sports or physical activity need to provide proper facilities, trained staff and necessary equipment and materials, with respect to each of them and also need to adhere to the respective guidelines.

11. Minimum Standards for Safety related to Sports

NCPCR guidelines developed with SAI and NIMHANS has suggested minimum standards for the safety of children in schools w.r.t to sports facilities:

- I. Provision of adequate medical facilities in schools is required. In case of female trainees, provision of lady doctor/ lady nurse should be made. Tie up with local reputed hospitals / empanelled hospitals for catering to the medical emergencies of trainees.
- II. Adequate and sufficient food/refreshment facilities for children while they participate in sports, as per norms fixed by SAI.
- III. Provision of counselling services for the children who take part in these activities, periodically.
- IV. The PT teacher and staff of school, should take the responsibility to monitor the system set up to address emergency pertaining to sports persons.
- V. School that are providing specific sports should comply with relevant safety measures as per guidelines of SAI.

12. Boundary Wall and Gates

RTE Act (2009) mandates that every school should have boundary wall/fencing. Kendriya Vidyalaya as well MHRD guidelines provide details on this.

- I. Boundary wall should be of sufficient height so that no one can scale it down and should be got fixed with concertina wire.
- II. Boundary wall should have 3-4 gates preferably on the walls of different sides so as to ensure free, convenient and prompt exit in emergency.
- III. However, entry of outsiders should be allowed only through single gate properly manned by the guards. That single gate should have telephone connection (so as to enable the guard to inform the police directly in exigency).

- IV. Special surveillance and safety measures should be taken before actual entry and exit time of the school.
- V. At exit time of staff and students as many as gates available be used for dispersal.
- VI. The main gate should remain locked after entry of students and staff. Entry of the parents and visitors should be permitted only through small doors after verifying their identity through window during well notified schedule intervals, as such vehicles of visitors should not be allowed inside the campus.

13. School Premises and Surroundings

KVS and NVS guidelines talk extensively about ensuring safety of the children in school surroundings and while a festival or celebration is being carried out in schools,

- I. The School should maintain a distance from railway tracks to provide a safe environment. If school is located near any rail track, impact of such locations on the school structure should be examined by the local authorities for the safety of the students before issuance of structural safety certificate.
- II. The School should maintain a distance from industry or chemical factory to provide a safe environment.
- III. If school located near an industry or a chemical factory producing fatal chemical products, each member including teacher, student and other staff must be made aware about different chemical product and precaution to be taken in case eventualities from the leakage of chemicals in this area.
- IV. First aid and other medical systems in place to safeguard school students
- V. Each member of school including students must be made aware on periodical basis about the procedures to be adopted in case of any emergency.
- VI. No liquor/opium/bhang shop should be allowed to operate in proximity of school.

14. Barrier Free Access for Children with Disabilities

MHRD circular to the states / SSA framework for implementation of RTE Act specifically highlights the importance of making the school environment safe for children with disabilities and special needs.

- 1. Ramps must be constructed to provide access to the following places.

- Entry to the school
- Classrooms
- Toilets
- Playground
- Library
- Canteen
- Auditorium/hall
- Floor to floor

2. Railings need to be provided on the both sides of ramp.
3. The school needs to make provision for children (children with visual impairment and low vision) to move around in the school safely and independently.
4. The school should make provision to provide a school map in Braille indicating all the facilities including classrooms, common rooms, library , toilets etc that may be suitably placed at the main gate of the school or at any other suitable place. In addition, all the classrooms should have the signage in Braille for children with visual impairment.
5. An emergency and evacuation plan of the school should also be in Braille.
6. Also it is important to;
 - I. List of all children with disabilities in school must be prepared
 - II. Training must be provided to teachers and other staffs to understand their limitations and procedures to help them in the event of any emergency.
 - III. There should be a designated official in the school who is entrusted with the exclusive responsibility of their needs in any emergency.

