



Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council

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PLAYGROUND / PLAY AREAS RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been prepared to formally recognise the assets, maintenance and inspection regime of Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council's play and recreational facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the authority and how the Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council") will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, risk assessment and the Council's response to risks, faults and repairs.
- 1.2 Playgrounds by their very nature should provide a degree of challenges to the user with the consequent element of risk. At all times it is to be recognised that in providing challenging play and exercise equipment there will be an identifiable and acceptable degree of risk to the user.
- 1.3 The Council aims to offer play spaces which are stimulating and challenging environments enabling children to explore and develop their abilities. The Council has also installed adult exercise equipment. In providing these environments the Council will manage the level of risk so that users of the play and exercise areas and equipment provided, are not exposed to unacceptable hazards and risks.

2. Legal Requirements

- 2.1 There is no specific legislation on safety at play. However, relevant key legislation includes:
 - (a) The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and appropriate updates
 - (b) Occupier's Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984
 - (c) Management of H&S at Work Regulations 1999 (Management Regulations)
 - (d) Consumer Protection Act 1987
 - (e) Children Act 1989
 - (f) RIDDOR 2013 (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences)
 - (g) Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1989
 - (h) Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
 - (i) Environmental Protection Act 1990
- 2.2 The Council and its Officers have a duty to take action that will ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected whilst using the facilities provided by the Parish Council, within the Parish of Rushmere St Andrew.
- 2.3 The Council will be governed by the rules of "reasonable practicality" 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

- 3.1 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 previous British Standards. The standard is not retrospective. It provides advice and guidance on design layout and the inspection of playground equipment. Contained within the guidance are the following recommendations:
 - (a) That if the equipment is not safe, access by the public should be prevented



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- (b) The equipment must be inspected and maintained
- (c) An inspection record should be maintained for 21 years.

4. Civil Legislation

- 4.1 In the event of a serious accident, claims are based on negligence. Such claims will need to show that the organisation (in this case "The Council"), responsible for play and exercise failed to take appropriate action which made the accident more likely to happen. The defence will be based on evidence such as records of inspections, maintenance and compliance with relevant standards and risk assessment.
- 4.2 The policy will take into account the Council's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance regimes within the given resources available to it.

5. Parish Council Playgrounds

- 5.1 Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council is responsible for managing and maintaining play equipment at five locations. Adult exercise equipment is also provided at those locations indicated in the following list:
 - (a) Tower Hall play area (includes adult exercise equipment)
 - (b) Broke Hall play area (includes adult exercise equipment)
 - (c) Chestnut play area (includes adult exercise equipment)
 - (d) Yew Tree play area

6. Inspection Type and Frequency

- 6.1 Inspection and maintenance activities are carried out to ensure that the play areas are safe for people using them. Inspections also ensure timely maintenance to minimise the need for major maintenance issues and replacement costs for equipment. The type and frequency of inspections are those feasible within the resources available to the Council including current contractual arrangements.
- 6.2 Weekly Visual Inspections:

The Council have a 'nominated person' who is appointed to carry out visual inspections of play and adult exercise equipment. This nominated person will also carry out a visual inspection of the surfaces, gates, fencing and the general area of all the play spaces. It is the additional responsibility of this nominated person to check for hazards resulting from use, the weather and vandalism such as bottles (broken or whole), litter, graffiti, equipment misuse, damage etc.

On a weekly basis the nominated person will report to the Parish Office any issues or seen hazards. Where an issue is identified, relevant actions to address this will be undertaken by the Officers.
- 6.3 Monthly Inspections:

The Council carry out in-house monthly inspections of each playground. This is carried out by a nominated person, who has undertaken the relevant training e.g. ROSPA training.
- 6.4 Quarterly Inspections:

The Council carry out full in-house quarterly inspections of each playground. This is carried out by a nominated person, who has undertaken the relevant training e.g. ROSPA training.
- 6.5 Annual Inspections:



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Current legislation (March 2024) is that playgrounds managed by local authorities must undergo an annual inspection. This must be carried out by an independent accredited playground inspection company e.g. ROSPA.

