**Chittlehampton Parish Council**

**Play Area Risk Management Policy**

**Adopted May 2024**

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**Introduction**

This strategy has been developed to recognise the maintenance and inspection regime of Chittlehampton Parish Councils play area facilities and the assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the authority and how Chittlehampton Parish Council will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks. Play Areas by their very nature should provide a degree of risk and challenges to the users. The policy will therefore summarise Chittlehampton Parish Councils objectives in providing challenging play whilst identifying an acceptable level of risk.

**Scope**

The scope of this document includes the following:

The Air Ambulance steps, balustrade and mesh at top and bottom.

Three wooden planters.

Triple memorial bench

2 x Picnic Table.

Play area sign.

Chain Link Fence between Play area and the ‘Football Pitch’ area.

Play area equipment including, Baby Bowl Rocker, Rocking Horse, Seesaw and tyre stops, slide and tower and x2 linking ropes. Climbing triangle and black plastic mesh under all. 2 Bay swing frame, Bowl swing, baby swing, Flat swing and black mesh surface under these.

Green shelter, metal floor plates and black mesh by shelter and waste bin.

**Legal Requirements**

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

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Act 1992

Occupiers Liability Act 1957 & 1984

Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Chittlehampton Parish Council and its Clerk have a duty to take actions 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 ‘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 & 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 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 to the public should be prevented***
* **The equipment must be inspected and maintained**

An inspection record should be maintained for the life of the equipment.

**Civil Legislation**

In the event of a serious accident claims are based on negligence: that is, 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 Councils legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to it.

**Balancing Risks & Benefits**

Chittlehampton Parish Council will aim to offer play spaces which are stimulating and challenging environments enabling children to safely 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.

**Playground Inspection Methodology**

Chittlehampton Parish Council are responsible for the Play Equipment and surrounding area at the Playing Field in Chittlehampton. The responsibility for the operational regular inspection of the play will be identified councillors and trained volunteer parishioners.

**Inspection Frequency & Type**

The table below details the frequency of inspections and the inspector responsible for carrying out the on-site inspections. The inspection and frequency rates are currently feasible given resources available to Chttlehampton parish Council.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Frequency | Type | Inspector | Record |
| Two Weekly | Routine Visual Inspection | Trained Councillor or Parishioner | Yes |
| Monthly | Operational Inspection | Trained Councillor or Parishioner | Yes |
| Annual | Detailed | Approved Playground Inspection Company | Yes |

All inspections will be carried out by written report where the results of the inspections are fed back to the clerk. For the purpose of data protection the inspection findings are stored and cannot be tampered with.

Chittlehampton Parish Council will ensure that all inspectors receive the appropriate training to carry out the inspections of the play facilities and will also preferably have the appropriate disclosure and barring service check. The play area inspections carried out by the councillors will be completed on a standard form developed for the specific play area in Chittlehampton, This standard form will be subject to review and update following any changes in legislation, guidance or actual play equipment and area.

**Inspection Type – Definitions**

**Routine Visual Inspections -EN1176 – 7.6.2a – Look & See (Standard Form – Two weekly)**

The Two Weekly visual inspection will be carried out by an appointed councillor or deputy for the area and will be undertaken using the relevant form covering the site and equipment and are provided by the Clerk. The inspection will include the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti, equipment misuse. Obvious hazards as described above along with the overall results of the inspections will be fed back to the Clerk / Deputy for appropriate action. All completed forms following review are filed for future reference.

**Operational Inspection – EN1176-7..6..2b – Poke & Prod (Standard form –Monthly)**

Operational inspections provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces especially for wear.

It is recommended that inspections should be carried out every month. All areas will receive a monthly operational inspection to:

* Check repairs carried out by others, rust and rot: bearings
* Cleanliness
* Equipment ground clearance
* Exposed foundations
* Sharp Edges
* Missing Parts – Bolt covers etc
* Excessive Wear (of moving parts)
* Structural Integrity
* Surface protection – Matting and general grass surface condition
* Inspectors will be trained by flow-down of methodology from RPI registered trainer through Parish Council trained person.

