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LAWFORD PARISH COUNCIL PLAYGROUND POLICY

Introduction

This policy formally recognises Lawford Parish Council's process to reduce risk and provide as safe an environment as possible at their playgrounds located at:

- Riverview Playing Field, Colchester Road, CO11 2BE
- Summers Park, Lawford CO11 2BX
- Lawford Green, next to a little Pumpkins Pre School, The Avenue, Lawford, CO11 2EF
- School Lane, close to Lawford football pitches, Lawford CO11 2HZ
- Waldegrave Way, CO11 2DT

The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of Lawford Parish Council and how the 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. At all times it is to be recognised that in providing challenging play there will be an identifiable acceptable degree of risk. The Parish Council aims to offer a playground which is stimulating with a challenging environment enabling children to explore and develop their abilities. In providing these environments, the Parish Council will manage the level of risk so that users of the play area and its equipment are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

It is the responsibility of the guardian and user to make sure the equipment is used in the correct way and suitable for the children that use the apparatus.

Legal Requirements

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

- Health & Safety at Work etc Act (1974)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (1992)
- Occupiers Liability Act (1957, Revised 1984)
- Consumer Protection Act (1987)
- Unfair Contract Terms Act (1977)
- Children Act (1989)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002)
- Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986)
- Environmental Protection Act (1990)

The Parish Council and its Officers have a duty to take actions that will ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities that are provided by the Parish Council within the parish of Lawford. It will be governed by the rules 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.

Policy

Inspection Frequency & Type

The table below details the frequency of inspections and the inspector responsible for carrying out the on-site inspections.

Inspection Frequency	Inspection Type	Inspector
Fortnightly	Visual	Handyman
Ad hoc	Visual	Councillors
Annual	Annual Detailed	TDC or other external provider
Bespoke	Reactive / Post installation	Playquip or other external provider

All inspections will be recorded on checklists and results of the inspections are sent to the Clerk.

Inspection Type Definitions

- Routine Visual Inspections - Includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti and equipment misuse.
- Annual Inspection - Includes looking at the overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces, the effects of weather, structural integrity, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety as a result of repairs made or added or replacement components.
- Bespoke Inspections - Typically bespoke inspections are a consequence of enquiry from a community member, an accident, in response to an urgent request or to carry out a post installation inspection following the installation of new equipment. Bespoke inspections can also be carried out as a method of verifying and checking existing inspections.

Responsibilities

The Council will undertake to:

- Nominate Councillors to be responsible for monthly inspections of playparks that are in their mapped area.
- Ensure all types of inspections are taking place, reports are filed and identified actions are undertaken in an appropriate timeframe.
- Approve spending on remedial actions.
- Delegate authority to the Chair and Vice Chair to instruct the Clerk to undertake actions to resolve urgent and / or high-risk issues where such action is required before the next meeting.

The Clerk will:

- Ensure fortnightly, ad hoc and annual playground inspections are carried out.
- Ensure all inspection reports are filed and remedial actions carried out
- Upon the Parish Council's instructions, engage a registered playground maintenance company to perform all maintenance repair works (other than minor work that can safely be carried out by the handyman).

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- Instigate action to resolve urgent and / or high-risk issues identified in inspections where such action is required before the next council meeting.
- Report any issues and actions to the Parish Council at their monthly full council meetings.

Nominated Councillors will:

- Perform ad hoc inspections and record any reports from residents.
- Notify the Parish Council as a matter of urgency of any dangerous equipment and if considered necessary take steps to isolate the dangerous equipment with temporary barriers or barricades.

Assessing Level of Risk

Whereas regular visual inspections will aim to identify obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti and equipment misuse, they will not include a detailed risk assessment. Detailed levels of risk will be assessed within the annual inspections by independent inspectors with sufficient knowledge and qualifications.

Most independent inspectors utilise the 5x5 methodology and assign risk as a product of probability and severity. A quantitative risk rating of immediate, high, medium, low or very low is then obtained from an outcome matrix based upon the final score.

Summary of risks, action and time frames

- Very low risk: No action required, monitor.
- Low risk: Monitor for deterioration, action required in some instances.
- Medium risk: Repair as soon as practicable possible, dependent on budget.
- High risk: Repairs to be undertaken as soon as possible.
- Immediate or Unacceptable High-risk: Item to be put out of action immediately and made safe until repairs are complete.

Accidents, Enquiries and Claims

Lawford Parish Council will record all accidents and enquiries relating to its play area and facilities within it. This information will enable the Parish Council to defend itself against claims and be an effective management tool for future improvements.

Reporting Accidents:

Not every accident or incident is serious enough to call the Emergency Services, but they may have an impact on the safety of facilities in the village. Should a child within your care have an accident at the Parish Council's play area, please report it to the Clerk to the Parish Council using the form on the following page:

Policy Implementation Notice

This is the policy statement of: **Lawford Parish Council**

The overall and final responsibility for this policy is that of: **Parish Councillors**

Approved by **Full Council**: 19th February 2024

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to: **The Parish Clerk**

Policy review date: 19th February 2025



PLAYGROUND ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date and Time	
Name of Injured Person	
Age	
Address and Telephone Number:	
Parent / Carer name;	
Address and Telephone Number: (if different to injured person):	
Item or cause of accident:	
Surface:	
Description of accident:	
Weather conditions:	
Clothes and shoes worn:	
Apparent injury:	
Body part:	
Treatment given and time:	
Follow-up treatment and time	
Ambulance called and time:	
Ambulance arrival time:	

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Name and address of hospital or doctor:	
Admitted (Yes/No) Time in hospital (if known):	
Witness to accident (Name, Address, Telephone number)	
Remedial action recommended on site:	
Date of report:	

Please email the completed form to the Parish Clerk at clerk@lawfordpc.org.uk.

Many thanks