**East Herts Council**

**Risk Assessment**

**(July 2020)**

# (Reopening Play Areas)

| Assessment carried out by: | Service: | Date carried out: | Date of Review: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Robert Allwood Leisure and Parks Development Officer | Operations Leisure and Parks | 2 July 2020 | July 2021 |

| **What is being assessed?**  (For example the workplaces/an activity/use of equipment/conditions) *delete as appropriate* | **How was the assessment done?**  (For example desktop exercise, site visit in consultation with employees, managers, safety representatives? | **Type of assessment** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The reopening of play areas/playgrounds across the district after lockdown due to COVID-19 | Desktop exercise  New guidance issued from the Government 29/06/20 | **Dynamic Risk Assessment** |

| **(A)**  **What are the hazards?** | **(B)**  **Who might be harmed, and how?** | **(C)**  **What controls are currently in place to manage the risks?** | **(D)**  **Are further controls required to control the risk?** | **(E)**  **Person(s) responsible for taking action.** | **(F)**  **Date action completed.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Transmission in Play Areas (over 60 play areas)**   * Close contact between people * Contact with contaminated equipment | Public Contractors   * Close contact with other users leading to the spread of the virus * Physical contact with equipment which has previously been touched by an infected person leading to the spread of the virus | At the time of writing this risk assessment the play areas are closed.  Government guidance issued 29/06/20 on how to safely reopen and manage play areas.  Guidance has been reviewed to determine which of the measures outlined by the government are practically deliverable for East Herts Council Play Areas.  All play areas are already categorised as either EPA P1 or P2 meaning that they are cleaned as regularly as required by the contractor to ensure they do not fall below a grade B (predominantly free from litter) within either ½ day for P1 or 1 day for P2.  This includes emptying litter bins within play areas when full.  Litter bins including those outside play areas are routinely emptied twice a week on Mondays and Fridays (summer) and once a week on Mondays (winter) with the exception of high usage parks; Hartham, Thorley Wedge, Castle Grounds and Park, Grange Paddocks which are emptied daily.  Play equipment is spaced sufficiently apart to comply with existing standard recommendations (BSEN 1176) that minimise clashes between users launching from individual items and allows for safe movement between items. This spacing should help to facilitate social distancing if visitors abide by the recommended max number of users per site.  All play areas have two access points to minimise the potential for bullying by ensuring young people have an escape route. This should help to minimise congestion as users access and leave the site. | **Signage (agreed and ordered)**  The signage will:   * Inform users on how to use the play area safely * Requests that no more than 1 adult accompany each child from the same household. * The number of users per piece of equipment – this is one per piece of equipment * Maximum number of users that should be within the play area at one time – this is based on the number of pieces of equipment with an extra buffer to promote social distancing * Requests that users coming into the play area give way to those exiting before trying to enter. * Request that users wait outside the play area is the play area has the maximum user numbers already * The Council does not have sufficient resources to employ or enforce a booking system on 60+ equipped play areas * Outline the council’s position on the cleaning of equipment including residents bringing their own hand santisers and wipes. * Users will be made aware that some of the equipment will be put out of action due to the design not allowing for users to clean it effectively such as net climbers, or where one user cannot use it whilst socially distanced. The middle swing seat in a bank of three may therefore be removed.   **Cleaning and Disinfecting**  The play area has a regular schedule of litter picking currently within the grounds maintenance contract but this does not include cleansing of individual equipment other than to clear obvious contamination such as sticky food, paint, chewing gum etc during scheduled routine safety inspections.  It would not be reasonable or practical to introduce a cleansing regime to disinfect equipment on 60+ play areas throughout the day even if restricted to that equipment which presented clear touch points.  EHC encourages users to bring their own wipes and clean any high contact points that they are concerned about such as handles and gates.  EHC will not be providing hand sanitizer. Experience from other authorities providing dog waste bags on site has been that these are routinely removed on bulk from site by local residents. The provision of secure and robust pedal operated stainless steel disinfectant dispensers would be prohibitively expensive to install.  