Recess is a time during the day where children can move and interact with their peers. This time contributes specifically to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the child.

**General Guidelines**
- All schools are required to schedule a minimum of 20 minutes of recess every day.
- Recess should not be scheduled directly before or after physical education.
- Teachers may not withhold recess as a consequence for incomplete homework or use as a group punishment. Instead, consider:
  - Choice boards
  - 60 Alternatives to Withholding Recess
  - PBIS
- When recess is indoors, limit screen time and consider the Indoor Recess Toolbox.

**Benefits of Recess**
- Improves students’ learning and overall academic achievement
- Increases classroom engagement
- Reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Lowers stress in students
- Leads to greater on-task behavior
- Improves students’ memory, attention, and concentration
- Supports social-emotional development by improving social skills such as negotiating, decision making, and cooperating with others
- Promotes fair play
- Allows students to learn which physical activities they enjoy, fostering lifetime activities
- Supports the normal growth and physical development of students
- Helps students meet the nationally recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity

**Benefits of Recess Before Lunch**
- Improves cafeteria atmosphere—students are more relaxed and focused on eating rather than the playground
- Improves student behavior because they have expended energy outside at recess
- Can reduce classroom discipline problems—students are calmer when they return to the classroom
- Increases food consumption—more nutrients and fluids are consumed; less plate waste = less trash

**Supervision Responsibilities**

**Administrators**
- Ensure that playground inspections are completed
- Check the grounds before and after recess
- Be sure there is adequate supervision

**Administrators and Teachers**
- Have a working knowledge of the playground equipment and precautions needed for safe use
- Be sure that communication is available between the office and the playground (i.e., walkie talkie, cell phone, etc.)

**Teachers**
- Provide 100% attention to the area you are supervising
- Rotate around the play area; be sure you can see all the students
- Report concerns with equipment/grounds to the administration
- Have a first aid kit readily available

**Weather-Related Guidelines**
- Decisions relating to scheduling indoor recess should be made by the principal or their designee.
- Consider the following when making the decision to go out or to stay in for recess:
  - Temperature
  - Wind Chill
  - Humidity
  - Air Quality
  - Condition of the play space
- Students will not be outdoors when the temperature—inclusive of the wind chill factor—is below 32 degrees.
- Children with special health conditions may need special accommodations during cold weather. Parents of those children are to provide medical documentation and/or be consulted to determine if other arrangements are necessary.
- Refer to the heat-related restrictions from the Athletic Handbook.

“Recess is important because it is one thing that helps me stay calm throughout the day because I know I will eventually have a break. It helps with stress and meeting new friends.”

—Seth, 5th grade, Marley Elementary
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