

Date: 22nd August 2019
To: The Hills Shire Council
Cc:
From: Cassandra Naccarella, TSA Management
Subject: Santa Sophia Catholic College - Play Space Provision

Introduction

When assessed as a traditional school environment, the design for Santa Sophia Catholic College provides 7.1m² of play space per student. The Hills Shire Council have requested further information on how this design parameter was determined and the research supporting this design approach. We note that based on how CEDP operate their play spaces, Santa Sophia achieves 10.1m² play space per child for recess and lunch.

School Design Research

Towards Effective Learning Environments in Catholic Schools (TELE) Report is the reference point for Catholic School design and demonstrates a deliberate and considered design approach supported by research. Play space is not designed in isolation to other school spaces, but rather a whole of school design approach is used.

A key outcome of the TELE Report is that the relationship between dedicated learning spaces and outdoor areas is crucial as it directly impacts:

- Supervision and safety (sight lines)
- Variety of activity settings available
- Opportunities for agile and flexible use, including connections to outdoor learning environments
- Movement of teachers and students
- Student geographical engagement
- Affinity for their learning environments

CEDP also has the following considerations in determining open space requirements:

- NSW PDHPE Curriculum – Santa Sophia will utilise on site facilities including Fitness Centre, Running Track, Multi Use Court, Performance Hall as well as external facilities as required. Hills Shire Council have noted their enthusiasm to finalise a shared use agreement that will supplement area for the PDHPE curriculum on the adjacent hockey fields.
- School Sport / Inter School Sport – This is an elective curriculum. Santa Sophia students will be encouraged to participate in local and club sport as this elective curriculum will not be offered at the school. The majority of CEDP schools do not participate in inter school sport and none of the recently constructed schools.
- Lunch Time Play Space – Santa Sophia will run two 30-minute breaks during the day. In early years student spend the first 10 minutes eating outside their classrooms followed by 20 minutes of play. CEDP experience is that 30 minutes is the optimal time frame to minimise antisocial behaviour.

CEDP recognises that play space cannot be a one size fits all approach. Play space must be designed so that it engages all students and does not by its nature exclude any students. It should also encourage activity that has the added benefits of social and cognitive development.

The landscape design for Santa Sophia Catholic College ensures age appropriate outcomes and encourages inquiry, exploration and social interaction. It will provide a variety of play space to develop gross motor skills and play space close to classrooms to promote use of the space.

Optimal play environments balance space, visual supervision, potential social interaction and in early years, play equipment.

Existing Benchmarks

CEDP has reviewed the lunch time play space provision at existing schools to determine the optimal ratio that achieves student learning outcomes while maximising resource efficiencies. Based on this assessment, schools with ratios of 5.4m², 6.5m², 6.6m², 8.4m² and 10.4m² were seen to provide sufficient play space with a balance of the competing requirements. 7m² was selected as it provided more than sufficient space while not compromising the intent of the design.

CEDP School Play Space Benchmarking

School	No. Students	Play Area (m ²)	Play Area Ratio (m ² /student)	Comments
St. Oliver's Harris Park	210	1,140	5.4	- Primary school - School functions well, play space is sufficient
St. Patrick's Parramatta North	420	1,750	4.2	- Primary school - School function less than sufficient
	210	1,750	8.4	- Staggered breaks introduced - School now functions well and play space is more than sufficient.
Christ the King, North Rocks	630	4,150	6.6	- Primary school - School functions well, play space is sufficient
Delaney College, Granville	720	4,650	6.5	- Secondary school - School functions well, play space is sufficient
St. Monica's Parramatta North	210	2,180	10.4	- Primary school - School functions well, play space is more than sufficient
Santa Sophia Box Hill	1,920	13,683	7.1	Outdoor space considered more than sufficient when considered in the traditional operational mode.
	1,920	19,483	10.1	Maximised use of play space by staggering breaks and utilising multipurpose hall and knowledge centre for passive play.

Additional Play Space Opportunities

In addition to the designated outdoor play spaces, Santa Sophia will cater to a range of play activities, with the knowledge centre intentionally utilised for passive play. The multi-purpose hall will also be utilised during recess and lunch breaks to support play activities. These spaces are not included in the 7.1m² play space calculation. The design also provides the opportunity for staggered break times to increase the play space ratio further if required. This method is currently utilised at other CEDP schools.

Santa Sophia Total Play Area Availability

Scenario	Current Play Area (m ²)	Additional Play Area (m ²)	Total Play Area (m ²)	Play Area Ratio (m ² /student)
1. Current Allowance	13,683	0	13,683	7.1
2. Additional Internal Areas (Knowledge Centre & Performance Hall)	13,683	1,800	15,483	8.1
3. Staggered Breaks	13,683	4,000	17,683	9.2
4. Combined (1+2+3)	13,683	5,800	19,483	10.1

Based on the experience of CEDP 7m² was selected as the target area for play space to meet the needs of the students and provide an optimal learning environment.

Kind Regards,



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