

# Playground Policy

May 2025



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy has been prepared to formally recognise the maintenance and inspection regime of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's playground facilities and the assets within these facilities.
- 1.2. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities and how the authority will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks.
- 1.3. Playgrounds by their very nature provide a degree of risk and challenges to the users. The policy will therefore summarise the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's objectives in providing challenging play while identifying and managing an acceptable degree of risk.

## **2. Related documents**

- 2.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Housing Management documentation.
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
  - Grounds Maintenance Contract

## **3. Policy statement**

- 3.1. The policy sets out the methodology the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea will use in managing and maintaining the playgrounds within their control.
- 3.2. The policy will take into account the authority's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to the authority.
- 3.3. Play is essential for the development of each and every child. It is a vital means by which children learn about themselves, their environment and other people. The freedom to explore, to experiment, to interact with peers and to be creative within a safe environment is a necessary ingredient of a child's physical, emotional and intellectual growth.
- 3.4. This policy is concerned with outdoor play equipment where items of equipment are permanently installed in public areas.
- 3.5. Safety will be the priority at every stage in monitoring and maintaining the facilities. RBKC adopts a collaborative approach, engaging with various internal and external teams, and leverages technology platforms, such as SafetyCulture, to support and enhance this process.

#### **4. Legal Context and Guidance**

4.1. This policy will ensure full compliance with relevant legislation, regulatory requirements and best practice to health and safety regarding Electrical Safety. This policy adheres to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1992
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

4.2. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and their staff have a duty to take actions to ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities provided by the authority.

#### **5. Industry Standards and Guidance**

5.1. These standards and Safety Guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered to be good professional working practice. The authority has a duty to recognise their limitations, and that compliance will not guarantee a safe playground.

5.2. EN1176 – Playground Equipment

5.3. EN1176 is the recommended UK Standard. The standard is not retrospective and provides advice on design layout and the inspection of playground equipment.

5.4. Contained within the guidance are the following key safety recommendations:

- Appropriate safety systems must be established by the operator
- No access to be allowed to unsafe equipment or areas (+ signage in UK)
- Records of safety management will be kept by the playground operator
- Effectiveness of safety measures will be assessed annually (a risk assessment and annual inspection)
- Signs provide owner details and emergency service contact points
- Entrances for the emergency services are freely accessible
- Information on accidents is kept
- Staff and users to be safe during maintenance operations

#### **6. Inspection Frequency**

6.1. Industry standards and regulations recommend the inspection frequency of inspections required although high-vandalism or high-use sites may need a more frequent check than that which is specified. A risk assessment will be

undertaken to establish the necessary frequency of inspection for individual sites.

- 6.2. There will be a three-tier inspection regime in place for all playgrounds; these will normally consist of:
- 6.3. Routine Visual inspections
- 6.4. Identification of obvious hazards resulting from vandalism, use or weather conditions will be recorded day to day by the Caretaker incidental to site visits. Caretakers are also expected to report hazards observed via the 'Issues Form' on the SafetyCulture application.
- 6.5. Every month or as recommended by a suitably qualified inspector ((Kompan or SafePlay). Checks operation, stability and wear and tear of the equipment etc.
- 6.6. Annual Inspection
- 6.7. Carried out by an additional independent third-party qualified inspector. Checks operation and stability of the equipment, wear and tear, compliance with current standards and overall levels of safety for the area.
- 6.8. Post-installation inspections
- 6.9. These will be carried out immediately after installation on new or refurbished sites, preferably prior being made open to the public, and is carried out by an independent organisation with appropriately trained inspectors.

## **7. Playground list**

- 7.1. The authority is responsible for 41 playgrounds that will adhere to the guidance set out in this document.
- 7.2. Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of playgrounds and locations.

## **8. Inspections**

- 8.1. It is essential that establishments have effective monitoring, inspection and maintenance programmes for all play areas.
- 8.2. All issues discovered will be rated using risk assessment matrix. If equipment or fixtures are found to be in need of repair they must be removed, replaced or repaired (Dependant on risk rating using risk assessment matrix – all repairs classed as high/very high-risk rating, will require immediate repair or immobilising as stated in 8.4).
- 8.3. Any issues which are classed as medium would be raised for repair to be actioned as soon as possible. Low risk issues would be assessed on a case-by-case basis and raised as deemed necessary.

