



Bishopsteignton Playgrounds Management & Maintenance Plan

Parks and play areas are integral to the cultural life of a community, giving children somewhere to play and interact, and communities a space to enjoy valuable time outdoors. Playgrounds, especially, provide children with stimulating and challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, including the need to understand and embrace the element of risk. This means that for councils and community organisations who manage playgrounds, there must be a balance between providing quality spaces for children to play and managing the equipment and infrastructure to reduce the possibility of accidents and injuries.

Causes of playground accidents involving mismanagement can include:

- Faulty or damaged equipment
- Incorrect installation
- Poor design and layout
- Poor inspection and maintenance of equipment
- Recommended precautionary measures not visible/displayed.
- Grounds and supporting infrastructure (fences, gates, surfacing, etc.) not regularly inspected for safety issues.
- Aged or poorly maintained equipment.
- Equipment unsuitable for the intended age group
- Missing or inadequate safety signage

Given that a large proportion of accidents result in children falling from equipment, often from a height, the playground surface is equally important to maintain, whether this is rubber flooring, wood chips or bark, artificial turf or another approved surface.

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

- The 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

Both the play equipment and the surfacing, should comply with the British and European Standard for playground equipment and surfacing, BS EN 1176. While these standards are not retrospective or, currently, a legal requirement, they represent good practice.

This Management & Maintenance plan shall be reviewed at least once per council term, if the current provision of play equipment and surfacing at Bishopsteignton playgrounds (shown in Appendix B) is changed by removal/replacement/renewal, or if safety standard legislation is amended or introduced. The Parish Councils Asset Register and Insurance cover is reviewed annually to ensure any changes are covered.

All additional installations will be managed by:

- Ensuring professional advice is given on appropriate design and layout, with a focus on the intended age group.
- Equipment and surfacing shall be installed by a competent person in accordance with standard BS EN 1176, and a post-installation inspection carried out by an independent body.

CIVIL LEGISLATION

In the event of a serious accident where a claim is based on negligence; that is, Bishopsteignton Parish Council, as the authority responsible for the play equipment and surfacing, has 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 should ensure the Council's legal responsibilities, insurance cover and method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to it.

INSPECTIONS

Routine inspections of play areas are performed on a regular systematic basis; the inspections checklist (Appendix A) is designed for use at monthly inspection although these will be carried out more frequently during busy periods. The inspection can be carried out internally by a councillor, the clerk, or a volunteer. BPC will ensure all inspectors receive the appropriate training to carry out inspections of playgrounds. Annual independent operational and safety inspections shall continue to be carried out by appointed qualified assessors.

Around 60% of all accidents on play areas do not occur on play equipment but on ancillary items or approaches, so these areas are included in the inspection. A high proportion of accidents occur from tripping on uneven surfaces.

It is important that inspections are 'hands on' and that you use all your senses. Look at, listen to and use the equipment. Sound differences can help identify problems that would not otherwise have been obvious. Take extra care not to put your hand where you haven't looked first in case any sharp objects have been left.

Start looking for hazards as you approach the play area. Check that paths are in good condition, without trip hazards and that there is nothing overhanging or projecting onto the path which children could run into.

When you reach the play area check the general surface for trip hazards including that the edges of all 'safer' surfacing are level with the surrounding areas (trip hazards). Check the 'safer' surfacing is in good condition and in place. If any deterioration has occurred assess if this warrants intervention such as cordoning off until repair has occurred. Check surfaces for slipperiness. Rubberised surfaces can get an almost invisible algae build up which can make them very slippery when wet. Use a 'hands on' approach on all equipment and use it where possible.

On sprung items, try giving them a hard push to make them rock forcefully. Look and listen for any loose parts/rattling.

For slides attached to a unit, stand near the top and look down the slide. Check the steps are secure and the chute is free from obstructions. Try moving the slide run out to see if there is any loose fixings.

On swings check seats for damage. Check on cradle seats that the centre strap (that goes between legs) is firmly fixed. Turn the seats over and check that there are no projecting bolts underneath. Separate the links on chains (where the chains meet the seats and where the diagonals meet) to check for wear. Any worn links will be replaced at 30%-40% wear. Throw the swing seat vertically up in the air and watch the shackle pin for movement. If the pin moves sideways only, there is unlikely to be bush or shackle wear. If however, there is a rocking motion, this can indicate that the shackles or bushes are worn.

From time to time sit on the swing seat and gently swing, looking upwards to the top bar. This should not move. If it turns at all then the head bar is loose in its fixings.

Use your weight to check stability of items. Where there are chains or ropes on any equipment make sure they are secure and in good condition and that ropes cannot form a loop (so they can't be caught around a neck).

