

# Fencing Playspaces



## Public Playspaces

A fence around an outdoor playspace assists preventing children from running out into hazards such as a busy road and water ways or keeping animals out.

Whilst public playspaces are not required to be fenced, the need for fencing is determined by conducting a risk assessment to *AS/NZS ISO 31000 Risk management—principles and guidelines*.

Designers should assess the most appropriate form of protection. A boundary can make a playground appear more defined, though this of course may not necessarily be a fence. Possible measures include simple one or two rail fences, bollards, garden beds, hedges, mounding, stone and brick walls or combinations of these.

It is important that the selected fence or barrier type does not introduce an additional hazard. As a minimum, the fence should comply with *AS 1926.1 Amdt 1 Swimming pool safety - Safety barriers for swimming pools* or *AS 2423 Coated steel wire fencing products for terrestrial, aquatic and general use*. Select fence contractors that are familiar with these Standards.

It is important to note that several companies manufacture playground fencing which is NOT the same as swimming pool fencing and may have a different opening threshold between vertical or horizontal members.



## Education and Care Services (ECS)

According to the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) all education and care services providing care for children under school age, 'Must ensure that any outdoor space used by children at the education and care service premises is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under it'.

In addition, the National Construction Code 2019 (NCC) requires fencing surrounding education and care services (Class 9b building) to meet elements of fencing requirements for pools.

*AS 1926.1 Swimming pool safety - Safety barriers for swimming pools* require:

- 1800mm high fencing to boundaries
- Fencing away from the boundary is a minimum height of 1200mm
- Openings in fence (or below) maximum of 100mm

Alterations to AS 1926.1 for barriers in Class 9b buildings include:

- Gates swing into the playspace
- Non-climbable zone (900mm arch from top of fence) located on the inside of the fence
- The latch (if less than 1500mm above ground level) located on the outside of gate

Family day care services providing care for children under school age should check state and local council planning requirements for fencing including minimum and maximum height, type of fence, construction material and installation.



## Schools

Security fencing is often installed along school perimeters. Schools should assess the most appropriate type of fence for dividing fences within the grounds and consider the recommended fencing specifications on this information sheet.





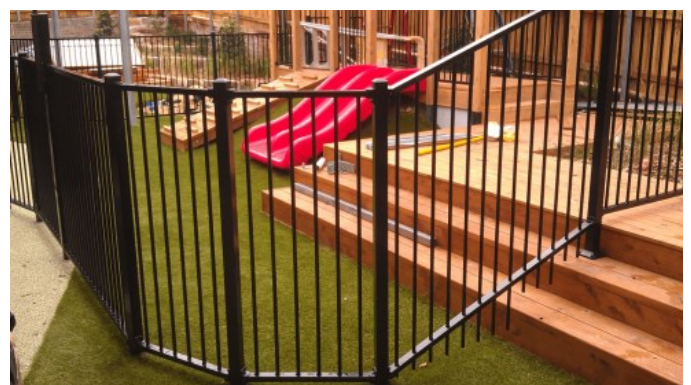
## Specifications

**Fence Material:** The fence can be constructed of a variety of materials such as timber; metal bars or sheeting; or chain-link. The chain-link versions can be covered with a polyvinyl coating that gives the chain link a softer feel. Select materials that are less likely to be climbed or scaled by children.

**Gates:** Where a gate is provided it is recommended that it has self-closing hinges certified to *AS 1926.1 Swimming pool safety - Safety barriers for swimming pools*. The latch must automatically catch when the gate closes. Monitor as part of routine maintenance inspections to ensure gates remain in sound working order.

**Rails:** The lower horizontal rail should be positioned at the bottom of the pickets or panel to prevent unintended access to the top rail (remove projecting pickets where possible). Avoid a mid horizontal rail where possible.

**Top Rail Profile:** A flat top rail is recommended. Loop top or rod top may potentially create a hanging point for a child's head between the pickets protruding above the top rail. For existing fences with protruding loops or rods at the top, ensure that climbing access to the top of the fence is not provided.



KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.  
Playground Advisory Unit

P: 02 9845 0893  
E: [schn-kidsafe@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:schn-kidsafe@health.nsw.gov.au)

[kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

  
Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia