

Wells Town Council Beach Road Children’s Playground

Re-opening of Play Equipment

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-managing-playgrounds-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 COVID-19, 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 in the context of Wells Town Council Beach Road Children’s Playground.

Key Principle	Government Guidance	Assessment	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 equipment was all inspected by PI on 22/6/2020 and no high-risk problems were identified. Daily visual checks continue.	The site can Open
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• Create waiting areas with barriers	The site is a large open site with the equipment well spaced out. Each item of equipment can be approached from different directions and there is plenty of space to allow people to socially distance. It is only on the equipment that it will be difficult to socially distance.	The government public health guidelines are a considerable challenge not only to Wells Town Council but also all operators of these facilities. The Town Council also needs to be aware of its duty of care both to public and its staff. The Town Clerk is therefore recommending that a pragmatic approach with clear information to the public about risks is followed – like

			<p>the approach undertaken for keeping public toilets open.</p> <p>It is not feasible for Wells Town Council to provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Stewards • Arrange a booking system • Relocate equipment for social distancing • Create entrance and exits (the site is open, and these are not needed). <p>Where necessary equipment will be modified to improve social distancing and notices will advise on the safe capacity and ask people to limit the time on each piece of equipment to 20 minutes with only one adult to each child. Signs will advise about keeping at least 1 m plus distance.</p>
Cleaning and Hygiene	<p>Clean high traffic touch points frequently. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Play Equipment • Seating Areas • Refuse Bins <p>In addition, use signage to encourage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users to clean equipment before and after use • Use of hand sanitiser and frequent hand washing 	<p>Covid-19 is spread through contact with infected surfaces so users are to be encouraged to take precautions and some daily cleaning will be of some limited benefit; however, once the first user has been on the equipment it should be considered contaminated. The science seems to suggest that the virus does not live as long outside the body in the open air. The best protection will be sanitisation and washing of hands by users.</p>	<p>It is not feasible for Wells Town Council to provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide hand sanitiser <p>Users will be advised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 14 years only • The maximum number of users will be 2 on any piece of equipment except on the Activity Trail, Climbing Frame and Play Boat where the maximum is 4 users • One family member to accompany one child at all times

	<p>Where practicable, provide hand sanitiser or hand washing facilities at entry and exit points.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please retain 1m plus distance from other users e.g. pushing swings • To enable as many children as possible to use the equipment please limit use to 20 minutes • If you can, wipe down equipment before uses with anti – bacterial wipes or fluid (these are not supplied). • Use of hand sanitiser gel or wipes is advised when using the equipment • When using equipment do not touch face • Consumption of food and drink on or near the equipment is not permitted. • Wash hands as soon as possible after using the equipment • Take all litter home <p>Where possible high traffic touch points will be cleaned once daily.</p>
<p>Face Coverings</p>	<p>If possible, a face covering should be worn in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't 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>The space is not enclosed, and distancing is achievable.</p>	<p>Not Required</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>Control measures will be detailed on signage. The site is large and open with benches and picnic tables away from the equipment. Food will not be allowed on the equipment but will be allowed elsewhere. The site has no bins, all waste is to be taken away.</p>	<p>Good signage and information on the Council website</p>
<p>Considering Children with Additional Needs</p>	<p>Take into account the requirements of children with additional needs.</p>	<p>All children will have to be with an adult and it is the responsibility of the adult to assess the suitability and safety of the equipment for children with additional needs and ensure their safety with regard COVID – 19.</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>Any staff on the site will need to be aware and take appropriate counter measures including suitable PPE.</p>	<p>Advise staff</p>

Conclusions

The government public health guidelines are a considerable challenge not only to Wells Town Council but also all operators of these type of facilities. The Town Council also needs to be aware of its duty of care both to public and its staff.

In addition, due to the size, location and open nature of the playground it is almost impossible to effectively close the site off and prevent people from using it; it is a much more practical approach to open and advise users how to stay safe.

The Town Clerk is therefore recommending that a pragmatic approach with clear information to the public about risks. The decisions are based on the guidance issued by the Association of Play Industries following consultation with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government who issued the original government advice.

Risk Assessments undertaken Greg Hewitt (Town Clerk).

2nd July 2020