

# West Wycombe Parish Council Play Policy

“PLAY IS THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD

PLAY IS A VITAL COMPONENT OF GROWING UP

PLAY IS HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP SKILLS, PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL

PLAY PROVIDES CHILDREN WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO TEST OUT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

PLAY GIVES CHILDREN OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTISE AND PREPARE FOR THE OUTDOOR WORLD”

*"THE CHILD SHALL HAVE FULL OPPORTUNITY FOR PLAY AND RECREATION AND SOCIETY AND THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO PROMOTE THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS RIGHT"*

'UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD'

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

TO PROVIDE, WHERE POSSIBLE, CONVENTIONAL PLAY AREAS, ENVIRONMENTAL PLAY AREAS AND COMMUNITY PLAY ACTIVITIES TO PROVIDE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY.

If we are to provide a society in which people live together and care for each other, we must first create a caring and creative atmosphere for children.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

TO ENSURE THE PARISH PLAY FACILITY COMPLIES WITH ALL THE APPROPRIATE BRITISH STANDARDS.

To minimise the risk of accidents and help provide a safer environment for children to enjoy play.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

TO MONITOR, ASSESS AND REVIEW DESIGN, INSTALLATION AND LAYOUT OF THE PLAY AREA AND INVESTIGATE AND TAKE NOTE OF NEW RESEARCH INTO SAFETY STANDARDS.

To be aware that accidents in playgrounds arise from many causes:

- \* inappropriate design and layout of playgrounds
- \* unsuitably designed play equipment
- \* incorrectly installed equipment
- \* inadequately maintained equipment
- \* lack of age - and ability - related equipment
- \* lack of adult supervision
- \* aggressive or dangerous behaviour of children
- \* misuse of equipment
- \* unsuitable clothing worn by children

and modify and update policies as new information, legislation and standards dictate.

#### **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO CARRY OUT ROUTINE WEEKLY AND MONTHLY RECORDED INSPECTIONS OF THE PLAY AREA IN ADDITION TO A FULLY DOCUMENTED CERTIFIED 12 MONTHLY INSPECTION BY AN INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR.

Sites should be visually inspected weekly for superficial defects and faults to equipment in addition to general cleanliness and removal of dangerous objects.

Monthly inspections should be more 'in depth' and cover fences, seats, gates, litter bins in addition to the play equipment and impact absorbing surfaces.

The documented inspections shall be carried out in accordance with current legislation by an independent inspector.

#### **5. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO MONITOR SAFETY BY KEEPING A CENTRAL RECORD OF ALL REPORTED INJURIES AND SERIOUS INCIDENTS ON ITS PLAYGROUNDS.

The information can be taken into account when updating existing play areas and planning new ones.

#### **6. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS TO, AND EXPERIENCE OF, ENVIRONMENTAL PLAY OPPORTUNITIES WHEN DEALING WITH PLANNING APPLICATIONS RELATING TO NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

Environmental play is probably the most valuable and most natural form of play and adults need to understand a child's need to experiment with things around them. Children should be given the chance to challenge and manipulate their environment and failure to provide this experience could result in vandalism as they grow up.

#### **7. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO ENCOURAGE PLAY SCHEMES AND TO PROVIDE, WHERE POSSIBLE, EXPERIENCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

This can be achieved by creating small areas of 'wildland' and providing nature trails, nature reserves/conservation areas etc.

#### **8. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO LIAISE WITH PARENTS, SCHOOLS & CHILDREN AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS WHEN REPLACING OR UPDATING PLAY EQUIPMENT.

Watching children at play and seeking their views on play facilities will be invaluable when planning future play facilities and updating existing play areas. Parents and schools can also prove to be a valuable source of information.

#### **9. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO FORMULATE A FORWARD PLAN AND UPDATE AND AMEND AS NECESSARY AND AS ANY NEW LEGISLATION OR STANDARDS DICTATE.

This will take account of all information gained from consultations with the local community and any accidents/incidents reported.

## **10. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO ENDEAVOUR TO INTRODUCE MORE PLAY PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

Disabled children are simply children with extra needs and they should have access to a play environment which allows them the same opportunities for recreation and creativity as able-bodied children.

They should be given the opportunity to mix and play with able-bodied children and, wherever-possible, have the use of suitable play equipment. Only by giving them the chance to meet and play with children without special needs will they begin to accept each other and help avoid prejudices that can arise as a result of ignorance.

## **11. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO ENDEAVOUR TO MAKE PARENTS AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN AT PLAY AND SEEK THEIR HELP TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEY CAN PLAY.

This can be achieved by the provision of literature for distribution to all households in the parish, which highlights and explains the need and reasons for the following:-

- \* parental/adult supervision in play grounds
- \* prevention of children acting aggressively or dangerously on the equipment
- \* wearing of sensible clothing and shoes (toggles on a hood can become caught on a slide and strangle the child).
- \* community consultation for future play provisions

## **12. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO DESIGNATE ALL PLAYGROUNDS WITHIN THE PARISH AND ALL RECREATION GROUNDS AS AREAS WHERE DOG OWNERS MUST CLEAR UP AFTER THEIR DOGS.

Local authorities have a duty to keep designated areas in their control, including parks and children's playgrounds, as clear of dog faeces as is practicable under part IV of the Environmental Act 1990

## **13. POLICY STATEMENT**

TO MAINTAIN A SITE REGISTER FOR THE PLAY AREA.

To contain:

- \* A copy of the Parish Play Policy
- \* A Site Plan
- \* Full Equipment Details
- \* Documentation of the planning & Development of the Site
- \* Inspection, Maintenance and forward planning programme
- \* Details of Reported Accidents and Serious Incidents

## **SUMMARY**

The Play Policy is designed to take account of all statutory requirements in addition to this Council's commitment to provide safe formal play areas and environmental play opportunities within the confines of its budget facilities.

West Wycombe Parish Council understands and acknowledges the need to:

Consult and liaise with parents, children and schools, before purchasing new equipment and thereby ensure only the type of equipment that will be enjoyed and put to its maximum use will be considered.

Educate parents/guardians to be aware of their responsibility to their charges at play.

Provide more play opportunities for disabled children and bear this in mind when considering the purchase of new equipment.

Install signs, in prominent positions, advising that Play Areas and Recreation Grounds are areas where dog owners must clear up after their dogs.

Update/or replace old and defective equipment.

Recognise the expected 'life' of existing equipment and create a replacement plan.

Maintain a site register and ensure it is kept up to date.

Ensure inspections are carried out as set out in Policy No. 4.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

To enable implementation of the Play Policy, the Parish Council needs to:  
Identify any grants and sponsorship available to assist with costs.

Consider creating a 'replacement fund', which can be added to each year, to enable implementation of Policy Nos. 1. 7. 9. 10 & 11

Ensure awareness of the Play Policy within the Council and throughout the Parish .

Instruct volunteers/staff to carry out weekly and monthly documented inspections.

Acknowledge that the administration and implementation of Policy Nos. 4. 5 & 12 shall be the responsibility of the Clerk.

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Adopted:

West Wycombe Parish Council, 18 Portway Drive, West Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4AU

Tel: 01494 448048

Email: [clerk@westwycombe.org.uk](mailto:clerk@westwycombe.org.uk)