

WEST LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY FOR THE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT

PURPOSE

To provide a statement on the policy of the Council for the provision of play equipment for members of the public, and to set out how it intends to manage that provision and the safety of equipment users.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management Policy, its Health and Safety Policy Statement and its Equalities and Inclusion Policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

West Lavington Parish Council recognises that it has a part in the overall provision of play opportunities in the community, and in support of the statutory obligations of Wiltshire Council. Therefore, the Parish Council chooses to act as custodian for a range of play equipment and related facilities that are publicly and freely available to all. The Council will monitor, maintain and insure the equipment for which it is responsible, ensuring it remains safe and fit for purpose.

CONTEXT

Through play children and young people explore the physical and social environment, ideas and concepts, and learn how to deal with what life puts in their path. In this they learn what cannot be explicitly taught.

At all ages it helps develop skills in communication, problem solving, negotiating, creativity, imagination, listening, team-working and analysing the pros and cons of opportunities. It helps develop physical ability and stamina, allows them to test the boundaries and learn how to take risks.

EQUIPMENT PROVISION

The Parish Council has become custodian to a range of play equipment, by virtue of community fund raising activities and grant-giving from other bodies. Co-ordinated variously by West Lavington Youth Club and by a charitable committee of local volunteers and fund raisers, a mixture of play equipment and young people's facilities has been provided over a number of recent years. In each case, the Parish Council has provided not only some advice and encouragement but also the funded means by which the assets provided can be subsequently managed and overseen on behalf of the whole community.

The equipment and facilities include:

- A Youth shelter
- A BMX track and fenced enclosure
- The Robert's (junior) playground
- The Senior play equipment
- The basketball hoop and stand.

The Council also provides and maintains the Recreation Ground under a lease from its owner, for the enjoyment of all parish inhabitants, part of which is used as football pitches and enjoyed by members of at least one football club. This facility is provided in partnership with the West Lavington Village Hall Committee, which makes the changing rooms available within the Village Hall.

THE MANAGEMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT

The Council manages all its recreational facilities, including play equipment, through its Playgrounds Working Group. Through Terms of Reference this public forum has the power to make recommendations to the Council on all management issues arising, from which the Council can allocate appropriate resources as required. As a Working Group, the membership includes non-Council representatives of parties with an interest in the facilities available.

PLAY ACTIVITY AND RISK

The Parish Council and the Playgrounds Working Group recognise that it is important for children and young people to be able to undertake play activities which have an element of risk attached to them, in order that they are challenged and have the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities.

The Play Safety Forum, RoSPA and the Health and Safety Executive have all recognised that there is a need for more risky play, and that children need and want to take risks when they play. In order for play provision to be challenging, facility providers need to be able to manage the elements of risk which are present in play activities to ensure that they can be undertaken in a controlled manner.

In order to be able to offer these activities, a balance needs to be struck between the risks inherent in the play activity and the benefit to the child, which can be derived from participating in it. In order to achieve this, it is important that play equipment providers ensure that the risks are manageable. However, it is impossible and indeed undesirable to eliminate all risks as this does not provide children with the opportunity to develop.

“Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.”

From ‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’, Play Safety Forum, 2002

“Play should be about children having fun and learning to manage risk through adventurous activity. This is an essential part of child development and important to the future health of the nation”

RoSPA, June 2005

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council is advised by its Risk Management Committee, has adopted a Risk Management Policy, and owns the Risk Register. The risk review process has captured the residual risk that arises from providing play equipment that is purposefully designed not to be risk free, for the reasons established above.

The risk, which is insured, is regarded as ‘tolerable’ in the light of the control measures that have been applied. The measures are a blend of engineered design and management process. The key control measures are:

- The equipment has been procured from, and installed by, reputable suppliers operating to BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177 standards;
- The principle risk of falling from height is mitigated by limiting the height to which users can reach to within the recommended maximum and safety surfaces are laid under relevant items of equipment;
- A system of inspection is established and maintained, using competent persons to inspect all the equipment and its immediate environment;
- Very young children are encouraged to use the junior playground under adult supervision.

PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION

Play equipment is inspected both weekly and biannually.

Weekly Inspections

Weekly inspections are made and recorded to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose and free from hazard. This is also a condition of the Council's insurance policy. The Council, through the Working Group, has nominated a number of volunteers as competent persons to undertake this task.

A checklist has been produced as an 'aide memoire' that each inspection will follow. A hard-bound log book has been provided, in which the checklist is reproduced. If the inspection reveals that all is satisfactory and no faults are found, the log book will be signed and dated as such. If a fault is found then the log book will be annotated, and the checklist will be completed in full as a separate paper record detailing the faults and an assessment of the ensuing risk. It is then submitted as per the signature chain on the form. The prioritisation for action will be at least that as per the risk criteria detailed on the form.

A copy of the checklist/aide memoire is at Appendix A.

Biannual Inspections

More substantial engineering inspections are contracted biannually from an external qualified provider, exceeding the insurer's requirement for at least an annual inspection. The Inspector will submit a report to the Council in order that any remedial action can be taken.

Records

This policy, related policies, and all records made may be used as evidence in case of formal investigation or inquiry. They will be stored indefinitely for that purpose.

"Play is what I do when everyone else has stopped telling me what to do."

(A child, anon)

Date created: July, 2011

Date for review: July, 2019 (last reviewed July, 2018)

Author: Clerk to the Council

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REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF EQUIPPED PLAYSPACES

Site Location: Sandfield Recreation Ground, West Lavington**Name of Inspector:****Date:****Time:****N°. Children present:****Weather:****Frequency:** Weekly

Item Ref	Item Description/Name	Item Ref	Item Description/Name	Item Ref	Item Description/Name
1	Approach Paths	6	General Surfacing	11	Other small eqpt J
2	Signage	7	Seating	12	Zip wire S
3	Gates & Entrances	8	Litter Bins	13	Side slider S
4	Perimeter Fencing	9	Climbing frame ropes J	14	Swing/bowl S
5	Planting	10	Swings J	15	Rotary seesaw S
		11	Slide/tower J	16	Vertical spinner S

Play areas inspected and no faults found

J = Junior area S= Senior area

Item Ref:	Hazard:	Risk:	Recommended Action:	Order Ref (office use)

Other comments

Graffiti Litter Alcohol/drug related litter Damage Resident Complaint Other

If immediate action was required, what did you do and who was contacted?

Time	Who did you contact to report fault?	Action	Signature

Risk Assessment Criteria

<p>INCREASING IMPACT</p> 	<p>INCREASING LIKELIHOOD </p>			
	<p>Virtually impossible to occur: 0 to 20% chance</p>	<p>Likely to occur: 21 to 50% chance</p>	<p>More likely to occur than not: 51% to 80% chance</p>	<p>Almost certain to occur: 81% to 100% chance</p>
	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
	<p>Very Unlikely</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<p>Likely</p>	<p>Very Likely</p>
<p>1 Minor</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>2 Moderate</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>MODERATE</p>	<p>MODERATE</p>
<p>3 Major</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>MODERATE</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p>4 Massive</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>MODERATE</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>IMMEDIATE ACTION</p>

Immediate:	Mitigating action to be taken immediately. The Clerk or Working Group Chairman to be notified by telephone and actions taken and any further agreed to be confirmed in writing as soon as practicable.
High:	May continue in use. Action required as indicated on the report will be necessary within 2 weeks
Moderate:	May continue to use. Action required as indicated on the report will be necessary within 2 months
Low:	May continue in use. Action may be required, but monitoring should be undertaken

Signed for inspection: **Date:**

Passed to Clerk for processing, if faults found: Signed..... **Date:**.....

Received by Clerk: Signed **Date:**.....