- 8.4. If based on the risk assessment it is impractical, or not possible, to fix the equipment immediately steps must be taken to ensure that it presents no danger by immobilisation or establishing protective fencing around it.
- 8.5. All inspections and maintenance programmes will cover the whole play area and not just the play equipment or the impact absorbing surface.
- 8.6. Fences, gates, seating and open areas of play within the boundary of the play site will also be assessed. Equipment and its components need to be inspected and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions at a frequency not less than that given by the manufacturer.
- 8.7. It is RBKC Housing Management policy that all their establishments adopt the hierarchy of inspection as recommended in BS EN 1176 - Part 7. Adopting this standard will enable the establishment to identify hazards which require remedial action and to assess the overall condition of sites and equipment.
- 8.8. A visual inspection is carried out and high-risk issues discovered are reported immediately to HM Estate Environmental Services.
- 8.9. Following monthly inspections carried out by the contractor, an operational inspection report is generated.
- 8.10. The responsibility for the monthly operational regular inspection of the playground facilities will be carried out by an industry recognised qualified contractor. The annual inspection will be carried out by an additional third-party qualified inspector with full detailed inspection report compiled.
- 8.11. The responsibility for litter picking and visual inspections of the playgrounds of the play and leisure facilities is by the estates caretaking team.
- 8.12. This section of the strategy will identify the authority's methodology in managing the authority's assets following: Inspections Frequency and Type Inspection Type Definitions Assessing the Level of Risk Summary of Risks.
- 8.13. The table below details the frequency of inspections and the inspector responsible for carrying out the on-site inspections.

Frequency of Inspection	Inspection Type	Details	Responsible person
Weekly	Visual	This inspection is a visual check to ensure playground is free of litter & debris. Obvious high-risk factors that affect the equipment/safety are reported	Caretakers

Monthly	Operational	This inspection is detailed and includes a risk assessment.	Contractor (Kompan / SafePlay)
Annual	Annual Detailed	This inspection is detailed and in-depth, including in depth risk assessment.	RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)
Bespoke	Reactive	Inspection following incident/issue reported to RBKC.	Caretaker / Senior Caretaker

- 8.14. Monthly and bespoke inspections will be carried out on a portable device where the results of the inspections are fed direct into SafetyCulture. For the purpose of data protection, the inspection findings are stored securely and cannot be tampered with.
- 8.15. Within SafetyCulture, any issues/risks that are classified as medium, high, and very high will require an action to be raised within the system. This would then be reviewed by the Grounds Maintenance Contract Officer and will be actioned as required.
- 8.16. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea will ensure all inspectors receive the appropriate training to carry out the inspections of play and leisure facilities.
- 8.17. Local estates policy may require certain playgrounds to be closed and secured (e.g. to mitigate anti-social behaviour) outside of Daylight Hours. HM Estate Caretaking Staff, Grounds Maintenance Contractors and those carrying out inspections are able to Lock and Unlock playgrounds as required.

## 9. Inspection Type - Definitions

- 9.1. Routine Visual Inspections – Includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti, equipment misuse.
- 9.2. Operational Inspection – Operational Inspections provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces especially for wear including:
- Check repairs carried out by others
  - Rust and rot of bearings
  - Cleanliness
  - Equipment Ground Clearance
  - Exposed Foundations
  - Sharp Edges

- Missing Parts
  - Excessive Wear (of moving parts)
  - Structural Integrity
- 9.3. Operational Inspectors will be trained to RPII Operational inspector's level enabling them to perform an operational inspection.
- 9.4. Annual Main Inspection – These inspections will be carried out every 12-month assessing the overall safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces the effects of weather, evidence of rotting or corrosion and any change in the level of safety as a result of repairs made or added or replacement components.
- 9.5. The annual inspections are to be carried out by an independent third-party inspector. Operational and annual inspections will be inspected and recorded using the same method and system.
- 9.6. Bespoke Inspections - These inspections can be carried out by an HM Estate Environmental Services officer within the team responsible for managing the play and leisure facilities and / or a Health and Safety Officer from the Council and / or an independent inspector.
- 9.7. Typically, bespoke inspections are a consequence of enquiry from a community member, an accident in a play facility, in response to an urgent request or to carry out a post installation inspection following the installation of new equipment.
- 9.8. Following a bespoke inspection HM Estate Environmental Services can decide the action required to maintain safety of the playground. This is where it is not possible to repair or replace immediately and this requires the equipment to be closed and sealed from use.
- 9.9. Bespoke inspections are also carried out as a method of verifying and checking existing inspections.

## **10. Reporting**

- 10.1. All inspection reports will be logged on SafetyCulture and can be reviewed by HM Estates and Environmental staff when necessary.
- 10.2. Any follow up actions which derive from the inspection reports will be actioned dependant on risk rating (medium, high, and very high will require immediate attention, with high and very high risk rated reports involving immediate immobilisation).
- 10.3. In depth Annual Reports are sent yearly from a 3rd party inspection company to HM Estate Environmental Services.