The annual inspection report will be presented to the Environment and Services Committee of the Parish Council. The annual (inspection) report will assess:

- (a) The overall safety of equipment, foundations, surfaces and environment.
- (b) The effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety.
- (c) The report should address those situations where new installations and / or “in-house” repairs and maintenance have occurred since the last inspection.
- (d) The structural integrity of all the equipment and facilities provided.

6.6 Reactive Inspections:

The Council will respond where issues arising from the use of the play areas is reported by members of the public. The Clerk, or Assistant Clerk will authorise an inspection. If necessary, the relevant item of equipment, or the entire play area, will be placed out of use until the risk is resolved. Where there is a report of an injury sustained in a Council play area then the area will be closed until the matter is investigated. Access will not be permitted until authorised by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Parish Council in consultation with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk.

7. Accidents, Reports of Injury, Enquiries and Claims

7.1 The Council will record all accidents, cases of personal injury relating to play areas and the facilities within them. Records will be maintained to ensure that the Council is able to identify a clear chain of action. This will include name(s) of those involved with contact details. The nature of reported injuries and any treatment sought. The location of the incident and, where relevant, which item of equipment was in use at the time the injury was sustained. A timeline will be maintained which will include evidence that the relevant play area has been closed until the matter has been assessed and that the relevant councillors have authorised a return to normal use.

8. Responsibilities:

8.1 The Council through its Environment and Services (E&S) Committee will undertake to:

- (a) Ensure that weekly inspections are being carried out.
- (b) Monthly inspections are carried out by the nominated person.
- (c) Quarterly inspections are carried out by the nominated person.
- (d) Ensure that an annual inspection is carried out by an authorised inspector.
- (e) That records of inspections are kept in accordance with relevant legislation.
- (f) Approve spending on remedial actions.
- (g) Seek more urgent matters to be dealt with at the next meeting of the Parish Council

8.2 The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will:

- (a) Review the quarterly reports from the nominated person.
- (b) Take action to deal with any issues (in accordance with the policies set out above).
- (c) File all inspection records and ensure records are retained for 21 years.
- (d) Maintain a clear and accurate account where personal injury is reported as having occurred within one of the Council's Play Areas.



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- (e) Instruct minor repairs and maintenance.
- (f) Instigate action, including informing the Chair of the E&S Committee, to resolve urgent and /or high-risk issues identified during inspections where such action is required before the next council meeting.
- (g) Following each Annual Inspection, carry out the Council's instructions to deal with issues arising.
- (h) Consult with the chairman of the E&S Committee to set agenda items for the E&S Committee or full council to deal with playgrounds and equipment.

8.3 Nominated Persons:

- (a) Perform weekly inspections of all play areas.
- (b) Complete monthly inspections of all play areas. Maintain a record in the office.
- (c) Complete the quarterly inspections of all play areas. Maintaining a record in the office.
- (d) Clear litter and debris from play areas.
- (e) Check equipment for any obvious signs of damage.
- (f) Report to the Parish Office any issues which need urgent attention.
- (g) Take steps to isolate equipment and / or entire play areas with barriers and barricades as instructed by the Parish Office.
- (h) Carry out minor repairs and maintenance of equipment and facilities as part of a programme identified within the Annual Inspection Report.

8.4 Authorised Repairs:

- (a) Following receipt of the Annual Inspection Report the Council will analyse the report.
- (b) Equipment and / or facilities requiring minor repairs or maintenance will be dealt with "in-house".
- (c) Equipment or facilities which require repairs, maintenance, modifications etc. which are beyond the scope of the Officers to manage will be the subject of a report from the E&S Committee to Parish Council. In conjunction with this the Officers will prepare quotes for consideration and recommendations detailing priorities.
- (d) Required works must only be carried out by accredited companies authorised to do so.