Look for any areas on equipment where there are unexpected changes in colour. These can indicate that a component is missing.

Where metal tubes are part of the play equipment construction, try hitting the metal with a rubber mallet and listen. If there is serious internal rusting you will hear a sound, like rain, as the rust you have disturbed falls inside the tube. If hollow metal appears to be 'bowing' at any point this is an indication that there may have been damage due to water build up in the hollow, which when it freezes then 'bows' and eventually splits the metal.

Appendix A to be completed during each inspection and return to the Clerk to the Council.

MAINTENANCE

Following the assessment, all concerns of potential risk must be highlighted to the Clerk of the Council, or the Chair of the Asset Management Committee (AMC) or the Chair to the Council immediately who will action remedial work to take place as soon as is practical. Depending on the risk assessment, use of the failed equipment may be restricted with immediate effect or as soon as possible. Any actions taken will be reported to council members at the next meeting of the AMC or full council, whichever takes place soonest.

All maintenance work, whether routine or emergency, and all necessary purchases will be conducted in accordance with the BPC Responsible Resource & Purchase Policy to ensure quality, value, sustainability and environmental impact are always considered.

Following maintenance work the equipment shall be checked by a councillor/the clerk to ensure a satisfactory conclusion and health and safety concerns are resolved.

Monthly Checklist for Children's Outdoor Play Areas & Equipment - The Lawns & Cockhaven Close

Site General	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are any barriers present and in place?			
Are fences secure and complete without any protrusions?			
Are gates in working order?			
Are pathways undamaged and free from obstructions?			
Is the site free from litter, glass or any other dangerous objects (needles, etc)?			
Is site and surrounding areas free from animal fouling?			
Do nearby trees appear to be in good condition and not likely to fall?			
Ancillary Items	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are all seats and benches undamaged and in good condition?			
Is the planting safe and undamaged?			
Surfacing	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are safety surfaces undamaged and free from any trip hazards?			
Is safety surfacing level with surrounding ground and not causing trip hazards?			
Does the site appear to be well drained without excessive puddling?			
If surfacing is grass, is it in good condition without undue wear?			
All Equipment	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are all supports present, secure and free from decay at ground level?			
Is all timber and metal work undamaged and free from corrosion?			
Are supports secure in the ground and are all fixings secure?			
Are all safety barriers present?			
Does equipment work properly and without undue noise?			
Swings	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are the chains intact and in good condition with less than 40% wear?			
Are the swing seats unbroken with no exposed metal?			
Are the seats fixed securely (with secure centre bar on cradle seats)?			
Slides	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are steps in good condition and not slippery?			
Are handrails secure and in good condition?			
Is the chute securely fixed, undamaged and clear of foreign objects (needles, glass etc) (carefully check under sides of chute)?			
Rotating Items	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Is it undamaged and is the platform level?			
Does it revolve smoothly and noiselessly?			
Are all safety features present?			
Does any speed restrictor work?			
Are there no protruding bolts etc. under the platform?			

Is it clear of rubbish, needles, sharps etc underneath?			
Rocking & Spring items	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are all supports and springs present and secure and free from decay at ground level?			
Are ground fixings secure with undue movement?			
Does the item move smoothly and noiselessly?			
Are all hand grips and footrests present and securely fixed?			
Where chains or ropes are present are they secure and in good condition?			
Climbing and Agility Items	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Are all supports present and secure and free from decay at ground level?			
Is all timber or metal work undamaged and free from corrosion?			
Are all the bars in place, securely fixed and any tube ends plugged?			
Are any overhead bars/rings all present, securely fixed, and do bars not rotate?			
Are all ropes or chains present and in good condition and firmly fixed?			
Are all nuts and bolts secure without any projecting thread?			
Do loose ropes not form a loop?			
Bridges	Yes	No	Remedial Action Required
Is there no gap opening at the ends which children can slip through?			
Are bridge slats all present, secure, and evenly spaced?			
Are all fixings secure and in good condition?			
Are chains and ropes secure without undue wear?			

Additional comments:

Signed.....

Print Name

Date

The Lawns Playground, TQ14 9PJ



1. Junior Climbing unit
2. Toddler climbing unit
3. Basket swing
4. Junior swings
5. Toddler swings
6. Springers/Rockers x3
7. Picnic bench
8. Visitors access gate
9. Maintenance access gate

Cockhaven Close Playground, TQ14 9RJ



1. Slide
2. Wooden Ship
3. Toddler/Junior Swing
4. Basket Swing
5. Climbing poles with net
6. Balance Rope
7. Seating
8. Visitors access gates
9. Maintenance access gate