15. Measures to Prevent Children from Dangers of Water and Drowning

Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Kendriya Vidyalay Sanghatan (KVS) in their guidelines have explained steps to be taken to avoid danger of children from drowning.

- I. The wells and ponds if exist in the campus are to be provided with protective wall and iron grills covering the well and the movements of the students should be restricted towards it.

- II. Children should not be allowed to go towards the nearby river, canals, ponds and railway tracks and to take bath using water from the overhead tanks by climbing on the terrace. Fencing should be provided to the steps of overhead tank to avoid children climbing over head tank.
- III. Movements of children are to be strictly watched through formation of groups by school authorities.
- IV. Children should not be permitted to go outside the School premises during the school hours.
- V. The presence of the students in the School campus at all times should be strictly enforced. Strict discipline and to check the unauthorized absence of the students from the School is to be given paramount importance.
- VI. The root cause for such behaviour of the child must be ascertained, parents should be informed accordingly and corrective steps should be taken.
- VII. For certain ritual and functions which are observed in the school, necessary precautions and arrangements to be made in advance. Children should not be permitted to go on rallies for immersion of idols in tanks, ponds and wells etc.
- VIII. No procession should be allowed to move from school out of the campus in the eve of any religious celebrations.
- IX. No swimming pool will be constructed without prior permission of competent authority.
- X. If swimming pool is constructed in school premises, it must be constructed as per the prescribed norms of competent authority and should also be maintained as prescribed.

16. Safety from Constructional Hazards

NVS, KVS and CBSE guidelines are highlighting the precautions to be taken when any construction work is taking place in school premises.

- I. School must obtain necessary permission from the local authorities for the constructional and repair work.
- II. The constructions must be planned during the lean time of students' presence in the school.
- III. Barricades and signboards must be installed in the construction area prohibiting the movement of students.
- IV. Water storage sources for such constructions must be covered to prevent small children from any possible mishap.

17. Safety during Celebration of Festivals

- I. Adequate precautions should be taken with regard to the movement of children inside the campus during celebration of festival days in schools.
- II. Teachers should be put on duty to organize the activities as per scheduled plan.
- III. Special care should be taken to see that children do not move, around the hazardous and dangerous points.
- IV. No procession should be allowed to move from out of the school campus on the eve of such celebrations.
- V. Wherever the immersion of idol etc. is involved during festival, the Principal should ensure that the image/idols are handed over by the students in the Campus itself and the Principal shall arrange for immersion through outsider/security personnel.
- VI. All staff members are required to be properly briefed before commencement of any programme regarding safety of children.

18. Safety in School Transports

Another important area that needs supervision and specific measures is the transport facility (school as well as own transport) that children use to commute to school. CBSE has specifically issued a circular towards ensuring children's safety in school transport, based on the Supreme Court Guidelines on this.

As per the notification no.G.S.R.868(E) issued by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, GOI, School Bus was defined as, "a vehicle with a seating capacity of thirteen passengers and above excluding driver, designed and constructed specially for children going school."

A. Exterior of the Bus

- I. All the school buses must be painted with uniform colour preferably Yellow with the name of the school written prominently on both sides of the bus so that these can be identified easily.
- II. The word "**School Bus**" must be written on the back and front of the bus if it is hired bus, "**On School Duty**" should be clearly indicated.

- III. Telephone numbers of the school and/or telephone numbers of any contact person shall also be written prominently in a prominent place in each school bus so that in case of necessity the public can inform the school authority/police or other authorities

B. Fixture and furniture of the Bus

- I. The windows of Bus should be fitted with horizontal grills and with mesh wire.
- II. The doors of the Bus should be fitted with reliable locks that can be locked.
- III. All school buses must be fitted with speed control devices so that they do not exceed the speed limit of 40 Kmph.
- IV. There should be a fire extinguisher in the Bus.