**Annual Main Inspection – EN1176-7.6.2c**

These inspections will be carried out annually and will assess:

* The overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces
* 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.

The annual inspections are to be carried out by an independent approved inspector.

Operational and annual inspections, whether carried out by a Councillor or a contractor working on behalf of the authority will be carried out and recorded using the same method and system.

**Bespoke Inspections**

These inspections can be carried out by a Council officer within the team responsible for managing the play equipment and area and or independent inspector. The inspection method is carried out using the same inspection system as all other inspections carried out by inhouse and external contractors. Typically bespoke inspections are a consequence of enquiry from a community member, an accident or reported incident in a play facility, in response to an urgent request or to carry out a post installation inspection following the installation of new equipment. Bespoke inspections are also carried out as a method of verifying and checking existing inspections.

**Accidents, Enquiries & Claims**

Chittlehampton Parish Council will record all accidents and enquiries relating to the play area and facilities within them. The details of enquiry, complaint or accident will be recorded within the same system used for issuing and recording inspections. 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 Council to defend against claims and also be an effective management tool for future improvements.

**Responsibilities:**

**The Council, through the Playing Field Committee (Committee), will undertake to:**

• Nominate Councillors to be responsible for Two weekly and monthly 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(s) where such action is required before the next meeting.

**The Clerk and nominated Playing Field Committee Chairman will:**

• Review the monthly inspection checklist completed by the Councillors of the Committee

• File all inspection records

• Ensure all inspection checklists and annual playground inspections are retained for 21 years.

• Instruct the original installers to perform minor maintenance where appropriate

• Either Instruct the original installer or a registered playground maintenance company to perform all (other than minor) maintenance repair works.

• 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 Committee for recommendations to Council.

**Nominated Councillors and Parishioners will:**

• Perform inspections according to the agreed schedule, including an overall site visual inspection

• Complete inspection reports, provide to the Playing Field Committee Chairman who will review, sign and with the Parish Clerk.

• Notify the Playing Field Committee Chairman or Clerk as a matter of urgency of any dangerous equipment or in the event the office is closed take steps to isolate the dangerous equipment with temporary barriers or barricades

**Assessing level of Risk**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 recommends that owners and managers of premises should undertake a risk assessment of their facilities – this includes the childrens playground.

**Purpose**

***The purpose of the risk assessment is to:***

* Undertake a systematic review of the potential for harm.
* Evaluate the likelihood of harm occurring.

***When this is done the responsible person has to:***

* Decide whether the existing control measures are adequate.
* Decide whether more needs to be done.

**Assessing Risk**

The sequence for this is:

* Activity classification
* Hazard identification
* Evaluation of risk
* Evaluation of control measures
* Specification for further action

**Action**

Once the assessment has been carried out there should be a hierarchy for control:

* Eliminate hazard
* Reduce hazard
* Isolate hazard
* Control hazard

**Future action**

Once the risk assessment has been carried out and control measures, it need not be repeated unless there is a significant change in the playground.

For the Chittlehampton Playground the Risk Assessment should be reviewed annually post the Annual independent inspection. The review will also take into account the results of inspections undertaken throughout the year and any accidents or injuries to ensure that any risks have been addressed.

**Risk Rating Approach**

**Assessing the level of risk**

The level of risk will be assessed by the Councils officer, councillor or independent inspector with sufficient knowledge.

**Methodology**

The risk assessment utilises the 5 x 5 methodology and risk is assigned as a product of probability and severity.

Risk Score = Probability x Severity

A final quantitive risk rating of immediate, high, medium or low is then obtained from an outcome matrix based upon the final score.

**Risk Rating**

Having obtained a risk score, the qualitative risk rating is obtained using the following matrix. Probability is a measure of the likelihood of an event happening, In managing play risk, the probability score will also take into consideration the location (is the area well used by children) and the popularity of individual piece of equipment within that location. These factors will combine to produce a score for the likelihood from injury of the hazard identified.







**Summary of Risks: Acceptable Risks, Actions & Time Frames**

