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**Burbage Parish Council**

**COVID-19**

**PLAYGROUND RISK ASSESSMENT**

**LOCAL COUNCIL RUN PLAYGROUNDS MANAGING THE COVID-19 RISKS**

The Government has announced that playgrounds and outdoor gyms will reopen from July 4th 2020. The approach to risk assessment will need to place a great emphasis on changing the user’s own behaviour so that they take responsibility for maintaining social distancing and cleanliness.

Burbage Parish Council has been working to pull together all of the available guidance on the management of risk when reopening playgrounds. The processes outlined in this guide should enable us to identify what is needed to reopen the play areas and whether this can be achieved safely.

This risk assessment forms part of the Parish Council’s main risk register. The intention is **reduce the risk to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP)**.

**Limitations**

This risk assessment relates solely to the two play areas adjacent to Seymour Court.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Council has no authority or responsibility for the play area in Bourne Way which is run by an independent management company.

**The Principles**

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify hazards, who might be affected, the likelihood of an event occurring and any measures that the parish council can put in place to reduce the severity. Unfortunately, there is no standard template for risk assessing playgrounds and play areas but the figure below demonstrates a hierarchy of risk reduction measures.

Closure

Hand Washing

Cleaning

Reconfiguration of Area

Signage & Awareness

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***Figure 1; Hierarchy of playground risk mitigations, with most effective at the top***

**2. The Action Plan**

This action plan for re-opening Burbage play areas safely includes:

* Preparing the site for reopening including arrangements for any regular safety/site inspections, cleaning and maintenance. The play equipment was last cleaned on 3rd June 2020[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Carrying out normal Risk Assessment (RA) checks but including managing the additional risks related to Covid-19 for all user groups and contractors/staff.
* The development of a safe management plan for the play area.
* Creating a checklist for keeping the equipment and surrounding area safe including:
* Clearing the area of unnecessary furniture
* Reconfiguration of the area to avoid pinch points
* Encouraging time limited visits
* Managing waste
* Signage
* Inspections
* Cleaning
* Engaging with contractors to discuss the risks and ensure we have copies of external risk assessments.
* Considering PPE and other equipment requirements for staff[[2]](#footnote-2).
* Developing clear and appropriate signage.
* Communicating arrangements with users/parent.
* Publishing guidance for users.

**This action plan is not a definitive guide – there are no minimum standards or criteria except that you must meet the 3 Covid-19 tests (social distancing, personal hygiene and the cleanliness of hard surfaces must be met).**

**Risks change, guidance changes and so our risk assessment must be kept under review and rechecked against any changes to government guidance.**

**3. Risk Assessment Methodology**

Play is important to children’s physical and mental health but playgrounds and play equipment can be hard to keep safe. The space is often crowded, making social distancing hard. The virus spreads easily when people touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth and it can be difficult to keep surfaces clean and disinfected.

Evidence would appear to show age is a significant factor affecting the lethality of Covid-19. It’s not clear whether a particular age group is more or less liable to ‘carry’ the virus.

This Covid-19 risk assessment is looking at specific concerns related to public health which are in addition to normal measures.

**Changing user behaviour is critical to managing the risks associated with Covid-19.**

**Step 1: The key factors**

The Parish is a rural community. There are no high-rise flats and few apartments. The majority of households have gardens and access to the countryside is good so there are some facilities for alternative play.

Play areas encourage social interaction between children and supervising adults from different families. Consequently, there is a risk of transmission of Covid-19 through personal contact and contact with play equipment and ancillaries (e.g. benches, waste bins, entry gates).

We need to consider the individual circumstances of each play area:

* -  **Who does it concern**: Parents/guardians/supervisors, children, Council & maintenance operatives.
* -  **How**: The playground will be in regular daily use.
* -  **Where**: This assessment relates to the two adjoining play areas adjacent to Seymour Court.
* -  **Other matters likely to be of concern**: Picnic tables and benches, rubbish bins, routine cleaning and maintenance.