C. Manpower in the Bus

- I. Police verification of the staff of the bus should be done before appointing them.
- II. There must be a qualified attendant, preferably female in the Bus to attend to Children.
- III. Each school should designate one Transport Manager/ Coordinator who will ensure the safety of the school children.
- IV. The provision shall also to be made by the school authorities for travelling of at least one teacher in each school bus, keeping in view the safety of the school students all throughout the journey and no outsider except the conductor or the said authorized teacher or one person authorized by the guardians shall be allowed to board school bus.
- V. Medical checkup regarding the physical fitness of the driver including the eye testing shall be made every year.

D. Facilities in the Bus

- I. Bus should have a First Aid Box.
- II. To keep the school bags safely, there should be a space fitted under the seats or as convenient.
- III. The buses should be fitted with alarm bell/siren so that in case of emergency everyone can be alerted.

E. Permits

- I. The driver should have valid license and at least 5 years of experience of driving heavy vehicles.

- II. A driver who has been challaned more than twice in a year for offences • like red light jumping, violation of lane discipline or allowing unauthorized person to drive cannot be employed.
- III. A driver who has been challaned even once for the offence of over speeding, driving dangerously or for the offences under Section 279,337,338 and 304A of the Indian Penal Code cannot be employed. Every vehicle shall carry a suitable photograph of the authorized driver duly certified by the RTA.
- IV. Periodical fitness certificate regarding roadworthiness of the vehicle shall have to be obtained.
- V. Any school authority and/or driver found to have violated the provision of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the rules framed there under as well as of the directions must be penalized.

F. Arrangements in the Schools

- I. All the affiliated schools will make safe arrangement for boarding and de- boarding of school children from the school bus.
- II. The school authority shall ensure that the doors of the buses remain shut while in running condition.
- III. They will ensure that buses halt only at bus stops designated for the purpose and within the marked area.
- IV. Refresher course for driver training so as to fine tune and increase the proficiency of the driver shall be given to the drivers of the school buses periodically, i.e. least twice in a year.
- V. No person shall be allowed to drive the school bus in drunken condition. Regular check in the respect shall be undertaken by the school authorities and in case of any doubt in that regard such drivers must be subjected to medical test immediately and proper action including the action for cancellation of the license have to be taken.
- VI. All drivers of the school buses have to be dressed in a distinctive uniform with their names inscribed in it.
- VII. In every school bus there shall be another qualified person to keep attending children travelling in such buses, as conductor, who have to be , dressed in distinctive uniform with their names inscribed in it.

- VIII. The school authority must provide one set of mobile phone in each school bus so that in case of emergency the bus can be contacted or the driver/conductor can contact the police or State authority as well as the school authority.
- IX. The authority shall ensure that the school buses are not permitted to over take any other four wheelers while carrying the school children in the bus.
- X. The School authority shall ensure that the students maintain discipline when boarding and disembarking the bus so that no children get hurt.
- XI. Effort shall be made by the school to make necessary arrangement for parking the school bus inside the school campus at least at the time of boarding and disembarking. In case it is not possible to park such vehicle inside the school campus, the buses must be parked in such a way so that it does not create any traffic problem for other vehicles.
- XII. The school should encourage its children to conduct programmes through play, exhibition etc. during Road Safety Week to create an awareness in public.
- XIII. Periodic feed-back from students using school Transport facility with regards to driver/conductor be taken and records are to be maintained.

19. Clearances and Certificates

Affiliation by-laws brought out by CBSE and ICSE lists some of the certificates and clearance documents for schools, with respect to infrastructure.

- I. Every School shall have a mandatory **fire safety** inspection by the Fire and Rescue Services Department followed by issuance of a '**no objection certificate**' to the School as a mandatory requirement for granting permission for establishing or continuation of a School.
- II. Periodical inspection must be carried on quarterly basis (especially during raining seasons) to check cracks in the school structures and immediate action should be taken to repair them.