

BLUNDESTON & FLIXTON PARISH COUNCIL PLAYGROUND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy has been prepared to record the maintenance and inspection regime of Blundeston & Flixton Parish Council's (hereafter referred to as "the Council") play facilities and the assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the responsibilities of the Council and how the Council will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks.

Playgrounds offer an exciting and challenging environment where children can explore and develop their abilities. Navigating the play equipment can help with problem-solving skills and help to develop physical strength, coordination and balance.

By their very nature playgrounds naturally involve a degree of risk and some bumps and bruises are to be expected.

In providing these facilities, the Council will manage the level of risk so that users of the play areas and its equipment are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

2. Legal Requirements

There is no specific legislation on play safety. However, ROSPA lists the following legislation as being relevant to playgrounds, although playgrounds are not specifically mentioned:-

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 Sections 3 & 4
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 (revised 1984)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Consumer Protection Act 1987
- Children Act 1989
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended 2003)
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
- Environmental Protection Act 1990

The 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 Council.

The Council will be governed by the rules of "reasonable practicability" and will seek to correct major hazards. Minor faults where risk is negligible and potential injury very minor will be monitored unless the fault or hazard changes status.

3. Industry Standards and Guidance

These standards and Safety Guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered to be good professional working practice.

EN1176— Playground Equipment

EN1176 is the European Standard which replaced the old British Standards. The standard is not retrospective and provides advice on general safety requirements, 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

4. **Civil Legislation**

In the event of a serious accident any claims for negligence will need to show that the Council failed to take some action which made the accident more likely to happen. The Council's defence will be based on evidence such as records of inspections and maintenance, compliance with the Standards and relevant risk assessments.

5. **Playground Inspection**

The Council is responsible for managing and maintaining play equipment at the playground which is situated on Hall Road, Blundeston. Inspection and maintenance activities are carried out to ensure the playground is safe for people using it. The Council also ensures timely maintenance to minimise any major maintenance issues and/or replacement costs for equipment. The inspection and frequency rates are currently feasible given the resources available to the Council.

- Visual Inspections – weekly visual inspections will be carried out by an appointed councillor and will be undertaken using the relevant guidelines. The inspection will include the identification of obvious hazards and defects, the operation and stability of equipment and the overall condition of both the site and the equipment. A detailed inspection report will be fed back to the Clerk for appropriate action. All completed forms are filed for future reference.
- Reactive inspections - The Clerk will respond to complaints, requests and reports received about play equipment from members of the public.
- Independent Full Inspections –
 - The annual inspection is carried out by an independent accredited playground inspector. This appointment is reviewed annually. The annual inspection report is reported to the Council and assesses:
 - a. The overall safety of the site, the equipment and safety surfaces
 - b. The effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety as a result of repairs made or added or replacement components.
 - c. Structural Integrity of the equipment
 - Annual tree inspection carried out by an independent tree surgeon who will recommend any necessary remedial work.

6. **Accidents, Enquiries and Claims**

All accidents should be reported to the Clerk to the Council and details of how to do this are displayed on the notice board within the playground. Records will be maintained to ensure that the Council is able to identify 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 Council to defend itself against claims and be an effective management tool for future improvements.

7. **Responsibilities**

The Council will undertake to:

- Nominate Councillors to be responsible for weekly inspections
- 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 Clerk to undertake actions to resolve urgent/and or high-risk issue where such action is required before the next meeting.

The Clerk will:

- Review the weekly inspection checklist completed by the Councillors
- File all inspection records
- Ensure weekly inspection checklists and annual playground inspections are retained for 21 years.
- Request that the village maintenance working party perform minor maintenance where appropriate
- Engage a registered playground maintenance company to perform all other maintenance repair works where this is not suitable to be undertaken by volunteers
- Instigate action to resolve urgent and/or high-risk issues identified in inspections or otherwise brought to the attention of the Clerk where such action is required before the next council meeting.
- Report any issues and actions to the Council

Nominated Councillors will:

- Perform weekly inspections according to the agreed schedule, including an overall site visual inspection
- Complete inspection reports and file with the Clerk
- Notify the Clerk as a matter of urgency of any dangerous equipment so that steps can be taken to isolate the dangerous equipment with temporary barriers or barricades

This Policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 16 December 2024.

Date of next review – December 2025