Kingskerswell
Parish Council

Playground Inspection Policy

Date: 27.10.2020
Agreed at Full Council Meeting – 26.10.2020
Reviewed and updated June 2025

Introduction

This Playground and Inspection Policy covers the inspection of playgrounds owned and managed by Kingskerswell Parish Council (KKPC), including any relevant record keeping, and maintenance and repairs.

The safety of children in KKPC Playgrounds will not just depend upon the initial design of the site, and the safe selection and use of the equipment. As importantly is the continued management and provision of a high-quality inspection and maintenance programme. This regime is essential to enable local children to play creatively and safely within these playgrounds.

There is no specific legal responsibility to provide inspection and maintenance programmes, but such procedures are recommended by the Department for National Heritage, the British Standards Institute, the Health and Safety Executive, Insurers and ROSPA. KKPC as owners therefore have a legal and moral responsibility and a duty of care to children using our site and therefore must meet the safety expectations of parents and relevant oversight bodies.

Inspections

Inspections should cover the whole of the site and not be just for the equipment. They should also include any pathways, fences, seats, which all need to be checked. All KKPC inspections should fall into line with EN1176, Part 7, which covers the guidance for installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of all playgrounds. In line with this guidance KKPC has a defined system of inspections for its children's playgrounds, which are:

a. **Routine inspection (Weekly)** – These weekly checks look at the equipment's basic condition, especially faults due to recent vandalism. KKPC inspections follow a recordable checklist and are carried out by a ROSPA Level 1 trained inspector. The completed check lists are passed to both the Parish Clerk and the L2 maintenance contractor, after each weekly inspection. The inspection email may include photographs to help with the clear identification of issues;

b. **Operational inspection (Quarterly)** - This is conducted quarterly, and looks in more detail at the equipment, still including all the considerations in the weekly checks like vandalism and minor wear. But the essential difference is the quarterly inspections include testing the structural integrity of all the equipment. These KKPC quarterly inspections are carried about by a ROSPA Level 2 inspector. The information recorded at quarterly inspections is underpinned and informed by all previous weekly inspection records, to ensure a seamless link throughout the year;

c. **Annual inspection (Annually)** - This is conducted by a fully independent contractor, not connected with the KKPC playground operations or the companies conducting either weekly or quarterly inspections. Essentially it looks at vandalism, minor and major wear, long-term structural problems, changes in standard compliance and design practice, and risk assessment. These inspections must always be conducted by organisations that have suitable professional indemnity (at least £5 million) and must be entirely independent. This independence provides a level of quality control on the entire process.

It is recommended by RoSPA that play inspection records be retained for 21 years.

Training

It is essential that staff carrying out the regular inspections should have undertaken some basic training in playground inspections. All contractors should be able to provide evidence of ROSPA certified training, at the correct level.

Maintenance

No inspection programme is worthwhile unless a structure exists for repairing identified faults and replacing parts. KKPC has linked its weekly L1 inspections to the L2 quarterly inspections and the repairs contractor. This enables any maintenance and repairs to be enacted at pace. It is also essential for all repairs to use either the manufacturer's original parts, or those alternatives that have been certified for use.

Manufacturer's Instructions

KKPC should not purchase any new playground equipment without details of inspection and maintenance requirements. A note should be kept of the age of the equipment and a special inspection carried out before the expiry of the warranty.

Surfacing

Surfacing should be carefully checked for its soundness. Ergonomic impact absorbency tests should be considered as part of the annual inspection, as required.

Post-installation Inspections

New playgrounds and equipment should be carefully checked for compliance with specifications and installation procedures before being accepted. Where only a single item is placed on a site, such inspections may be uneconomic, and if so can be carried out as part of the annual inspection, since they will fall within warranty periods if there is anything wrong.

Policy Status and Review

This policy was adopted by the KKPC at a meeting of the full council on 26.10.2020. It will be reviewed regularly by KKPC. Last review date May 2025.