Little is known about Covid-19. It appears to be highly contagious and affects people of different ages and ethnicity in different ways. Pre-existing health and fitness levels appear to be significant factors. However, it is not always life threatening.

Within the context of this risk assessment. transmission of the virus could be through:

* person to person contact
* contact with contaminated play equipment
* contact with contaminated ancillary equipment

Current social distancing guidelines and high standards of personal hygiene appear to reduce the risk of transmission. . It is understood that a lower level of virus transmission risk exists in outdoor spaces due to increased ventilation and higher levels of ultra violet radiation.

Cleaning protocols and frequency

It is difficult to ensure effective cleaning in this outdoor setting, especially where the equipment encourages play and socialising. The Council will introduce a cleaning routine but users must be aware of the limitations and difficulties of cleaning all surfaces.

There may be some pieces of equipment where it is impossible to ensure cleanliness i.e. enclosed crawl through areas and playhouses and it may be necessary for some enhanced signage or closure.

Waste bins are emptied every two weeks by Wiltshire Council.

Personal Hygiene

* -  Prohibit eating and drinking around the play area
* -  Good signage to promote user responsibility for hand sanitising and washing
* -  Encourage users to bring their own PPE
* -  Encourage users to take their used PPE
* -  Encourage users to take responsibility for leaving the area clean and tidy

Good signage will remind users of the need to maintain personal hygiene including hand sanitising/washing and optionally wearing a mask. It can also remind users to maintain social distancing and emphasise the need to avoid hand to face contact. Currently there’s no requirement to wear masks or other PPE but users may chose to do so.

Contractor Safety and Care

Contractors should be fully briefed and understand the council’s approach to playground maintenance and what to look for during site inspections.

Contractors, either for long term contracts or single pieces of work will also need to provide risk assessments before starting any work.

**Step 2: Risk Assessment for each play area**

See Annex A.

**Step 3: Managing and monitoring**

Once we have established the Risk Rating for our play areas, we will use the chart below to establish whether we are able to reopen the play areas.

Risk Rating & follow-up

The Risk Rating (RR) is the product of the Probability (P) and Impact/severity (I).

The pre-mitigation risk is that which applies if nothing is done to lessen the risk. Mitigation measures are then implemented and the Risk Rating reassessed to give a post mitigation Risk Rating.

The pre and post mitigation Risk Ratings are reviewed against the following table to determine the outcome

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 15 – 25 (Very High) | The play area will not be opened without significantly reducing the risk |
| 10 – 12 (High) | As above |
| 8 – 9 (Moderate) | Able to open the play area but additional measures should be considered |
| 4 – 6 (Low) | Able to open the play area with existing measures |
| 1 – 3 (Very Low) | As above |

Table 1; Risk Ratings and their outcomes

The risk analysis will need to be reviewed should circumstance change (eg following Government guidance).

**Step 5: Publicising our decision**

**Action**

Once mitigation measures have been implemented to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, the Parish Council will reopen the two adjoining Council play areas.

The decision to reopen the play areas will be publicised as widely as practicable. If we have to keep the play area closed or partially closed it is vital to let all stakeholders know why and when this decision will be reviewed.

Note: During the drafting process we have carefully considered points raised in colleagues’ feedback and have consulted the government guidance below.

Resources consulted:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work#outdoors-5-3>

With thanks to Cornwall Association of Local Councils for use of their Risk Assessment template.

