

## Play Area Inspection Policy 2024/25

### 1. Purpose

Haydon Wick Parish Council is responsible for 22 play areas, 6 multi use games areas and the Haydon Wick skate park. This policy outlines the procedures for the Parks & Open Spaces Team to regularly inspect and maintain the play areas to ensure the safety of all users and protection and longevity of its assets.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all playground equipment and surrounding areas within Haydon Wick Parish Council's play areas. The names of the play areas are listed as below:

1. Basil Play Area
2. Bowls Green Play Area
3. Brookfield Play Area
4. Capesthorne Play Area
5. Doyle Play Area
6. Galloway Play Area
7. Gaynor Play Area
8. Haydon Wick Skate Park
9. Havisham Play Area + Multi Use Games Area
10. Heaton Play Area + Multi Use Games Area
11. Kelly Gardens Play Area
12. King George V Play Area
13. Lilian Play Area
14. Luna Play Area + Multi Use Games Area
15. Primrose Play Area
16. Queen Elizabeth Play Area + Multiple Use Games Area
17. Thyme Play Area
18. Trent Road Play Area
19. Village Green Play Area
20. White Eagle Play Area + Multi Use Games Area
21. Wick Farm Play Area
22. Voyager Drive Play Area + Multi Use Games Area

Note: Francomes Play Area in Abbey Meads, Swindon is also checked regularly for basic health & safety checks and included in the annual external inspection, but the



management and responsibility of this play area is with the North Swindon Development Company and Swindon Borough Council. This play area is not in the remit of Haydon Wick Parish Council.

### **3. Inspection Frequency**

- Daily visual inspections upon emptying public litter/dog waste bins
- Three weekly detailed inspections
- Monthly comprehensive inspections and shrub bed maintenance
- Annual professional assessment

### **4. Inspection Procedures**

#### **4.1 Daily Visual Inspection**

- Conduct a walk-through of the play area
- Check for obvious hazards, vandalism, or damage
- Remove any litter or debris
- Report any issues requiring immediate attention
- Closure of any equipment will be cordoned off with safety tape and signage

#### **4.2 Three Weekly Detailed Inspection**

- Inspect all equipment for wear, damage, or loose parts
- Check surfacing materials for proper depth and distribution
- Ensure all signage is in place and legible
- Test moving parts for proper function
- Closure of any equipment will be cordoned off with safety tape and signage

#### **4.3 Monthly Comprehensive Inspection**

- Perform all weekly inspection tasks
- Check for structural integrity of equipment
- Inspect for rust, rot, cracks, or splinters
- Verify stability of equipment footings
- Examine chains, connectors, and moving parts for excessive wear

#### **4.4 Annual Professional Assessment**



- Hire a certified playground safety inspector to conduct a thorough evaluation
- Review and update the inspection policy based on the assessment findings
- Any items marked as 'high risk' are dealt with immediately, other items are prioritised in order of risk medium – low.

## **5. Documentation**

- Maintain logs of all inspections retained for 5 years as per the Data Retention & Disposal Policy
- Document any issues found and corrective actions taken
- Keep records of repairs and replacements

## **6. Legal Requirements**

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

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and appropriate updates
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Management Regulations)
- Consumer Protection Act 1987
- Children Act 1989 • RIDDOR 2013
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation 1992
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 198

## **7. Shrub Bed Maintenance**

The Parks & Open Spaces Team will ensure that the shrub beds around the perimeter of the play areas and the main footpaths leading to the play areas are kept to a manageable level. Details of this can be found in the Council's Shrub Bed Maintenance Specification.

## **8. Balancing Risks and Benefits**

The Council's risk management approach will aim to offer play areas and open spaces that provide 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 users of the equipment are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

## **9. Staff Training**



- External training to be provided by a Playground Safety Inspector body such as RoSPA for the Parks & Projects Team, with regular refresher training
- Train all relevant Parks & Open Spaces Staff on inspection procedures
- Ensure staff are familiar with playground safety standards
- Provide regular refresher training and examples in-house to ensure safety compliance

## **10. Emergency Procedures**

- Establish a process for immediately addressing serious hazards
- Create a protocol for closing play areas if unsafe conditions are found

## **11. Civil Legislation**

In the event of a serious accident claims are based on negligence. Such claims will need to show that 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 consider the Council's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to it.

## **12. Accidents, Enquiries and Claims**

The Council will record all accidents and enquires relating to the play areas and facilities within them. Records will be maintained to ensure that the Council is able to identify 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 itself against claims and be an effective management tool for future improvements. Claims relating to children and young people will be held until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, after which will be disposed of as detailed within the Data Retention & Disposal Policy. All other accidents will be kept for three years.

## **13. CCTV**

The Council has installed a portable CCTV system at some of its play areas locally. The purpose of the CCTV is to protect the Council's assets from damage or vandalism and to ensure families feel safe when visiting. Any matters of petty crime should be reported to the Police for the Investigating Officer to contact the CCTV trained operatives to request footage as per the Council's CCTV Policy.



#### **14. Policy Review**

- Review and update this policy annually or as needed based on incident reports, inspection findings, or changes in safety standards.