

Playground Inspection Policy

Old Bolingbroke & Hareby Parish Council

Adopted 25/11/20

Review 11/2025

Introduction

1. This Playground and Inspection Policy (PIP) covers the inspection of the playground owned and managed by Old Bolingbroke & Hareby Parish Council (OBPC), including any relevant record keeping, and maintenance and repairs.
2. The safety of children in the OBPC Playground will not just depend upon the initial design of the site, and the safe selection and use of the equipment but also (and as important) is the continued management and provision of a robust inspection and maintenance programme. This regime is essential to enable local children to play creatively and safely within the playground.
3. 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. OBPC 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

4. Inspections should cover the whole of the site, and not be just for the equipment. They should also include any pathways, fences and seats which all need to be checked. All OBPC 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 OBPC has a defined system of inspections for its children's playground, which are:

- a. Routine inspection (Monthly) – These monthly checks look at the equipment's basic condition along with the structural integrity of all the equipment. OBPC inspections follow a recordable checklist and are carried out by a ROSPA/IOSH trained inspector. The completed check lists (attached at Annex A) are passed to the Parish Clerk, after each inspection. The inspection record may include photographs to help with the clear identification of any issues
- b. Annual inspection (Annually) - This is conducted by a fully independent contractor, not connected with the OBPC playground operations or the person conducting monthly inspections. Essentially it looks at 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.

Training

5. It is preferable that anyone/volunteers/competent person carrying out the regular inspections should have undertaken some basic training in playground inspection either through ROSPA or LALC. All contractors should be able to provide evidence of ROSPA certified training, at the correct level.

Maintenance

6. No inspection programme is worthwhile unless a structure exists for repairing identified faults and replacing parts. OBPC standing orders allows the Chairman to authorise necessary maintenance thereby ensuring repairs are 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. Playground maintenance is a standing item for discussion at each Parish Council meeting. Inspections should cover the whole of the site, and not be just for the equipment. Any maintenance should therefore cover access, fencing, hedging, gates, signage, seating and grass areas which may include periodic weed removal.

Manufacturer's Instructions

7. OBPC should not purchase any new playground equipment without details of inspection and maintenance requirements. It should also be noted that the Council should seek at every opportunity prior to installation that all equipment is provided with the best possible guarantees and warranties. Upon completion of any installation the Council should seek to be provided with a final installation inspection for all items of equipment. A note should be kept of the age of the equipment and a special inspection carried out before the expiry of the warranty.

Surfacing

8. Surfacing should be carefully checked for its soundness. Ergonomic impact absorbency tests should be considered as part of the annual inspection, as required or where is reasonably practicable.

Post-installation Inspections

9. New playgrounds and equipment should be carefully checked for compliance with specifications and installation procedures before being accepted in all cases. Any defects that fall within the warranty period should be addressed as soon as possible.

Policy Status and Review

10. This policy was adopted by the OBPC at a meeting of the full council on 26/11/20. It will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation changes.