

Tree Climbing Policy

Kerry Street Community School considers tree climbing to be an important part of child development. The benefits we see to tree climbing are:

- A. Tree climbing is good exercise.** Tree climbing is not only fun, but it's also an excellent workout. Though it's not nearly as demanding as it appears, climbing is great exercise for the arms and legs. Climbers work many muscle groups they often don't use elsewhere, and climbing is also great for the spine. The extra bonus to this exercise is that it is stimulating and never boring.
- B. Getting in touch with nature.** There is something very wonderful about getting outdoors and being related to the part of our environment that resides there. Humans find peace and relaxation in the branches of a tree.
- C. Sensory development.** A whole new perspective is added to the climbing experience through the feeling of touch as the tree moves and sound as the wind whistles through the leaves.
- D. Safety and awareness development.** When children climb trees they teach themselves about safety and develop awareness for danger.

Our school takes the following precautions to ensure minimum injuries when students are climbing trees:

- A.** We have designated one climbing tree – The *olive tree* in the front yard of the school. This tree's branches fork relatively close to the ground and are strong enough to hold the weight of students of all ages that exist in our school.
- B.** The tree is located on soft ground so injury would be minimal in case of fall.
- C.** All students are briefed about the tree climbing rules –
 - 1. The Rule of Three**

There are four points on your body that come in contact with the tree's branches: two hands and two feet. At least three of these points should be supported by branches at all times. [Reason: If one of the three branches breaks, then at least two branches will still be supporting you.]
 - 2. Keep Close to the Trunk**

Always step onto or grab a branch at the point closest to the tree's trunk. [Reason: This is where the branch can support the most weight.]
 - 3. Stay off the Dead**

Avoid using dead branches when climbing. If you must use a dead branch, be sure to follow the "Keep Close to the Trunk" rule. [Reason: Dead branches can easily snap; living branches will bend before they break.]
 - 4. Test Weak Branches**

If you're not sure if a branch will support your weight, test it out by stepping on it (or grabbing it) at a point far away from the tree's trunk. Be sure that you follow the

Rule of Three as you do this. If it passes the test, then step on it (or grab it) at a point close to the trunk.

5. Always Think About Falling

If you keep in mind that you could easily fall at any moment, then chances are you will proceed cautiously.

6. If It Doesn't Feel Right, Don't Do It

If for any reason you feel uncomfortable with what you're doing, then stop.

- D.** A supervising teacher will be observing the climbing tree whenever students are climbing it.

Authorisation and Review

- A.** This policy established Aug 2012
- B.** Passed by council 2012
- C.** To be Reviewed May 2019

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