

Ecole St. Mary School

422 - 20 Street South
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1J 2V5

November 29, 2018

Dear Mr. Smeaton,

On behalf of the School Council of Ecole St. Mary School, I am writing to advise of our concerns with our playground. As you know, we have two playgrounds, one of which is still quite new, the other is more than 17 years old. There are a number of child safety issues with this playground, specifically:

- The area surrounding the playground is dressed with wood chips which collects hazardous debris not easily observed. In fact, our school is known as a 'hot spot' for needle debris. Needles have been found in the playground and around the school.
- Interestingly, wasps are also attracted to the wood chips through spring and summer.
- The playground equipment is a wood structure which has likely outlived its useful life. As the wood has aged it has become a hazard for splinters and slipping resulting in a variety of injuries being reported. As well the chain link on the bridge becomes quite slippery during the winter months.
- There is almost no lighting in our playground which makes it very unsafe for the children to play in during the dark winter months, especially with our school having one of the earliest start times for the school day.
- Finally, the accessibility for children with disabilities is non-existent in this old playground. We want to be an inclusive school with equal opportunity for all.

We have spoken with the City on numerous occasions to rectify some of these situations to no avail. Therefore, we are asking for support from the Province to provide funding to, at a minimum, replace the wood chips from the ground.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Laurie Catonio

Ecole St. Mary School Council Chair