

National School Safety Guidelines

Emphasize on the need for active mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in all the school education in the country

This would require collaboration between the state education department and SDMA.

1. It needs capacity development activities such as sensitization of officials, public awareness on disasters, training of teachers and students.
2. Pre positioning equipments for emergency response
3. Creation of educational material on disaster.
4. Monitoring of risk.

Approach to implementation

School safety efforts need to consider all kinds of hazards that may affect the well-being of all children.

Hazards include structural and non structural factors

Structural factors included dilapidated buildings, poorly designed structures, faulty constructions, poorly maintained infrastructure, loose building elements etc.

While non-structural factor include loosely placed heavy objects

1. Almirahs
2. Infestation of the campus by snakes and other pests.
3. Broken or no boundary walls
4. Uneven flooring, blocked evacuation routes, poorly designed and paced furniture that may cause accidents and injuries, inadequate sanitation facility etc.

Safety of children, their teachers and parents needs to be approached holistically to include visible as well as invisible risks that may be sudden or have built-up slowly over a period of time.

Policy provisions to make school safer

Unsafe structures can increase the vulnerability of children who are the primary target ground of such efforts. Thus it is important to ensure that all development actions taken even in non-emergency times are designed with a view to ensuring their performance during emergencies. So, it is imperative that the existing institutions at the national and state level are strengthened and capacitated to take responsibility of school safety planning and action school safety as an indicator of quality for planning, execution and monitoring

1. Safety principles need to be incorporated in day to day functioning of the educational institutions in the country.

2. Thus institutions involved in providing education need to evolve a mythology and an approach of their own that looks at safety as a continuously monitored indicator of quality.

Objectives of the policy guidelines

The primary objective of the national school safety policy guidelines is to ensure the creation of safe learning environment for children.

The policy guidelines also seek to highlight the specific actions towards the school safety that can be undertaken by different stakeholders within the existing framework for delivery of education.

School Disaster Management Plan

Schools should also develop a Disaster Management Plan defining procedures to confine, contain, consolidate and control the emergency and crisis with inputs from DDMA. This plan should include among other aspects system of warning, communication protocols within and outside the school including usage of public addressal system), identification of evacuation routes, access by emergency vehicles and care of children with special needs. The Disaster Management Plan should also include stock piling of emergency equipment and materials, regular maintenance of emergency equipment, arrangements for orderly release of students to guardians and temporary shelter in case required. A site map should be included in the plan, designating planned evacuation routes and assembly areas. The same should be displayed on each floor of the school. A copy of the plot map and floor plan for each school with these details should be submitted to the DDMA for inclusion in the DDMP.

Implementation of safety actions

Appropriate Siting, Design and detailing for structural safety in new schools and repairing of existing schools

All existing as well as new schools need to conform to safety standards as per the National Building Code to addition any other norms prescribed by the state government need to be adhered to some of these actions are given below:

- New schools should be located on a site that has adequate mitigation measures already in place against any imminent natural hazards. Existing schools located in a vulnerable location should either be relocated at a safer site or they should be provided adequate support to mitigate the effect of any natural hazards that may affect the area

- All new school constructions should include disaster resilient features. Existing vulnerable schools need to be repaired to the desired level of resilience with regard to local disaster risks.
- Prescribed designs may be adapted to accommodate safety and child friendly features.
- For design of structural standards of school building and its components such as corridors, staircases, side areas, quality of construction should be as per the National Building Code 2005. Only non-combustible, fire-proof, heat resistant materials shall be used in school construction.
- Vertical expansion of existing schools shall not be carried out without a fitness certificate for the building from a certified civil/structural engineer.
- Additional classrooms or any other structures requiring horizontal expansion shall be designed taking into account the space availability and while constructing as a continuous unit to the existing structures, these should be designed to have less impact of seismic forces.
- Each class room should have two doors for easy evacuation, adequate opening for ventilation and lighting are some of the essential elements that need to be accommodated in the design.
- Doors opening outside into open areas or corridors of adequate width are key details that need to be incorporated to make schools safer.

