



BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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PLAYGROUND POLICY

Introduction

This policy formally recognises Bradfield Parish Council's process to reduce risk and provide as safe an environment as possible at their playground located at the Bradfield Recreation Ground. The Street, Bradfield, Essex, CO11 2UU.

The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of Bradfield Parish Council and how the Parish Council will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks.

Playgrounds by their very nature should provide a degree of risk and challenges to the users. At all times it is to be recognised that in providing challenging play there will be an identifiable acceptable degree of risk. The Parish Council aims to offer a playground which is stimulating with a challenging environment enabling children to explore and develop their abilities. In providing these environments, the Parish Council will manage the level of risk so that users of the play area and its equipment are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

It is the responsibility of the guardian and user to make sure the equipment is used in the correct way and suitable for the children that use the apparatus.

Legal Requirements

There is no specific legislation on play safety. However, the key legislation is the:

- Health & Safety at Work etc Act (1974)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (1992)
- Occupiers Liability Act (1957, Revised 1984)
- Consumer Protection Act (1987)
- Unfair Contract Terms Act (1977)
- Children Act (1989)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002)
- Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986)
- Environmental Protection Act (1990)

The Parish Council and its Officers have a duty to take actions that will ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities that are provided by the Parish Council within the parish of Bradfield. It will be governed by the rules of "reasonable practicability". In other words, it is reasonable to correct major hazards; it is unreasonable to spend considerable resources on minor faults where risk is negligible and potential injury very minor.

Industry Standards and Guidance

Standards and Safety Guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered to be good professional working practice. Play England's Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide provides recommendations regarding risk-benefit assessment.

EN1176 – Playground Equipment

EN1176 is the European Standard which replaced the old British Standards. The standard is not retrospective and provides advice on design layout and the inspection of playground equipment. Contained within the guidance are the following key recommendations:

- That if the equipment is not safe, access by the public should be prevented
- The equipment must be inspected and maintained
- An inspection record should be maintained for 21 years

Test methods for surfacing are covered by BS 7188 and EN 1177.

Civil Legislation

In the event of a serious accident claims are based on negligence. Such claims will need to show that the organisation responsible for play failed to take some action which made the accident more likely to happen. The defence will be based on evidence such as records of inspections and maintenance, compliance with the Standards and relevant risk assessments. This policy will take into account the Council's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to it.

Inspection Frequency & Type

The table below details the frequency of inspections and the inspector responsible for carrying out the on-site inspections.

Inspection Frequency	Inspection Type	Inspector
Regular (dependent upon time of year)	Visual	Clerk / Councillors
Quarterly (except for quarter when annual inspection is carried out)	Operational	Approved contractor (currently Playquip)
Annual	Annual Detailed	TDC / RoSPA or Other External approved provider
Bespoke	Reactive / Post installation	RoSPA or Other External approved provider

All inspections will be carried out on a portable device where the results of the inspections are fed directly into a live database (Bradfield Parish Council are currently using PSS Ltd).

Inspection Type Definitions

- Routine Visual Inspections - Includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti and equipment misuse.
- Operational Inspections - Provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces, especially for wear.

- Annual Inspection - Includes looking at the overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces, the effects of weather, structural integrity, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety as a result of repairs made or added or replacement components.
- Bespoke Inspections - Typically bespoke inspections are a consequence of enquiry from a community member, an accident, in response to an urgent request or to carry out a post installation inspection following the installation of new equipment. Bespoke inspections can also be carried out as a method of verifying and checking existing inspections.

Responsibilities

The Council will undertake to:

- Nominate Councillors to be responsible for weekly inspections alongside the Clerk.
- Ensure all types of inspections are taking place, reports are filed and identified actions are undertaken in an appropriate timeframe.
- Approve spending on remedial actions.
- Delegate authority to the Chair and Vice Chair to instruct the Clerk to undertake actions to resolve urgent and / or high-risk issues where such action is required before the next meeting.

The Clerk will:

- Carry out regular inspections alongside nominated councillors.
- Issue regular inspection reports to all Councillors and act on Parish Council instructions.
- Ensure visual, operational and annual playground inspections are retained for 21 years.
- Upon the Parish Council's instructions, engage a registered playground maintenance company to perform all maintenance repair works (other than very minor work that can safely be carried out by councillors / other contractors).
- Instigate action to resolve urgent and / or high-risk issues identified in inspections where such action is required before the next council meeting.
- Report any issues and actions to the Parish Council at their monthly full council meetings.

Nominated Councillors alongside the Clerk as appropriate, will:

- perform regular inspections according to the agreed schedule.
- notify the Parish Council as a matter of urgency of any dangerous equipment and if considered necessary take steps to isolate the dangerous equipment with temporary barriers or barricades.

Assessing Level of Risk

Whereas weekly visual inspections will aim to identify obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti and equipment misuse, they will not include a detailed risk assessment. Detailed levels of risk will be assessed within operational and annual inspections by independent inspectors with sufficient knowledge and qualifications.

Most independent inspectors utilise the 5x5 methodology and assign risk as a product of probability and severity. A quantitative risk rating of immediate, high, medium, low or very low

is then obtained from an outcome matrix based upon the final score.

Summary of risks, action and time frames

- Very low risk: No action required, monitor.
- Low risk: Monitor for deterioration, action required in some instances.
- Medium risk: Repair as soon as practicable possible, dependent on budget.
- High risk: Repairs to be undertaken as soon as possible .
- Immediate or Unacceptable High-risk: Item to be put out of action immediately and made safe until repairs are complete.

Accidents, Enquiries and Claims

Bradfield Parish Council will record all accidents and enquiries relating to its play area and facilities within it. The details of the enquiry, complaint or accident will be recorded within the same system used for issuing and recording inspections (currently PSS Ltd). Recording incidents in this manner will enable the council to illustrate a clear chain of information from the inspection, the associated risk, details of works and repairs carried out and any information related to an accident or enquiry. This information will enable the Parish Council to defend itself against claims and be an effective management tool for future improvements.

Reporting Accidents:

Not every accident or incident is serious enough to call the Emergency Services, but they may have an impact on the safety of facilities in the village. Should a child within your care have an accident at the Parish Council's play area, please report it to the Clerk to the Parish Council using the form on the following page:

PLAYGROUND ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date and Time:	
Name of Injured Person	
Age:	
Sex:	
Address and Telephone Number:	
Parent / Carer Name:	
Address and Telephone Number: (if different to injured person):	
Item or Cause of Accident:	
Surface:	
Description of Accident:	
Weather Conditions:	
Clothes and Shoes Worn:	
Apparent Injury:	
Body Part:	

Treatment Given and Time:	
Follow-up Treatment and Time:	
Ambulance Called and Time: Ambulance Arrival Time:	
Name and Address of Doctor or Hospital:	
Admitted (Yes/No): Time in Hospital (if known):	
Witness to Accident (Name, Address, Telephone Number):	
Witness to Accident (Name, Address, Telephone Number):	
Remedial Action Recommended on Site:	
Date of Report:	

Please e-mail the completed form to clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk or call 07851 760264 for alternative options.

This document has been adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting held on 6th September 2022 under minute reference 76/22 a) and will be reviewed annually

Last reviewed 7th May 2024