

East Hagbourne Sport & Recreation Committee
East Hagbourne Parish Council

**Risk Assessment for reopening the Children's playground at
the Recreation Ground, Great Mead, East Hagbourne**

The Playground was closed on 24 March 2020 in accordance with government guidance to avoid Covid-19 infection. On 23 June, the government announced that from 4 July 2020, outdoor playgrounds would be allowed to reopen, if safe to do so.

This Risk Assessment evaluates the actions needed before the playground can be safely reopened. The playground is managed by East Hagbourne Sport & Recreation Committee, but owned by East Hagbourne Parish Council. This Risk Assessment has been prepared jointly by both bodies.

Our Risk Assessment references the following guidance:

[1] COVID-19: Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms: UK Government, 26 June 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

This gives good guidance (section 4) on what to consider.

[2] Risk Assessment for COVID-19. NALC, June 2020
and OALC explanation in email of 29 June 2020.

Generic guidance including key principles. Advice to publish the basis for why a facility has been opened/closed and consider making the risk assessment public.

[3] Children's Play and Leisure - Promoting A Balanced Approach. HSE, 2012

Good reference on the need to balance risk and not be over-conservative.

[4] HSE Risk Assessment Template

A good starting point, but very much the bare bones and does not meet all our needs.

[5] Opening-your-hall-after-lockdown-15.6.20-Final. ACRE

Aimed at reopening of community halls, but contains a lot of things to consider and helpful advice on how to address them. Also links to supporting material are helpful.

[6] Government guidance on social distancing after 4 July

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

References to other sources are noted in the text.

General Background

The World Health Organisation has identified that COVID-19 is not an airborne virus. Respiratory infections can be transmitted through droplets of different sizes. When the droplet particles are above a certain size they are referred to as respiratory droplets, and when they are below a certain size, they are referred to as droplet nuclei. According to current evidence, COVID-19 virus is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets and contact routes including touch points.

What this means in practice is, the droplets are of a weight that they will fall to the ground at around 1 metre, thus the 2 metre social distancing rule. They can remain on surfaces for some time depending on type of material. Therefore the two main methods of preventing the spread of infection are hygiene measures and social distancing.

Source: <https://unitetheunion.org/media/3069/009-riskassessandprocedures-2020-05-07.pdf>

HSE has issued general guidance on promoting a balanced approach to children's leisure and play, <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>.

It argues that all risk cannot be eliminated, but it should be managed, to ensure that the benefits of play are experienced to the full. We, as play providers, should use judgement and expertise to ensure that assessments and controls proposed are proportionate to the risks. We should communicate what these controls are and why they are necessary so that the beneficial aspects of play are not unnecessarily reduced.

Our Risk Assessment

A detailed risk assessment matrix has been prepared. The risk assessed is infection from Covid19 Coronavirus and there are two possible sources of infection:

Firstly, contact with respiratory droplets must be controlled through social distancing. This means limiting the number of families and people using the playground at any one time and more strictly restricting use to supervised children up to the age of 12. Separate entry and exit points are also proposed to further assist social distancing.

Secondly, infection is possible through contact with hard surfaces. Since contact with these surfaces cannot be avoided, control must be through users taking responsibility to maintain personal cleanliness and preferably also wiping down high-contact surfaces to protect themselves and others. The benefits of children's play are recognised in the HSE guidance and in the government's announcement that playgrounds may reopen. However, completely open access to the playground at this time would pose significant risks. We can, however, contemplate a controlled and restricted opening with clear rules around numbers of people and the behaviour expected of users. Parents must be aware that all risk cannot be eliminated and they use the playground at their own risk and take suitable steps to stay safe.

The conditions proposed for use of the playground are outlined in Attachment 1 and the full risk assessment matrix is in Attachment 2.

The rules must be clearly communicated to all people using the playground through signs at the playground and by making the full risk assessment available on the village web site.

Proposal

That the playground be opened under limited and controlled conditions as outlined in this document once the necessary preparations have been completed.

In the event that anyone who has used the playground subsequently tests positive for Covid19, they will be asked to contact the Parish Clerk immediately. The playground will then need to be closed for 72 hours following government guidelines.

Review

Understanding of the risks posed by Covid19 is evolving rapidly and it is possible that new guidance may become available at any time.

This risk assessment should be reviewed if there are changes in the local infection rate or if government and professional guidance suggests that different measures should be employed
It should in any case be reviewed and at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2021.

Prepared by D Rickeard/L Lloyd 9 July 2020

Adopted by EHSRC & EHPC by email vote, 12 July 2020

ATTACHMENT 1: Covid19 Safety Instructions to users of the Playground.

