

DOWNTON  
PARISH COUNCIL



## **Playground Risk Management Policy**

**Adopted January 2019**

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## **Introduction**

This strategy has been prepared to recognise formally the maintenance and inspection regime of Downton Parish Council's play facilities and the assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the authority and how Downton 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 Downton Parish Council's objectives in providing challenging play whilst 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

Downton 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 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 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 Council's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to it.

## **Balancing Risks and Benefits**

Downton Parish Council's will aim to offer play spaces which are 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 children are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

## Playground Inspection Methodology

Downton Parish Council is responsible for 4 areas which will adhere to the guidance set out in this document. The areas include playgrounds and a skate parks. The responsibility for the operational regular inspection of the play will be identified councillors and the Clerk who have been trained in playground inspection.

## 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 Downton Parish Council and the current contractual arrangements which are set until 2020.

| FREQUENCY  | TYPE     | INSPECTOR                         |
|------------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Two weekly | Visual   | Councillors                       |
| Six Months | Detailed | The Playground Inspection Company |
| Bespoke    | Reactive | The Playground Inspection Company |

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.

Downton Parish Council will ensure all inspectors receive the appropriate training to carry out the inspections of play facilities and will also have had the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check.

## 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 bottles, litter, graffiti, equipment misuse. Obvious hazards as described above will be reported to the Clerk for action.

### Operational Inspection – EN1176-

#### 76.2b - POKE & PROD

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 1 – 3 months. 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
- Excessive Wear (of moving parts)

- Structural Integrity
- Inspectors will be trained to RPII Operational inspector's level enabling them to perform an operational inspection.

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

These inspections will be carried out approximately every 6 months. It 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 inspector.

Operational and annual inspections, whether carried out by a Council employee, councillor or a contractor working on behalf of the authority will be carried out and recorded using the same method and system. Diagram 1 depicts the flow of information, starting with the methods for recording inspections, the processes carried out by The Play Inspection Company and the actions and outcomes.

### **Bespoke Inspections**

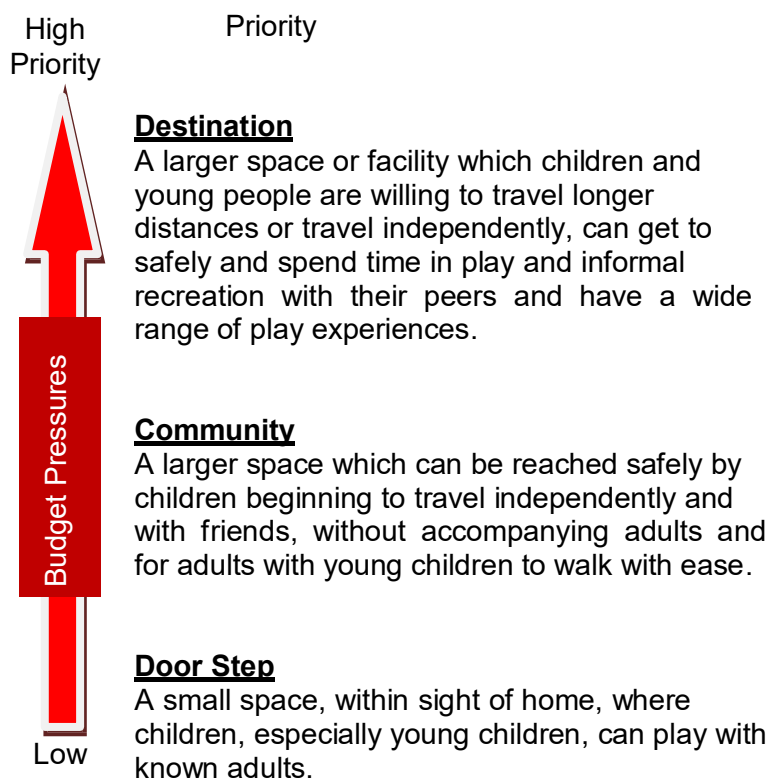
These inspections can be carried out by a Council officer within the team responsible for managing the play and leisure facilities and or independent inspector. The inspection method is carried out using the same inspection system as all other inspections carried out by in house and external contractors. Typically bespoke inspections are a consequence of enquiry from a community member, an accident 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 and Claims**

Downton 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 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 itself against claims and also be an effective management tool for future improvements.

## Downton Parish Council's Priority Approach

Using techniques approved by Play England, the Council will categorise and prioritise the play areas within the Authority's management into the following:



The criteria used to prioritise the play areas will take into account the location of the facility, the play value of the equipment and space along with the popularity of the area. Therefore the resources (inspection regime, budget allocation and Section 106 project proposals) allocated to the management of play and leisure facilities will be indicative of the criteria used in prioritisation. The more popular and well used playgrounds will receive a higher frequency of inspection and a priority in regard to maintenance and repairs.

### Assessing Level of Risk

The level of risk will be assessed by the Council's Officer, councillor or independent inspector with sufficient knowledge.

### 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

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.

| PROBABILITY         | SEVERITY |    |    |    |    |
|---------------------|----------|----|----|----|----|
|                     | 1        | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| <b>1 (Rare)</b>     | 1        | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| <b>2 (Unlikely)</b> | 2        | 4  | 6  | 8  | 10 |
| <b>3 (Possible)</b> | 3        | 6  | 9  | 12 | 15 |
| <b>4 (Likely)</b>   | 4        | 8  | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| <b>5 (Certain)</b>  | 5        | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

| Rating | Risk      | Action   |
|--------|-----------|--|
| 1-9    | Low       | Monitor situation, action required in the event of any deterioration or exceptional circumstances likely to affect risk rating e.g. review of risk assessment following an accident. Action will be required on some situations where indicated. |
| 10-15  | Medium    | Monitor situation, action required as soon as practicable, and within defined time frame, to reduce risk to lowest practicable level e.g. provision of suitable fencing and gates around play area.  |
| 16-24  | High      | Immediate action required to remove risk or reduce to its lowest reasonably practiced level e.g. replacement of severely worn swing chains.  |
| 25     | Immediate | Immediate action required and access by the public must be prevented.  |

| Severity Score | Severity of injury   |
|----------------|--|
| 1<br>Very Low  | No injury likely<br>• Damaged or soiled clothing, minor bruising   |
| 2<br>Slight    | Minor injury<br>• Laceration or bruising requiring first aid only  |
| 3<br>Moderate  | Injury requiring medical intervention<br>• Laceration requiring stitches<br>• Sprain, fracture of small bones of hand or foot                                |
| 4<br>High      | Serious injury including hospitalisation for observation<br>• Concussion<br>• Fracture of long bones of leg/arm<br>• Back/neck injuries<br>• Fractured skull |
| 5<br>Very High | Severe injury involving the potential for permanent disability<br>• Amputation<br>• Loss of sight<br>• Spinal injury<br>• Fatality                           |

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

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Immediate</b> | Action advised to be undertaken immediately and the operator or appropriate representative must be notified from the site by telephone.  |
| <b>High</b>      | May continue in use. Action required should be indicated in the inspection.<br>Remedial action to be carried out within 3 months. Earlier intervention will be carried out if repairs are standard and there is no requirement to order specialised parts. |
| <b>Moderate</b>  | May continue in use until budget is available to undertake the necessary action and/or repairs to form a planned maintenance schedule.   |
| <b>Low</b>       | May continue in use, but should be monitored and may still require remedial action. The necessary action should be indicated in the inspection report where appropriate.   |

## References

Torbay Council Playground Risk Management Policy  
PSS – Playground Inspection Software Provider  
Play England  
Register of Play Inspectors  
RoSPA Safeplay