

Playground Risk Management Policy



Date

Minute Reference

Adopted:

25/056 17th March 2025

Next Review:

March 2026

Playground Risk Management Policy

1. Introduction

This policy has been prepared to formally recognise the maintenance and inspection regime of Southminster Parish Council (hereafter known as the Council) in respect of their recreational facilities and assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the Council and how they 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. The Policy will therefore summarise the Council's objectives in providing play while identifying an acceptable degree of risk.

2. Legal Requirements

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

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1992
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Council has a duty to take action to ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities provided by the Council. It is governed by the test of "reasonably 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.

3. Industry Standards and Guidance

These standards and Safety Guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered 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 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. Areas of responsibility

- King George V Memorial Field, Station Road, Southminster, Essex CM0 7EW

5. Civil Legislation

In the event of a claim being brought against the Council on the grounds that harm has occurred to one or more persons due to negligence on the part of the Council, there would have to be evidence that the Council took, or failed to take, some action which made the accident more likely to happen, or worse than would otherwise have been the case. The Council's defence will be based on the Council's Play Risk Management evidence such as records of inspections and maintenance, compliance with the Standards and relevant risk assessments.

6. Balancing Risks and Benefits

The Council's Risk Management Approach will aim to offer play spaces that are stimulating and challenging environments enabling children to explore and develop their abilities. In providing these environments the Council will manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

7. Playground Inspection Methodology

This section will identify the Council's methodology in managing its assets following:

- Inspections Frequency and Type
- Inspection Type Definitions
- Assessing the Level of Risk
- Summary of Risks

8. Inspection Frequency and Type

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

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION	INSPECTION TYPE	INSPECTOR
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Weekly	Visual	Parish Warden
Annually	Operational/Detailed	RoSPA qualified contractor

All inspections will be carried out using the relevant form which will then be passed to the Parish Clerk/RFO.

9. Inspection Tye – Definitions

Routine Visual Inspections – EN 1176-7.6.2a LOOK & SEE

This includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, noting broken parts, litter (especially dangerous litter such as bottles), graffiti or any signs of equipment misuse. Obvious hazards as described above that are seen by the Parish Warden are to be reported to the Parish Clerk/RFO.

Operational Inspections – EN1176-76.2b/c - POKE AND PROD

Operational Inspections provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces especially for wear, as listed below:

- Check repairs carried out by others: rust and rot: bearings:
- Cleanliness
- Equipment Ground Clearance
- Exposed Foundations
- Sharp Edges
- Missing Parts
- Excessive Wear (of moving parts)
- Structural Integrity
- The overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces
- The effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in safety level due to repairs made or added or replacement components.

The Council may alter the frequency of the operational inspections, and this decision will be dependent on the grading of the area which will consider factors such as popularity, profile and equipment type.

10. Accidents, Enquiries and Claims

The Council will record all accidents and enquiries relating to the play areas and the facilities within them. The details of the enquiry, complaint or accident will be recorded within the same system used for issuing and recording inspections. Recording incidents like this will enable the Council to show a clear chain of information from the inspection, the associated risk, details of works and repairs and any information related to an accident or enquiry. This information will be used to enable the Council to defend itself against negligence claims and be an effective management tool for the future.

Signed_____ Date:_____

(Print Name)_____Chair, Southminster Parish Council