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## Local Code of Practice

### Play Equipment including Fixed Equipment in Playgrounds

#### Section 38

(Version 2.00 – March 2019)

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#### STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, schools must make sure that:

- All play equipment is maintained, inspected and tested.
- The set up and use of play equipment is the subject of risk assessment and controls in place to reduce the risk of injury to as low as is reasonable practicable.
- Where required, appropriate supervision is in place to monitor the use of the play equipment.

#### SCOPE:

This Local Code of Practice (LCoP) applies to:

- All managers including head teachers referred to as managers herein in LBB maintained schools.
- All employees of Barnet Borough Council.
- All contractors, agency staff, volunteers and temporary workers working on behalf of the Council
- All visitors to council premises (members of public, pupils etc.)

## Issue Control

This Local Code of Practice is issued and managed by the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team.

Issue		Revision		
Number	Date	Number	Date	Amendments
Version 1.00	2003			
Version 2.00	March 2019			
<b>Review Schedule</b>				
Review Conducted		Next Review Date		

This LCoP should be read in conjunction with the London Borough of Barnet (LBB) Policies listed below in relation to LBB employees.

- Part C – Section 1 – Management of Health and Safety

These can be found by clicking on this link <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/www/working-children-barnet/information-schools/health-and-safety-schools/health-and-safety>

**Note, these policies are for the exclusive user of London Borough of Barnet employees only**

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## **1. Responsibilities**

### **Level 1 Managers/Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring:**

- 1.1. The design, selection, installation, maintenance and use of play equipment are subject of a risk assessment.
- 1.2. Construction and installation of play equipment is in accordance with legislation and industry and British/European standards.

### **Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with this LCoP and must:**

- 1.3. Carry out a risk assessment on the design, selection, installation, maintenance and use of play equipment in accordance with SWP Risk Assessment.
- 1.4. Play equipment is maintained and inspected in accordance with legislation, industry guidance and the SWP Work Equipment.
- 1.5. Controls are in place for the safe use of play equipment including appropriate supervision in accordance with industry guidance, consideration must also be given to weather conditions.
- 1.6. Report any incidents in accordance with SWP Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation.
- 1.7. Staff that set up and monitor the use of play equipment are competent to do so.
- 1.8. First aid arrangements are in place in accordance with SWP First Aid at Work.

### **Employees must:**

- 1.9. Set up play equipment in accordance with risk assessment and industry guidance.
- 1.10. Report any incidents in accordance with SWP Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation.
- 1.11. Supervise the use of play equipment in accordance with training and industry guidance.

## **2. Introduction**

Play is an essential part of every child's life. It provides the mechanism for children to explore the world around them and the medium through which skills are developed and practiced.

Risk taking and challenge have an especially important role in children's play and development.

Well designed, supervised and maintained play grounds and play equipment provides an additional stimulus for children and gives them an opportunity to improve their motor skills and test their physical abilities in a controlled and supervised environment.

Play equipment can range from

- Inflatable devices (bouncy castles);
- Climbing frames;
- Swings/slides;
- Toys.

### **3. Play Equipment Standards**

- BS EN 1176: Playground Equipment (11 Parts)
- BS EN 1177: Impact Absorbing Playground Surfacing
- BS EN 15312: Free access multi-sports equipment

The European Standards are not retrospective or a legal requirement but they represent good practice. However, it does **not** mean that older facilities, constructed to previous standards are no longer safe.

### **4. What You Need to Do**

- Ensure that playgrounds and play equipment are appropriately sited and designed
- Ensure that new equipment/safety surfaces are designed and installed to the appropriate standards
- Ensure that where any new equipment/safety surface is installed, appropriate certification and documentation is obtained
- Ensure that risks associated with play activities are assessed and that control measures are adopted
- Ensure that there is appropriate levels of supervision during play periods
- Ensure that all play grounds and play equipment is regularly inspected and maintained

### **5. Design Considerations**

Designing for play is an ongoing process. Successful play spaces are not simply ordered from a catalogue, put in the ground and left. They require careful thought and planning, continuing care and maintenance.