SJ Colling

Chairman Burbage Parish Council

**BURBAGE PARISH PLAYGROUND RISK ASSESSMENT**

**ANNEX A TO**

**BURBAGE EMERGENCY PLAN RISK ANALYSIS**

**DATED 5 AUG 20**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SITE LOCATION** | **Both play areas adjacent to Seymour Court** | | |
| **UNDERTAKEN BY** | **Parish Council** | **DATE OF RISK ASSESSMENT** | **5 Aug 2020** |
| **OVERALL RISK RATING** | **12 (pre mitigation)** | **Reduced to** | **8 (post mitigation)** |
| **AGREED ACTIONS:**  **(Open / Close / Partially reopen)** | **Annex B** | **REVIEW DATE** | **To be reviewed at monthly Parish Council Meetings** |

**Instructions:**

1. This assessment applies to all envisaged activities that take place within the boundaries of the play area.
2. If this risk assessment does not cover all of the hazards and existing control measures required relevant to your service, you should add them below at ‘Other risks (please detail)’ and notify the Clerk and/or Service Manager by sending the risk assessment attached to the email.
3. If further controls are necessary, these should be recorded in the ‘Additional controls to reduce risk’ column and a revised lower score given.
4. Please communicate this risk assessment to all staff e.g. via email, team meetings etc evidencing how you do this.
5. Review the risk assessment annually, or after an accident/incident or significant changes to the workplace or working processes.

**Terminology:**

* **Activity** - The use of facility being undertaken.
* **Hazard** - Something with the potential to cause harm. Harm can be physical, chemical, biological or psychological.
* **Control Measures/Mitigation -** Actions taken to prevent hazard being realised. Control measures can include such areas as training, supervision, safe systems of work, maintenance procedures, physical measures such as guarding and personal protective equipment.
* **Probability -** the chances of harm occurring on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being highly unlikely and 5 being highly likely
* **Risk Rating -** Multiply the likelihood figure by the severity figure to get the risk rating after the existing control measures have been considered.
* **Impact** - the level of harm/injury caused by the accident or incident, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being First Aid required and 5 being a fatality.

**Probability (P) × Impact (I) = Risk Rating (RR):**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | P= 1 | P = 2 | P = 3 | P = 4 | P= 5 |
| I = 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I = 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| I = 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| I = 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| I = 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Risk Rating | Outcome |
| 15-25 Very High | The play area will not be opened without significantly reducing risk |
| 10-12 High | As above |
| 8-9 Moderate | Able to open the play area but additional measures should be considered |
| 4-6 Low | Able to open the play area with existing controls |
| 1-3 Very Low | As above |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Probability** | **Impact** |
| 5 | Highly probable | Fatality |
| 4 | Likely | Major Injury |
| 3 | Possible | Hospital treatment |
| 2 | Unlikely | Medical assistance required |
| 1 | Highly unlikely | First Aid required |

RISK ASSESSMENT

Assumptions:

* Most children are not severely affected; but they could pass the infection to a vulnerable person with very serious consequences.
* Recent publication of Public Health England statistics as at early August 2020 indicate that Wiltshire CC area is experiencing very low numbers of new Covid-19 cases but elsewhere in the country, and locally in Swindon, the numbers are rising.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nature of hazard or issue increasing risk of transmission** | **Persons at direct risk** | **Probability x Impact = Risk Rating** | | | **Recommended Control Measures (if RR > 6)** | **Revised risk Rating** | | | **Potential additional controls to reduce risk, where reasonably practical (if RR > 10)** |
| **P** | **I** | **R** | **P** | **I** | **R** |
| **Contamination – from virus present on entry gates[[3]](#footnote-3), benches and picnic tables** | Parents/supervisors | 3 | 4 | 12 | 1. Use handwipes/ sanitiser. 2. Signs requesting handwashing & hand sanitation before entering and after leaving site. 3. Tape off one side of picnic benches to avoid face to face contact. | 2 | 4 | 8 | 1. Regular (weekly) contractor cleaning. 2. Check signs regularly. 3. Remove picnic benches. 4. Check sanitisers |
| Maintenance Operatives |  |  |  |
| Children | 3 | 3 | 9 | As 1. above +  Proper parental supervision. | 1 | 3 | 3 |  |
| **Virus on play equipment** | Parents/ supervisors | 3 | 4 | 12 | General warning signs at entry. | 1 | 4 | 4 | Regular (weekly) contractor cleaning |
|  | Children | 2 | 3 | 6 | Proper parental supervision | 1 | 3 | 3 |  |
| **Contamination from airborne virus due to overcrowding on equipment and in play area** | Children/ Supervisors | 3 | 3 | 9 | 1. Limit number and time on equipment. 2. Parent/Supervisor supervision and social distancing. 3. Promote feedback & incident reporting to Parish Council. | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1. Signs regularly checked. 2. Monitor and close facility, if overcrowding considered excessive and uncontrollable. |
|
| **Virus left on surfaces within enclosed units where may survive for longer periods – e.g. tube slides, tunnels and playhouses** | Children/ Supervisors | 3 | 4 | 9 | 1. Use handwipes/Sanitiser. 2. Signs requesting handwashing & hand sanitation before entering and after leaving site. | 2 | 4 | 8 | 1. Regular cleaning. 2. Signs regularly checked. 3. Preventing use with tape, mesh and/or signage. |
| **Highest Risk** |  |  |  | 12 | **TOTALS** |  |  | 8 |  |

