

Oakham Town Council

Re-opening of Playgrounds Risk Assessment

The Government recently announced that Play Parks could be re-opened on 4 July 2020 and subsequently produced guidance offering “practical advice on how these can be reopened and managed effectively to enable their use while minimising the transmission risk of COVID-19”. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managingplaygrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

The guidance includes a requirement to “carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment”. It is made very clear that “Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law”. On that basis, this Risk Assessment takes each of the Key Principles as set out in the guidance and assesses whether or not practical arrangements can be put in place for the Play Areas at Royce’s Recreation Ground, Cutts Close and Willow Crescent.

Key Principle	Government Guidance	Assessment	Control Measure Conclusion
General Maintenance Issues following Lockdown	Ensure equipment is safe to use and that risks from damaged or defective equipment are addressed before opening.	The Council is able to thoroughly check equipment prior to each area being re-opened.	Equipment will be checked by a qualified inspector in all play areas. Should any repairs be deemed necessary these will be carried out asap.
Social Distancing	Put in place measures to support social distancing – 2m or 1m plus risk mitigations. Examples given include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit number of users at any one time • Booking system • Advisory signage 	It is not practically possible for Oakham Town Council to operate a booking system or to monitor and limit users of the facility. The Council can comply with the signage requirements	The onus will be upon users of the facility to ensure they observe social distancing rules. The Council will prominently display guideline notices at both sites. These will contain social distancing advice of 2m and advice that other users should be given space. This notice will also advise people to return later if the play area is busy.
Cleaning and Hygiene	Clean high traffic touch points frequently. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Play Equipment 	It is not practically possible for the Council to ensure users clean the equipment before and	A deep clean has taken place with frequent cleans scheduled monthly. Notices will remind people to use hand sanitizer frequently and to consider wiping down high touch areas before use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating Areas • Refuse Bins In addition, use signage to encourage: • Users to clean equipment before and after use • Use of hand sanitizer and frequent hand washing Where practicable, provide hand sanitizer or hand washing facilities at entry and exit points. 	<p>after use as neither site is monitored/manned. Nor can hand washing facilities be provided at the entry/exit of either site.</p>	
<p>Face Coverings</p>	<p>If possible, a face covering should be worn in enclosed public spaces where social distancing is not possible and where the public may come into contact with people they do not normally meet. (Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly).</p> <p>Play Areas owned by Oakham Town Council do not contain any enclosed spaces. Both sites are entirely outdoor settings where social distancing is easily achievable.</p>	<p>Most of the play area users are young children (many of whom are under 3) who will struggle to wear a face mask consistently and correctly. Oakham Town Council will not recommend that users wear a face mask whilst using play equipment.</p>	<p>The guidelines notice will remind users not to put their mouths on equipment and hands near their faces.</p>
<p>Additional Measures and Communicating with Parents</p>	<p>Promote responsible behaviour by children, parents, carers and guardians. For example, owners and operators should consider putting up signs to make clear to users, parents, guardians and carers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumption of food or drink on play equipment or in the playground area is banned • parents, guardians or carers should dispose of all litter including any used protective wear such as face coverings or gloves properly in litter bins, taking it home where a bin is not provided. 	<p>The Council can comply with the signage requirements.</p>	<p>The guidelines notice will advise users that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unsupervised children are not allowed to use the equipment. • Food and drink should not be consumed in the play areas. • Litter must be properly disposed of or taken home (to include PPE items)

<p>Considering Children with Additional Needs</p>	<p>Take into account the requirements of children with additional needs. Unsupervised children will not be able to use the equipment and therefore the onus can be placed on the accompanying adult to ensure understanding and compliance. The Council is not able to “staff” the play areas.</p>	<p>The supervising adult will need to be responsible for communicating the expectations this risk assessment places on users to all children in their care.</p>	<p>The accompanying adult will also need to ensure they assist/enable children with additional needs to understand and manage these requirements e.g. to maintain social distancing.</p>
<p>Keeping Staff Safe</p>	<p>Consider the risks staff may be exposed to and how these can be mitigated. Staff roles may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning playground equipment/surrounding areas • managing queues of those waiting to use equipment • stewarding equipment to ensure users comply with rules made by the owner/operator 	<p>Oakham Town Council does not have sufficient human resources to ensure play areas are manned and therefore staff members will not be placed at any risk.</p>	<p>Control measures are not required</p>
<p>Increase in the number of cases of the virus locally.</p>		<p>All</p>	<p>The Proper Officer will continue to monitor the local status through updates from Rutland County Council. Should there be an increase in cases locally, the Council will consider this and decide on a way forward. This may mean that additional control measures are needed but the Council reserves the right to close facilities at any time that it sees fit.</p>

Conclusions

Oakham Town Council will open the Recreation Playground from Saturday 4th July 2020, due to recent work carried out on the play equipment it was deemed that this equipment is suitable to return to use by the public. Notices will be highly visible at both sites informing users that the equipment is NOT cleaned by the Council after use and they use it at their own risk. Notices outlining guidelines to be followed as a result of this risk assessment will also be displayed at both sites. This risk assessment will be kept under regular review.