## **11. Records Management**

- 11.1. HM Estate Environmental Services will record all accidents and enquires relating to the play areas and facilities within them. The details of the enquiry, complaint or accident will be recorded with the Health and Safety Team.
- 11.2. Recording inspections and repairs will enable RBKC to illustrate a clear chain of information from the inspection, the associated risk, details of works and repairs carried out and any information related to the inspection or/and repair. This will be listed within SafetyCulture stating all relevant actions derived from the incident report.
- 11.3. This information will be an effective management tool for future improvements

## **12. Equalities statement**

- 12.1. The Council is committed to promoting fair and equal access to services and equal opportunities in employment, the procurement of goods and as a community leader. The Council's policies, procedures and day to day practices have been established to promote an environment which is free from unlawful and unfair discrimination, while valuing the diversity of all people.
- 12.2. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability and age is not acceptable: the Council will take action to ensure no person using the council's premises or services receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be justified. The Council will tackle inequality, treat all people with dignity and respect and continue to work to improve services for all service users.

## **13. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018**

- 13.1. As a directorate of RBKC, Housing Management shares the commitment to ensure that all data is:
  - Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
  - Collected for a specific and legitimate purpose and not used for anything other than this stated purpose, or as provided for in our privacy and fair processing notices
  - Relevant and limited to whatever the requirements are for which the data is processed
  - Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date. Any identified inaccuracies will be amended or removed without undue delay
  - Stored for as long as required, as specified within RBKC's Records Retention policy

- Secured with appropriate solutions, which protect the data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction or damage.

13.2. For further information about the Council's commitment to GDPR, please see the Council's website at [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk).

#### **14. Compliance, monitoring & review**

14.1. This policy will be reviewed every five years, or when legislative or regulatory changes take place that could affect it. The next review will take place by: May 2030

14.2. Playground equipment list (Appendix 1) to be updated every six months by the HM Estate Environmental Services

#### **15. Appendices**

15.1. Appendix 1 – Playground list with addresses

## Appendix 1 – Playground list with addresses

Playground	Postcode	Access
Cremorne Playground (bowling Green House)	SW10 0DE	Open
Cremorne Playground(Riley House)	SW10 0DE	Open
World's End Estate (pitch)	SW10 0DS	Open
World's End Estate (lower gardens playground)	SW10 0DS	Open
Worlds End Estate (upper garden playground Level	SW10 0DS	Resident Only
Worlds End Estate (upper garden playground Level	SW10 0DS	Resident Only
Hortensia House playground	SW10 0QP	Open
Wiltshire Close Estate Play area	SW3 2NX	Open
Thomas More Outside Gym	SW3 5AJ	Open
Chelsea Manor Court Estate Play Area	SW3 5SA	Open
Manchester Drive playground	W10 5BH	Resident Only
Octavia House	W10 5BH	Resident Only
Kensal House MUGA	W10 5BQ	Resident Only
Kensal New Town MUGA	W10 5DZ	Open
Kensal New Town playground	W10 5DZ	Open
Kensal New Town playground	W10 5ED	Resident Only
Swinbrook Estate (site 1)	W10 5GJ	Open
Swinbrook Estate (site 2)	W10 5GJ	Open
Trellick Tower	W10 5PA	Open
375 Portobello Road	W10 5SL	Resident Only
Oxford Gardens Estate	W10 5UG	Resident Only
Reymede Tower Playground	W10 6BG	Open
Treverton Estate playground	W10 6BG	Open
Treverton Estate MUGA	W10 6BG	Open
Balfour of Burleigh (MUGA)	W10 6ED	Open
Balfour of Burleigh (Playground)	W10 6ED	Open
Silchester West Playground	W10 6UD	Open
Clydesdale House	W11 1ED	Resident Only
Convent Estate	W11 1NL	Resident Only
Moreland & Talbot Estate MUGA	W11 1TZ	Open
Moreland & Talbot Estate playground 1	W11 1TZ	Open
Moreland & Talbot Estate playground 2	W11 1TZ	Open
Lancaster West Estate (finger Garden Playground)	W11 1WD	Open
Portobello Court Estate	W11 2DG	Open
Longlands Court Playground	W11 2DZ	Open
Henry Dickens Court Playground and MUGA	W11 4DS	Open
Verity Close Play area	W11 4HE	Open
Allom and Barlow Estate	W11 4JJ	Resident Only
Nottingwood House Estate	W11 4JQ	Resident Only
Sheffield Terrace Playground	W8 7NB	Resident Only