EHC will continue to monitor the current waste and refuse collection schedule of the play areas and increase this if necessary to minimise any potential contamination from discarded food wrappers.  Users will be encouraged not to bring food or drink into the play space and to take any rubbish away to dispose of at home if litter bins are full due to the increased volume of open space use during the Covid crisis.  **User Numbers**  Unfenced play areas will have no reductions in users due to their being greater space around the play spaces  Fenced NEAPs (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)  will be the max number of pieces of equipment minus 5  Fenced LEAPs (Local Equipped Area for Play)  will be the max number of pieces of equipment minus 3  Fenced LAPs (Local Area for Play)  will have lighter use and the max users will be the total number of pieces of equipment  **Protecting staff and contractors**  Glendale and the Council have made separate risk assessments relating to working in public spaces during the Covid 19 crisis. These ensure that all staff are provided with sufficient PPE to clean their hands regularly and, if necessary to wear disposable gloves whilst touching potentially contaminated surfaces. Whilst masks are available, staff will consider the negative impact of wearing these on young children whilst carrying out play area inspections. Play area inspections where possible will be timed to take place when less users are present. | Leisure and Parks Officers  Glendale Public | Pre-opening aim Saturday 10th July 2020 then ongoing review |
| **Transmission at:**  **Yalp Goal Wall** | Public  Contractors   * Close contact with other users leading to the spread of the virus * Physical contact with equipment which has previously been touched by an infected person leading to the spread of the virus | At the time of writing this risk assessment the goal wall has been switched off to deter usage.  Government guidance issued 29/06/20 on how to safely reopen and manage play areas.  Guidance has been is reviewed to determine which of the measures outlined by the government are practically deliverable for East Herts Council Play areas. | **Signage**  The signage will:   * Inform users on how to use the play area safely * Requests that no more than 1 adult accompany children * Maximum number of users for this piece of equipment is no more than 4 – the Yalp Goal Wall has games for up to 4 players and the area of play is 200m2. This provides 4 users suitable space to play. * Requests that users coming into the area of play allow those exiting to do so before entering area of play * Request that users wait outside the area of play while the goal wall is in use * Outline the council’s position on the cleaning of equipment   **Cleaning and Disinfecting**  The play area has a regular schedule of cleansing currently within the grounds maintenance contract.  This will not be increased as this will require operatives to constantly clean the play area which neither physically nor financially possible.  EHC encourages users to bring their own wipes and clean any high contact points that they are concerned about such as handles and gates.  EHC will continue to monitor the current waste and refuse collection schedule of the play areas and increase this if necessary | Leisure and Parks Officers  Glendale Public | Pre-opening aim Saturday 10th July 2020 then ongoing review |
| **Transmission from Interactive Play Equipment at Grange Paddocks** | Public  Contractors   * Close contact with other users leading to the spread of the virus * Physical contact with equipment which has previously been touched by an infected person leading to the spread of the virus | At the time of writing this risk assessment the play area is switched off to deter usage.  Government guidance issued 29/06/20 on how to safely reopen and manage play areas.  Guidance has been is reviewed to determine which of the measures outlined by the government are practically deliverable for East Herts Council Play areas. | **Signage will include:**  That this is a 2 user piece of equipment which requires two users to be within 2m of each other – for this reason the equipment shall remain switched off. | Leisure and Parks Officers  Glendale Public | Pre-opening aim Saturday 10th July 2020 then ongoing review |

## -Method Statement-

**How was the risk assessment done?**

Use the following guidance in Five steps to risk assessment ([www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)) to help you prepare you risk assessment.

Please use this section to record your risk assessment process

1. To identify the hazards, the following factors were taken into consideration:

Government guidance on play areas and outdoor gyms – 29/06/20

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms" \o "Gov.uk website - Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms COVID-19)

Copies of all service risk assessments must be sent to the Health and Safety Officer.

Appendix 1 – Play area signage

Appendix 2 – Government guidance on safely opening outdoor gyms and play areas

[Gov Guidance for Play Areas 29.06.20.docx](file:///C:\Users\peter.dickinson\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\NXL4PFTF\Gov%20Guidance%20for%20Play%20Areas%2029.06.20.docx)