

Middleham Town Council

Covid 19 Risk Assessment for reopening and management of play and skate park areas.

Author: Cllr Honor Byford, 03 July 2020, based on similar report by Leyburn Town Council
and detailed inspection by Cllr Byford on 03 July 2020

Middleham Town Council is committed to re-opening its play areas on the 4 July 2020 at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. The Council recognises the need to provide community facilities to help people enjoy outdoor activity but also recognises that it must provide a safe environment for those using the facilities and staff/councillors who facilitate the services.

This risk assessment has been prepared for the re-opening of the play on the 4th July 2020 in order to highlight the risks faced and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising that it is not possible to completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

This assessment will be kept under regular review to include all government guidelines and requirements on the Council.

The risk assessment and the recommendations contained may change according to new government guidance issued.

Release of Covid-19 lockdown of Play Areas Safety Risk Assessment

Activity	Hazard linked to Covid-19	Potential risks to persons entering play areas	Control measures
General Maintenance of equipment			
Inspection of equipment	General Maintenance Issues following lockdown closure	Ensure equipment is safe to use and that risks from damaged or defective equipment are addressed before opening.	Inspect all equipment prior to opening any damaged equipment is to be cordoned off and taken out of use.
Infection Prevention, Cleaning and Safety of all persons			
Staff/Councillor Cleaning Facilities	The equipment and sites must be secured against Covid-19 to reduce the risk of virus transmission	<p>Cleaning team</p> <p>There is a direct threat to all person's health and wellbeing from transmission of Covid-19 in the play areas and on the equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All cleaners have been issued the PPE as set out in the Government Guidelines Government guidelines for cleaning in non-health care settings. - cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wear disposable or washing-up gloves for cleaning. These should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours after cleaning is finished before being thrown away in the regular rubbish. - using a disposable cloth, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products you normally use. Pay particular attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces and door handles - wash hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and after removing gloves and other protection used while cleaning - Staff have been advised to wash their hands more regularly <p>A staff briefing delivered regarding additional H&S measures to be followed and enhanced cleaning regimes to be carried out before opening.</p>

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Public using facilities		<p>Persons can catch the virus from others who are infected in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virus moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth and are spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales • The virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces that persons have coughed on • People can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth 	<p>We will ensure that the organisation complies with its duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace/working conditions and safe public facility by providing signage stating what the arrangements of the council are in relation to each site</p> <p>The following messages will be promoted at the sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing • Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing • Put used tissues in the bin straight away • Use hand sanitiser regularly • Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects • Do not touch face, eyes, nose or mouth whilst in the play area or using the gym. • Require all persons to practise effective social distancing while in and around the play areas. <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 • Where practicable, provide hand sanitiser or hand washing facilities at entry and exit points. – This is not possible at this moment in time. <p>The following key safety precautions will be undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments will be kept under review to ensure that a safe place of play and exercise is maintained • All government health advice will be followed

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Cleaning high touch point objects	Contamination by contact	Cleaning team and the public	<p>A deep cleaning of all the equipment will be undertaken before reopening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All touch points are being cleaned • A higher specification cleaning product is being used <p>Signage will be put in place stating that all users must clean the equipment before use.</p>
Social Distancing			
Informing users of social distancing measures	<p>Members of the public and staff not adhering to social distancing measures.</p> <p>Effective social distancing is a key element in reducing the transmission of Covid-19</p>	<p>Staff and public</p> <p>Social distancing refers to people being required to maintain a distance from each other of 2 metres wherever possible. Social distancing effectively puts people at a safe range from anyone coughing. The main route of virus transmission is through droplets exhaled or coughed by an infected person.</p>	<p>Middleham Town Council has adopted a 2-metre social distancing requirement for its play areas. Everyone using the park will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid non-essential contact with others (apart from members of their own household) • Keep a safe distance of at least 2 metres from others wherever possible • Avoid physical contact <p>The play areas will be adapted where required to enable social distancing to be implemented and maintained.</p> <p>Use of individual pieces of equipment within the play areas is limited to one household at one time.</p> <p>Signs will be placed at the entrance to the areas reminding people of the need to socially distance and of the limits of number of households per piece of equipment.</p> <p>Further measures: A queue system may be put in place alongside social distancing markers if keeping to social distancing becomes an issue.</p>

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Higher Risk Areas			
Cleaning of high touch areas	Some parts of the play equipment may present a higher risk than others – this includes areas such as the gates and hand holds.	Heavily used areas of the play areas are more likely to present an infection risk. It is essential for all persons to use hand sanitiser regularly. Community members entering the play areas may introduce covid-19 contamination	Ensure higher risk high traffic areas of the play are covid-19 secure by applying appropriate safety precautions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress to all people the need to follow good hygiene practice at all times whilst in the play area. • Areas with high traffic to be monitored and managed as appropriate • Users to be required to bring hand sanitiser with them when they visit and to use it frequently and regularly.
Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable users of the play areas			
	Some people may have conditions which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of Covid-19	Those who are identified by PHE as being at greater risk from Covid-19 include people in the vulnerable (moderate risk) and extremely vulnerable (high risk) categories	The following safety and health arrangements will apply to persons who are classed as vulnerable or extremely vulnerable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to be provided to ensure that adequate protection is given to enable them to comply with the government health recommendations • No vulnerable or extremely vulnerable person should attend the play area during the pandemic without wearing appropriate PPE and ensuring that the equipment is sanitised first.