Following a risk assessment, the playground will be reopened from 14 July 2020
These simple rules have been put in place to minimise the risk of people catching Coronavirus.

Covid19 virus can be transmitted both through close proximity to other people and through contact with hard surfaces.

Please be aware that the equipment is not regularly sanitised or disinfected:

Use of the playground is at your own risk and we expect you to play your part to keep yourself and others safe by following this guidance.

Who can use the playground:

- The playground may be used only by supervised children up to the age of 12 years.
- A maximum of three families / 12 people should use the playground at any one time.
- Only one adult per child in the play area at a time.
- Children should not use the play equipment if they are clinically vulnerable.

Cleanliness:

- Please wash hands before and after your visit and bring wipes and sanitiser from home to maintain personal hygiene.
- Wipe down frequent contact areas whenever possible to help keep you and others safe.
- Please take your rubbish home with you or use the waste bin provided - DO NOT LITTER.
- Encourage children to avoid touching their faces particularly after touching shared surfaces.
- Consumption of food or drink anywhere in the playground area is prohibited.

Social distancing:

- You **MUST** maintain social distancing of 2 metres from other families where possible.
- Only one family should use each piece of equipment at a time.
- Please share the playground: if others are waiting, please limit your stay to 20 minutes.
- If the play area is busy, please come back when it's quieter.
- Please use the separate entry and exit points to help distancing.

Important:

- Do not use this equipment if you or any member of your household has coronavirus symptoms, or are self-isolating.
- If someone who has used the playground tests positive for Covid19, inform the Parish Clerk IMMEDIATELY via easthagbourneparishcouncil@gmail.com so that appropriate action can be taken.

We hope you enjoy using this play area and thank you for helping to keep everyone safe by following this guidance.

A full version of the risk assessment can be found on the village web site
www.easthagbourne.net

ATTACHMENT 2: RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

East Hagbourne Sport & Recreation Committee / East Hagbourne Parish Council
 Risk Assessment for reopening the playground at the Recreation Ground, Great Mead

Area of Risk	Specific Risk identified	Who might be harmed and how?	potential measures to control the risk	Source	Evaluation/proposed action	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is action needed by?	Done
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus		All users of the playground, including:						
		- Children						
		- Parents and Carers						
		- Those carrying out safety inspections and rubbish removal						
1	Contact with respiratory droplets	all playground users	Maintain Social Distancing					
			Limit the number of families using the playground at one time	djr	Maximum 3 families, so they can spread between the different equipment			
			Set an advisory limit on the maximum number of users at one time	[1]	The fenced area measures approximately 18m x 20m, so even allowing for space take by equipment is not limiting on the number of people. Based on the permitted number of families, an advisory limit of 12 people should be set			
			Limit number of users/families on a piece of equipment	[1]	Only one family on each piece of equipment at a time			
			Limit family members accompanying a child	[1]	Only 1 family member accompanying a child			
			Set a time limit for use of the playground	[1]	20 minutes limit per family if others are waiting			
			Social distancing is difficult for young children	[1]	All children must be supervised			
			When communicating safety messages consider those with hearing or vision impairments.	[1]	Make signage as clear and simple as possible. Anyone with severe needs should be accompanied.			
			Government guidance states that face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly.	[1]	We cannot provide washing facilities, so leave use of face coverings to the discretion of users.	EHSRC & EHPC to agree rules of use and post signs	before playground reopens	DONE
			Consider separate entry and exit points	djr	Enter via west gate, leave via east gate. Families can then move onto the slide if desired, which is outside the fenced area			