**ANNEX B TO**

**BURBAGE EMERGENCY PLAN RISK ANALYSIS**

**DATED 5 AUG 20**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | |
| **PLAYGROUND COVID-19 ACTION PLAN – ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS**  What additional actions do we need to take to eliminate or mitigate the Covid-19 risks to least Medium or ideally Low Risk Rating? | | | | | |
| **Item** | **Action Required** | Who | When | Done |
| Initial Cleaning | Cleaning and targeted disinfection of all appropriate playground equipment, furniture and gate contact points | Contract | 3 Jun 20 | 3 Jun 20 |
| Initial Reopening Safety Check | Issues raised in council late 2019 early 2020 put on hold pending replacement/upgrade |  |  |  |
| Sanitisers | Installed | CW | 30 Jul 20 | 30 Jul 20 |
| Signage | Produce signs as at Annex C and check as per Annex D. | SC |  |  |
| Cleaning | Regular hose down of play equipment, entry points, ancillary items | Contract | TBD |  |
| Picnic tables | Restrict picnic table usage with tape or remove |  |  |  |
| Monitoring | Regular site monitoring visits to assess user compliance. Check list Annex D. | Councillors | Weekly |  |
| Public Hygiene | Check sanitisers  Check list Annex D | Councillors | Weekly |  |

**SIGNAGE**

**ANNEX C TO**

**BURBAGE EMERGENCY PLAN RISK ANALYSIS**

**DATED 5 AUG 20**

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FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN AND TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE RULES. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

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**Burbage Parish Council**

1. Children using this playground must be accompanied by an adult from the same household or bubble.
2. No food is to be consumed in the playground.
3. Do not enter if you or any member of your party is supposed to be isolating, in quarantine, shielding, is feeling unwell or showing signs of Covid 19 (high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss/change to your sense of smell or taste) .
4. Please use the sanitisers and/or your own hand wipes.
5. PLEASE GET ALL YOUR GROUP TO THOROUGHLY CLEAN THEIR HANDS BEFORE ENTERING THE PLAYGROUND AND WHEN YOU LEAVE.
6. Please be considerate to other playground users – do not monopolise an item of play equipment.
7. Please do not leave any property or rubbish after your visit.

PLEASE LET THE PARISH COUNCIL CLERK KNOW IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE PLAYGROUND, OR IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

**ANNEX D TO**

**BURBAGE EMERGENCY PLAN RISK ANALYSIS**

**DATED 5 AUG 20**

A screenshot of a cell phone

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Additional Covid-19 Measures** |  |
| 7 | Check Sanitisers for content |  |
| 8 | Check Signage |  |
| 9 | Monitor usage/social distancing |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. Matters that must be addressed but will not necessarily delay opening. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As above [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gates should not be removed. Required to secure the area if/when necessary and to keep out roaming dogs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)