



West Swindon Parish Council

**Play Risk
Management Policy
2025**

Adopted May 2024

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Introduction

This strategy has been prepared to formally recognise the maintenance and inspection regime of West Swindon Parish Council's play and leisure facilities and the assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the authority and how West Swindon Parish Council will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks. Playgrounds by their very nature should provide a degree of risk and challenges to the users. The policy will therefore summarise West Swindon Parish Council's objectives in providing challenging play while identifying an acceptable degree of risk.

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 and Safety at Work Act
- 1992 Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

West Swindon Parish Council and their staff 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 and 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 by the public should be prevented. The equipment must be inspected and maintained.

An inspection record should be maintained for 21 years.

Civil Legislation

In the event of a serious accident, claims are based on negligence: that is, the Parish Council's staff took or failed to take some action which made the accident more likely to happen or worse than would otherwise have been the case. The defence will be based on West Swindon Parish Council Play Risk Management and evidence such as records of inspections and maintenance, compliance with the Standards and relevant risk assessments.

This policy will set out the methodology West Swindon Parish Council will use in managing and maintaining the playgrounds within their control. The policy will take into account the authority's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to the authority.

Balancing Risks and Benefits

West Swindon Parish Council's Risk Management approach aims to offer play spaces that are stimulating and challenging environments enabling children to explore and develop their abilities. In providing these environments West Swindon Parish Council will manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

Playground Inspection Methodology

West Swindon Parish Council is responsible for 21 areas plus a pump track and skate park that will adhere to the guidance set out in this document. The areas include playgrounds, fitness equipment, skate park and pump tracks and multi use games areas (MUGA). The responsibility for the operational regular inspection of the play and leisure facilities in West Swindon Parish is carried out by the Parish team members and includes the responsibility for litter picking and grounds maintenance of the playgrounds of the play and leisure facilities in West Swindon.

Inspection Frequency & Type

The table below details the frequency of inspections:

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION/VISIT	INSPECTION TYPE	
Weekly	Operational	Parish Team member October half term to Easter half term.
Twice Weekly	Operational	Parish Team member Easter half term to October half term.
Annual	Annual Detailed	RoSPA (or other external organisation) – Play Inspection Company
Bespoke and maintenance visits	Reactive	Parish Team members

All inspections are carried out using manual forms for the recording of the visit and any cautions or notes for action. The forms are held securely for 21 years.

West Swindon Parish Council ensures all team members conducting inspections have received the appropriate training to carry out the inspections of play facilities.

Inspection Type – Definitions

Routine Visual Inspections – EN 1176-7.6.2a - LOOK & SEE

It includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or glass, litter, graffiti, equipment misuse. All staff undertake Look and See approaches to identifying hazards across public open spaces in West Swindon. West Swindon Parish Council manages litter clearance and grounds maintenance in addition to the visual inspections of play equipment which are recorded on the inspection form.

Operational Inspection – EN1176-76.2b - POKE & PROD

Operational Inspections are the basis of West Swindon Parish Council inspections of play and 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 check

- Repairs carried out by others; rust and rot; bearings.
- Cleanliness
- Equipment Ground
- Clearance Exposed
- Foundations
- Sharp Edges Missing Parts
- Excessive Wear (of moving parts)
- Structural Integrity

Annual Main Inspection – EN1176-7.6.2c

These inspections will approximately be carried out every 12 month, not exceeding 15 months.

The overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces are checked as well as 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 inspector who provides a detailed written report with condition statements for each piece of equipment.

Maintenance Visits Inspections

Maintenance visits can be carried out within the team to respond to issues and repairs.

Accidents, Enquiries and Claims

West Swindon Parish Council will record all accidents and enquires relating to the play areas and facilities within them. The details of the 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 authority 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 authority to defend itself against claims and also be an effective management tool for future improvements.

The public can report concerns or issues during office hours to the Parish Office or through its website. Out of hours reports can be made to the Swindon Borough Council out of hours team.

Assessing Level of Risk

Methodology

The risk assessment utilizes the 5x5 methodology and risk is assigned as a product of probability and severity.

Risk Score = Probability x Severity


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

Risk Rating

The Parish Council takes a lead from the annual independent inspections risk rating for short and long term maintenance and refurbishment. 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 from the hazard identified. The most recent annual inspections were conducted by the Play Inspection Company and the matrix used is set out below.

Risk Assessment Matrix

			Scores in the report are multiplication factors of Likelihood x Severity					
			Severity>>					
Likelihood	Very High probability, if the situation is not addressed an accident is almost certain.	5	Very High	VL (5)	L (10)	M (15)	H (20)	VH (25)
	High probability an accident is probable without any added factor.	4	High	VL (4)	L (8)	M (12)	H (16)	H (20)
	Moderate probability an incident is foreseeable.	3	Moderate	VL (3)	L (6)	L (9)	M (12)	M (15)
	Some probability, requires a combination of factors to take place.	2	Low	VL (2)	VL (4)	L (6)	L (8)	L (10)
	No significant probability; lightning strike, freak accident.	1	Very Low	VL (1)	VL (2)	VL (3)	VL (4)	VL (5)
			Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	
			1	2	3	4	5	
			No injury likely e.g. damaged or soiled clothing, minor bruising, grazes	Minor injury, laceration or bruising requiring first aid only	Injury requiring medical intervention e.g. cuts requiring stitches	Serious injury including concussions or fracture of long bones	Severe injury involving a potential life changing injury or fatality	
			Severity>>					
<p>Note 1: The total risk scores included within our reports are a multiplication factor of the calculated Likelihood and Severity of each finding. Both Likelihood and Severity are given a number between 1 - 5 as shown on the matrix above and these two numbers are then multiplied together to give the total risk score that is shown against defects on the report. Total risk scores can be divided in both directions, i.e. a total risk score of 12 could be a Likelihood (3) x Severity (4) or Likelihood (4) x Severity (3).</p> <p>Note 2: When we inspect we only see a snapshot of the current condition of the equipment. It is the operators responsibility to ensure that there is a continuing level of maintenance to keep the equipment in good working order and the site fit for use.</p>								

Equipment has been assessed to the following standards where relevant:

BS EN 1176 Parts 1-11 (Playground equipment and surfacing)
 BS EN 14974 (Facilities for users of roller sports equipment)
 BS EN 15312 (Free access multi-sports equipment)
 BS EN 16899 (Parkour Equipment)
 BS EN 16630 (Outdoor Fitness Equipment).

New Play Areas and Major Refurbishment

The Parish Council will commission an independent play inspection of any newly installed play areas or where it has conducted a major refurbishment. After the first inspection, these sites will be routinely inspected in the same frequency as all other play areas.

Repairs

The Parish Council will conduct any necessary repairs as soon as it is practical to do so. If there is a delay in the repair due to materials or budget approval, items will either be judged to be safe and left in situ or be removed from the site to prevent use whilst there is a delay.

Matters relating to Play equipment will be reported to the Planning, Leisure and Environment Committee on an as and when basis for discussion and awareness.