When new play equipment is to be purchased or playgrounds refurbished, an appropriate procurement processes should be adopted to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation and good practice standards.

Involvement of a professional contractor/designer experienced in designing play spaces is critical.

When procuring equipment and/or services, establishments must undertake adequate checks to ensure the competency of those to be hired.

Further information can be found in the Play England document: Making Space for Play.

### **6. Equipment Selection**

Children really enjoy using play equipment and all the challenges it offers. Playground equipment is particularly good at providing for more active play, including movement such as climbing, swinging, sliding and rotating.

All new equipment should comply with British Standards European Norm specification and guidance for play equipment.

Equipment manufacturers can advise on the best types of equipment for different play experiences.

The Association of Play Industries (API) is the trade association of equipment suppliers and manufacturers. Members of the API have been checked for reliability and offer a wide variety of types of products, as well as design advice.

## **7. Surfacing**

Impact absorbent surfacing (safety surfacing) can be provided in a variety of materials. Where used the depth of material must comply with the regulations relating to the critical fall height, and this must be considered in relation to the maximum height of the equipment.

Although impact absorbing surfaces cannot prevent accidents they may reduce the level of injury. The type of surface under play equipment is a risk factor which must be considered when providing play equipment.

A surface with test requirements is not required for low level play equipment items, less than 600mm fall height, that do not introduce a 'forced movement' on the user. Items with higher fall heights or those producing 'forced movement' still require a tested surface to reduce life threatening head injuries to a child.

**The extent of surfacing around static equipment is dependent on the fall height of the equipment. For example, where the fall height is 2.0 metres surfacing should extend 1.83 metres.**

**A different calculation applies for moving equipment and advice should be sought from the independent competent person carrying out annual inspection and maintenance.**

## **8. Installation Documentation**

Equipment manufacturers/suppliers must submit documentary evidence of compliance with BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.

Where equipment is unable to meet a standard, an explanation of acceptability or evidence of third party testing by a recognised body or a risk assessment should be provided.

Appropriate test certificates should be obtained by the school indicating that the surfacing meets the impact absorbency requirements for the equipment to be used.

The installer should provide written confirmation that the equipment and surfacing have been installed to the manufacturer's instructions and to the

relevant standard where appropriate

Where considered necessary, a post-installation inspection, including indicative surfacing tests, should be carried out by RoSPA or other appropriate body.

## **9. Playground Furniture**

Appropriate ancillary items, such as gates, fences, litter bins and seating if provided should be constructed and installed to apply to the requirements of BS EN 1176.

Cluttered play areas cause supervisory and accident problems for schools and the installation of any ancillary equipment should be an integral part of an overall plan. Ancillary equipment should not restrict the statutory recommended open play areas or their safety run-off zones.

Where practicable, the space beyond playgrounds and their safe run-off zones should be considered for furniture and equipment locations.

## **10. Ancillary Play Equipment**

In some play ground environments, establishments may have additional features such as sand pits, trampolines or skateboarding areas.

Similarly, schools may use inflatable equipment, either their own or via hire and if this is the case it must be ensured that the equipment is used in line with the appropriate guidance and operated and supervised by suitably competent persons at all time.

Further advice and guidance can be found at the end of this document.

## **11. Weed Control/Use of Chemicals and Pesticides**

This might be necessary to reduce trip hazards and prevent damage to surfaces. Any weed control should be carried where possible at the beginning of the school holidays. Springtime would be the time of year when this would be likely to be most effective but if weed growth makes the area hazardous further control may be necessary.

Spraying should only be undertaken by the site manager if he/she has been adequately trained and certificated.

## **12. Risk Assessment**

The design, installation, use and maintenance of playgrounds and equipment should be subject to a risk assessment. This should identify hazards and the necessary measures necessary to control risk to a reasonably practicable level.