All of these and any other additional ones require the guidance and support of a panel of technical agencies to be identified at the state level and designated to work in specific districts in the manner location specific designs can be worked out with adequate attention to safety features as well as child friendly elements.

Besides these details other design solutions in line with the Whole School Development Concept need to be incorporated to promote safety and child friendly features. Elements pertaining to school safety should be included in the whole school development approach.

Non structural safety measures in schools

Besides structural safety measures, non-structural elements within the school campus need to be addressed to ensure safety. These are mostly low cost, regular maintenance items that the school should address on a regular basis from their own funds. Some of these items have been listed below:

- All items of furniture such as almirahs, shelves, black boards etc. as well as any other items that may fall and cause injury to students and

teachers such as ceiling fans, coolers, water tanks etc. need to be secured to the walls or floor.

- Any electrical items such as loose wires that may cause an exigency should be addressed promptly by the school.
- Chemicals and any hazardous materials in the school laboratory should be handled and stored as per instructions to prevent any harm to students and school staff.
- Open areas including corridors and evacuation routes including staircases ramps should be kept free from any hurdles and barriers so that evacuation is smooth and swift.
- Pots/planters in the playground or corridors should be kept in a manner that does not affect smooth evacuation.
- Any derelict or unused building, rubble, etc. should be removed to prevent any harmful animals or pests from accessing children.
- Traffic movement outside the school should be managed to minimize risk to students at the time of assembling and dispersal of school.
- During excursions, schools should carefully choose the location of excursion and the itinerary so that exposure to hazard is minimized. Extra precautions should be taken when students are being taken close to water bodies, narrow mountainous tracks etc.
- Buses or any other vehicles owned/hired by the school need to be maintained properly so that students are not at risk of accidents. Drivers need to be appropriately trained on speed limits, stoppage of vehicles as well as crisis management so that children remain safe during their travel to and a from schools.
- Emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, first and kits, ropes etc. need to be procured and maintained regularly by the School Authorities.

Planning for Safety

- District level baseline of schools to be made safer. These can be accessed through Rapid Visual Screening or any other tool to cover all hazards relevant to the area.
- Proximity of emergency and crisis service agencies their capabilities and consequently their expected response time.
- Physical capacity of school infrastructure and facilities to resist known hazards that are relevant to the local context.

- Information related to existing resources and capacities within the school and the community with regard disaster management.
- Information related to hazards and risks posed by other facilities in the vicinity of the school e.g. any industrial establishments producing hazardous materials.

Planning at the school level inclusive and ongoing action

It is equally important to recognize that planning for safety at the school level is not a one time or static process it is an ongoing dynamic process involving identification of safety needs, developing prevention, response preparedness protocols, evaluation physical facilities, and providing communication and training for staff members and students.

The existing planning process and protocols at the school level need to be adapted to adequately include safety concerns. For private and unaided schools, the Nation Accreditation Board for education and Training needs to monitor safety aspects. In addition, as per the DM act, DDMA needs to monitor all schools building for their compliance with building codes.

For school under SSA, the current process of preparation of annual school Development plans needs to reinforce focus on safety aspects. A comprehensive assessment of needs conducted prior to the development of the school, development plan (SDP) is essential for identifying the possible risks for children as well as their capabilities to respond and recover from critical incidents. The assessment should consider the history of natural disaster risk in the area the natural vulnerabilities, physical factor such as the location of the school with regard to existing/emerging hazards for example flooding due to proximity of a water body.

Format of School DM Plan is available as Annexure 8

1. Short term interventions: both non-structural and structural activities.
2. Long term interventions: both non-structural and structural activities.
3. Training plan for: For students and teachers
4. Knowledge building plan including awareness creation, mass sensitization and mock-drill includes follow up through regular school timetable. This would also include the use and regular maintenance of emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers.
5. Review and monitoring plan including safety audit, availability of emergency equipment and materials.

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