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Staff Health and Staffing Levels			
Play park maintenance	Low staffing hazards due to high rates of staff sickness or staff having to self isolate/quarantine themselves at home	Staff may get sick with Covid-19. People who have symptoms must “self isolate” at home for 7 days from the start of symptoms to prevent them from passing the infection. Those who live with others or who have been traced by ‘contact and trace’ are required to quarantine for 14 days.	In the case of staff/councillor sickness reducing the workforce to a level that maintenance or deep cleaning before opening cannot be maintained the Council will endeavour to engage contractors or will close the facilities.
Cases of Possible Infection On-site			
Covid disinfection clean Track and trace users	People becoming unwell while on-site or a symptomatic person using the site	High risk of transmission	If a person becomes unwell whilst in the play area, with coronavirus symptoms (a new continuous cough or a high temperature) they must go home and then inform Middleham Town Council. When the Council becomes aware that a potentially infected persons has used one of the play areas the following actions will be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific area/equipment will be closed • All surfaces that the symptomatic person may have come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, especially objects visibly contaminated with body fluids and all potentially contaminated high contact areas such as gates and handholds • Cleaning staff should use disposable cloths or paper roll and a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1000 parts per million available chlorine • Cleaning staff must wear appropriate PPE

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste from cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be “double-bagged” and tied off; the waste must be placed in a secure holding area for 72 hours before being disposed of in general waste
Record keeping			
	Hazards are created when tasks are not undertaken and identified risks not actioned	The Council needs to be proactive in taking appropriate action at the right time and in the right place in order to protect all persons	An action log will be kept of all actions taken to deal with issues identified.
Additional mitigating measures			
	Face Coverings		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).
Information			
	Hazards are caused by lack of information or inaccurate information being circulated	The pandemic has been accompanied by a large amount of official guidance, which requires interpretation. There is also misinformation, rumour and “fake news” or “myths”. If these are allowed to gain traction within the community they can obscure and confuse vital health and safety measures.	<p>The following safety information arrangements will be applied to mitigate risks caused by misinformation and no information</p> <p>Promote responsible behaviour by children, parents, carers and guardians by putting up signage making it 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. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone strategies will be based on accurate information and everyone will be given consistent, simple and clear messages The covid-19 risk management team will monitor official advice carefully and update all policies and procedures as required Staff, councillors and contractors will be briefed on any changes to the policies and guidance Signage will be placed at appropriate places providing information for the specific play area. The signage will provide instruction based on this risk assessment

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Councils website will provide safety advice for each play area • The safety messages will also be placed on the Councils social media sites

Conclusions

Preparing a playgrounds for re-opening

In order for the Play areas to be reopened on Saturday there are some measures that need to be taken to ensure that the area is COVID-19 secure:

- All equipment needs to be cleaned with antibacterial cleaner
- All equipment must be inspected- the Town Council must ensure playground equipment is safe to use and that risks from damaged or defective equipment are addressed before opening.
- Signs must be located throughout the parks to remind users of the need for and adherence to social distancing in accordance with existing government guidance. In implementing measures, owners and operators should acknowledge that adults and children with certain conditions will find social distancing difficult.

If the park gets very busy the Council may consider limiting the number of users able to use a particular piece of equipment to minimise the transmission risk of COVID-19. Potential measures include:

- signs to communicate maximum number of users at one time
 - request those using the play area to only have 1 family member accompanying a child
- setting a time limit and using signs to communicate this to users, parents, guardians or carers

Cleaning and hygiene

Scientific advice suggests that the virus can survive for up to several days on some hard surfaces, particularly when indoors. These risks are reduced when outdoors, where surfaces may be subject to UV light and/or rain. This guidance applies to outdoor playgrounds and skateboard park but the virus could survive long enough on frequently used/touched outdoor surfaces to facilitate transmission. The Town Council are advised where possible to manage any potential risk, cleaning high traffic touch points frequently. This could include cleaning regimes for:

- playground equipment for children, usually up to age 14, such as slides monkey bars and climbing frames
- semi enclosed playhouses or huts for small children
- enclosed crawl through 'tunnels' or tube slides
- exercise bars and machine handles on outdoor gym equipment
- entry and exit points such as gates
- seating areas such as benches and picnic tables
- refuse areas/bins

The Town Council does not have the staff in place nor resources (hand sanitising & cleaning stations) to allow regular sanitising of surfaces. For this reason signs and disclaimers will be placed in the parks stating that ALL equipment must be cleaned by users prior to use.

The Signage will encourage effective sanitation by users, parents, guardians and carers in the following ways:

- to promote cleaning of equipment by users, parents, guardians and carers, particularly where there are clear touch points such as swing rockers, see saws, zipwire handles or exercise bars
- encouraging parents to bring hand sanitiser gel or wipes to clean their children's hands before, during and after use
- to encourage hand hygiene with including washing/sanitising hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water or approved gel and foam sanitiser, particularly at the beginning and end of play
- to advise users (or parents of users) not to touch their faces, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue or arm when a tissue is not available
- to remind adults and children not to put their mouths on equipment or their hands in their mouths
- to promote and remind users, parents, guardians and carers of the need for social distancing
- 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.