			You can meet in groups of up to two households (your support bubble counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors.	[6]	Families will be visiting individually rather than meeting as a group. The general restriction on people meeting in groups would still apply, regardless of whether they were in the playground.			
			Reinforce the message 'under-12s only'	djr	This is a reiteration of the existing rules. To discourage use by older youths.			
			Consider limiting the number of seats available to ensure distancing	[6]	Not necessary if we restrict use of each equipment to a single family.			
			Maintain 2 metres if possible	[6]	Government guidance still says 2 metres. BBC News says : Social distancing between people not in your household will still have to be observed - ideally at 2m (6ft), but at 1m if that's not possible. Word signage accordingly.			
2	Contact with hard surfaces		Alert people to the risks and encourage hygiene					
			Owners and operators are advised to manage any potential risk, cleaning high traffic touch points frequently.	[1]	It is not practical for us to clean regularly, and even if we could it would have limited effect, because surfaces would immediately be exposed to new users. Risks are reduced outdoors [1], with frequently touched surfaces being the areas to concentrate on.			
			Transmission possible from frequently used/touched outdoor surfaces, play equipment, gates.	[1]	Our playground is not staffed, so the only avenue for frequent cleaning is to ask users to take responsibility.			
			Encourage effective personal sanitation by users. Encourage parents to bring hand sanitiser gel or wipes to clean their children's hands.	[1]	Clear signage is needed to alert users to the risks to themselves and ask them to take care and mitigate risk through personal sanitation.			
			Promote cleaning of equipment by users	[1]	Clear signage is needed to alert users to the risks and ask them to wipe surfaces for the benefit of all.			
			Consider how we facilitate this	djr	We should ask all users to bring wipes for their own personal sanitation.			
			Where possible provide hand sanitiser at entry points.	[1]	Anything provided is at risk of being pilfered and we do not have the ability to rapidly replenish supplies. Encourage users to bring their own supplies - do not commit to regularly supplying sanitiser.	EHSRC & EHPC to agree rules of use and post signs	before playground reopens	DONE
			Consider a caretaker to provide daily supervision.	djr	We are unlikely to find anyone willing, so must limit the amount of servicing needed on the site.			
			Advise users not to touch their faces	[1]	Part of general government advice.			
			Remind users not to put their mouths on equipment or their hands in their mouths	[1]	Require that all children be supervised.			

			Consider providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection	[1]	A large waste bin is already provided in the playground. Ask people (via a sign) to take litter home if they can. Empty bin more frequently (at least weekly).			
			Consumption of food or drink on play equipment or in the playground area should be prohibited	[1]	Include on signage.			
			All litter should be disposed of in the waste bin or taken home	[1]	Include on waste bin sign.			
			Provide clear information to parents to set clear expectations about how children should behave when using playground	[1]	Require that all children be supervised			
3	People do not understand the requirements		Clear Signage and information needed		To cover the specific conditions for use of the playground	EHSRC & EHPC to agree rules of use and post signs	before playground reopens	DONE
			People should be aware that there is always some risk and they must take precautions and use the playground at their own risk.	[1]	Word signage appropriately			
			The signage is too detailed, too prescriptive.	djr	Provide one-page rules for access at the site, supplemented by key points in larger text. Use additional signs on litter bin, gates etc as needed.			
4	Risk to people working in the playground			djr				
		Contractors and volunteers engaged in :						
		-emptying bins			Ensure volunteers understand risks and take suitable precautions	EHSRC members are already informed	before playground reopens	DONE
		- safety inspections			Ensure volunteers understand risks and take suitable precautions			
		-grass cutting			Inform contractors that the playground is reopening and advise them to take precautions.	Parish Clerk	before playground reopens	DONE
5	Someone falls ill after using the playground		Provide instructions on what to do if someone tests positive for Covid after visiting the playground	djr [2]	Include Parish Clerk as contact in the event of any emergency.			

			Put measures in place to close the playground until it has been properly cleaned	djr	Close the playground for 72 hours - this appears to be the best current guidance. Review actions needed as new information becomes available.	Procedures to be defined and adopted by EHPC & EHSRC. Contact details to be posted at site and on web site	before playground reopens	DONE
			Cleaning possibly infected equipment	[5]	[5] ACRE points to guidance on cleaning premises suspected contaminated: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings . Any cleaning after closure should not negate the 72 hour closure requirement			
			Protective equipment for those working	[1]	Decontamination is a specialist job. Take expert advice before allowing work in the playground and ensure they have suitable PPE.	Parish Clerk, following expert guidance.	Before any decontamination work is carried out	AS REQUIRED
6	People do not understand the risks			[1]		EHSRC to post agreed signage	before playground reopens	DONE
			Signs stating that allowing children to use playground equipment is done at their own risk where appropriate	[1]	Signage should make this clear			
			take into account the requirements of children with additional needs	[1]	Require that all children be supervised			
7	People do not understand the reasons behind the assessment	EHSRC, EHPC	Potential criticism of the rules	[2]	Put notices on web site and in Parish Magazine explaining the conditions on reopening and the reasons for them. Post full risk assessment on web site. Our Insurers advice is that we should put in place the best practical measures we can.	Parish Clerk	Once finalised and before playground reopens	DONE
8	There is an increase in infection cases in the community	All users, EHSRC, EHPC	Increased infection risk	djr	Opening of the Playground will be subject to review - the facility will be closed again if the health situation or government guidance requires it.	EHPC and EHSRC to monitor developments	Ongoing requirement	AS REQUIRED