Typical hazards to consider will be:

- Slips, trips and falls associated with equipment use
- Use of equipment by children with special needs
- Damaged or faulty equipment and safety surface
- Inadequate or poor levels of supervision
- Inclement weather
- Older equipment/use of second-hand equipment
- Poor maintenance and inspection regimes
- Use of equipment by inappropriate age groups
- Use of equipment by large numbers of children
- Children wearing inappropriate clothing

### **13. Supervision**

The safe usage of equipment provided for the physical development of pupils relies on adequate arrangements for supervision and control being established and followed within the school.

Supervising staff must be familiar with the equipment, the rules for its use and the levels of response which may reasonably be expected from children in its use.

The number of persons required to supervise should be determined by the risk assessment. As a general rule, the younger the children the greater the level of supervision required.

The more hazardous the equipment the greater the level of supervision required. Generally the risk of injury increases with the increasing fall height of the equipment

Equipment requiring close supervision should only be provided if it is possible to provide adequate supervision for it on a regular basis. This may have significant staffing implications. An example of equipment requiring close supervision is overhead hand ladders or “monkey bars”.

Pupils must only be allowed to use the equipment when playground supervision is provided in the area in which the equipment is located.

Pupils using the equipment must wear suitable footwear and clothing. Pupils should be shown the correct usage of the equipment.

### **14. Unauthorised Use**

It is possible that parents bringing their children to school or waiting to collect their children in the afternoons will allow younger brothers and sisters to play on the equipment although it is not suitable for their age group.

If an accident occurs a claim will be likely. The use of the equipment by children other than those who attend the school should be strongly discouraged. Sign(s) should be displayed in a prominent position near the play equipment stating that it is provided solely for the use of the children who attend the school under the supervision of their teachers.



## 15. Maintenance

BS EN 1176-1 requires that the equipment and its components should be inspected and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions at a frequency not less than that stated by the manufacturer.

**Daily visual inspection** by supervising staff prior to use should include looking for evidence of vandalism/damage to equipment or surfaces. The area around equipment should also be checked to ensure it is clear of glass, animal faeces, litter etc.

**Weekly Inspection** by a nominated person should be a checklist provided by the equipment supplier or the body undertaking the annual inspection. It should be carried out by a competent person on the school staff who has received appropriate training.

The **annual inspection** should be undertaken at intervals, not exceeding 12 months. It should be carried out by an independent and competent specialist. It should be carried out in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

## 16. Records

Inspection record sheets and records of work actioned as a result of them should be kept for the life of the equipment. They should include date the work was carried out and the reasons for it.

Records of annual inspections by the play equipment inspector should be kept during the life of the equipment as they will be required if a claim is made following an accident.

## 17. Repairs

Faults identified during the inspection should be rectified immediately if they are hazardous. If this is not possible then the equipment should be taken out of use until such time as it has been made safe.

Hazardous equipment which is beyond economic repair must be taken out of use immediately, appropriately signed and be removed from the site and safely disposed of as soon as possible. When it is necessary to remove equipment from the site the ground underneath must be made good afterwards.

When repairs are required, always use the manufacturer's correct replacement parts or provide parts of equivalent or better quality. If the original manufacturer no longer exists, obtain advice on suitable replacement parts from a play equipment inspector.

## 18. Further Information and Guidance

The Children's Play Information Service: [www.ncb.org.uk/cpis](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cpis)

Association of Play Industries <http://www.api-play.org>

Play England: [www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents:  
[www.rosipa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/playsafety/default.aspx](http://www.rosipa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/playsafety/default.aspx)

Health and Safety Executive Guidance Document [HSG175 Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks](#);

[PIPA scheme for Inflatable Play Equipment](#) (not pools) and the tagging and testing of devices. Administered by the Performance Textile Industry in partnership with the HSE; Health and Safety Executive Guidance Document

[HSG179 Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools](#);

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents guidance for [Trampolines Guidance for Commercial Users](#)

British Gymnastics; [Trampoline](#)

British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (baalpe) Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport;