

Play Area Safety Policy

1. Introduction

Playgrounds have been provided for families and children to enjoy for many decades. They are designed to be physically and mentally challenging in order to help children develop skills, confidence, and resilience. While a degree of risk is inherent in play, Brington Parish Council recognises its responsibility to manage and reduce risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy sets out the procedures and responsibilities of Brington Parish Council to minimise risks at the play areas for which it is responsible, while recognising the benefits of challenging play.

2. Legal Requirements

2.1 Relevant Legislation

There is no single piece of legislation governing playground safety; however, the following legislation is relevant:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Consumer Protection Act 1987

2.2 Duty of Care

Brington Parish Council has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of employees, contractors, and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities it provides.

2.3 Fault Classification

- Minor faults, where risk is negligible and potential injury is minor, may be monitored unless the risk level changes.
 - Major hazards will be acted upon immediately to make the site or equipment safe.
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3. Play Areas Managed by Brington Parish Council

The play/community areas under the responsibility of Brington Parish Council are:

- Kimbell's Field, Great Brington
 - The Playing Field, Little Brington
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4. Inspections

4.1 Types of Inspections

Three levels of inspections are carried out:

a) Routine Visual Inspection

- Identifies obvious hazards caused by vandalism, misuse, weather conditions, or wear and tear
- Includes cleanliness, surface condition, and obvious missing or broken parts
- Examples include broken equipment, litter, or debris
- Frequency: Weekly

b) Operational Inspection

- More detailed than a routine inspection
- Checks the operation and stability of equipment
- Includes ground clearance, exposed foundations, sharp edges, excessive wear of moving parts, missing parts, and impact-absorbing surfaces
- Frequency: Quarterly

c) Annual Inspection

- A thorough inspection assessing the overall safety of equipment, foundations, and surfaces
- Includes the effects of weathering, corrosion, rot, and any changes due to repairs or replacement parts
- Confirms compliance with relevant safety standards
- Frequency: Annually
- Must be carried out by a certified playground inspector

4.2 Areas Covered by Inspections

Inspections will cover the entire play area, including:

- Play equipment
- Fencing and gates
- Signage

- Benches
 - Trees and foliage
 - Ground conditions (grass, rubber, and other surfaces)
 - Surface hazards (uneven areas, moss, fungal growth)
 - Cleanliness, including bins and litter
 - Identification of any obvious hazards
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5. Reporting

5.1 Inspection Reports

- A written tick list will be completed following each weekly visual inspection
- This will include a basic risk assessment considering the likelihood and severity of potential injury

5.1.1 Scope of Visual Inspections

Routine visual inspections do not include dismantling equipment or checking internal mechanisms.

5.2 Maintenance Checks

- Quarterly operational inspections will include minor repairs where appropriate
- Any significant or costly repairs must receive prior approval from Brington Parish Council

5.3 High-Risk Issues

Any high-risk concerns identified during inspections must be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible for a decision on appropriate action.

5.4 Council Oversight

Inspection findings and outstanding issues will be reported to Brington Parish Council meetings for review and action.

6. Risk/Benefit Assessment

6.1 Managing Risk

Risk assessment aims to reduce risk to an acceptable level rather than eliminate all risk, which is neither possible nor desirable in a play environment.

6.2 Risk Scoring

Risks will be assessed based on:

- Likelihood of an accident occurring
- Severity of potential injury

Risks will be categorised as:

- Low: Monitor or repair ideally within 3 months
 - Medium: Action required within 2 weeks
 - High: Immediate action required; equipment may be closed to prevent use
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7. Corrective Maintenance

7.1 Maintenance Commitment

Brington Parish Council is committed to ensuring that all play equipment is fit for purpose and properly maintained.

7.2 Equipment Modifications

Play equipment must not be modified from its original design or intended use, as this may increase risk and liability.

7.3 Repairs

All repairs must be carried out by suitably qualified and insured persons.

7.4 Equipment Closure

Where equipment needs to be taken out of use, appropriate measures will be implemented to prevent access and ensure public safety.

8. Accidents and Incidents

8.1 Reporting

All accidents and incidents occurring within Brington Parish Council play areas must be reported and recorded using the Accident and Incident Report Form.

8.2 Council Review

All reported accidents and incidents will be reviewed and reported at Brington Parish Council meetings.

Adopted: February 2026

To be reviewed: February 2028
