



# Use of Playground and Play Equipment



Risk Assessment carried out by – Rachel Edkins

Job title – Executive Head  
Teacher

Date of assessment – September  
2024

Review interval – Bi- Annual

Staff covered by this assessment – Lunchtime Supervisors and Teaching Assistants		Activities involved – use of play equipment	
RISK RATING	Likelihood		
	<b>Probable</b> Occurs repeatedly, to be expected or could affect large number of people	<b>Possible</b> Could occur sometime or effect a few people	<b>Remote</b> Unlikely to occur or not many to be affected

Whilst writing Ashby Fields Primary School’s risk assessment for Outdoor Play and Learning, the following statements from the Health and Safety Executive document has been considered.

“HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE fully understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well-managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential danger.”

“HSE fully recognises that play brings the world to life for children. It provides for an exploration and understanding of their abilities; helps them to learn and develop; and exposes them to the realities of the world in which they will live, which is a world not free from risk but rather one where risk is ever present. The opportunity for play develops a child’s risk awareness and prepares them for their future lives.”

Striking the right balance does mean:

- Weighing up risks and benefits when designing and providing play opportunities and activities
- Focusing on and controlling the most serious risks, and those that are not beneficial to play the activity or foreseeable by the user.
- Recognising that the introduction of risk might form part of play opportunities and activity
- Understanding that the purpose of risk control is not the elimination of all risk, and so accepting the possibility of even serious or life-threatening injuries cannot be eliminated, though it should be managed.
- Ensuring that the benefits of play are experienced to the full

Striking the balance does not mean;

- All risks must be eliminated or continually reduced
- Every aspect of play provision must be set out in copious paperwork as part of a misguided blanket.
- Mistakes and accidents will not happen.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

This means that staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place. They should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action, if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity of harm while preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Hazards/Issue	Risk rating H/M/L (before)	Controls already in place	Further Action required/comments	Risk Rating H/M/L (after)	By Whom & When
Injury from activities in the playground	M	<p>Ball games are permitted in designated areas to create a quiet area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils only allowed to play games that are considered within pupils individual capabilities as decided by staff.</li> <li>Games can be stopped at any time by staff if considered unsafe or inappropriate. Discussion regarding safety will take place.</li> <li>Activities to be age appropriate and reflect the mix of ages within the school as well as special needs of pupils.</li> <li>The school's behaviour policy applies on the playground.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to enforce school rules and report behaviour problems to School Management.</li> <li>Ball games on Year 6 playground'.</li> <li>Lunchtime supervisors to discuss any unusual uses of play equipment with Deputy/Head Teacher. Decisions made and confirmed in lunchtime supervisors weekly meeting.</li> </ul>	L	All staff
Lack of supervision	M	<p>Supervision has been assessed using the playground safety guidance.</p> <p>Results of assessment -            Max Number Pupils in playground 420            Supervision required on duty – Breaktime            six staff covering all areas            Supervision required – Lunchtime            One LTS per year group covering all areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervision will always be provided when children are using the outdoor play equipment.</li> </ul>	<p>Review when required given age of pupils and activities being undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lunchtime supervisors have areas of responsibility for supervision timetabled.</li> <li>Playground rota has specific areas for adults to 'Monitor.'</li> </ul>	L	HT to review annually
Unsafe condition and / or use of play equipment & furniture	M	<p>Pre – use checks of play equipment by school logged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly inspections of play equipment by school recorded.</li> <li>Play equipment is given an annual safety inspection by a competent person</li> <li>All furniture is kept in good condition. i.e. free from splinters, loose joints, protruding bolts or screws etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Annual inspections of play equipment by competent person to be acted upon when required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued monitoring of condition and maintenance – quarterly inspections and pre-use checks.</li> <li>The condition of the playground is included in the annual workplace</li> </ul>	L	HT to arrange checks All staff to monitor condition of equipment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The supervision assessment accounted for the risk of injury using the play equipment.</li> <li>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment is to be used.</li> <li>Site Supervisor to carry out informal inspections as part of normal duties every day to look for damage, vandalism, broken glass etc</li> <li>Playground surface maintained in good sound condition to minimise slips and trips.</li> <li>Check free of ice before use in winter</li> <li>Kept free from build-up of leaves in autumn</li> </ul>	<p>welfare inspection of the outdoor areas of the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff monitor the condition of the playground when they are on duty and report problems to the Site Supervisor / HT immediately.</li> </ul>		
Wet breaks/lunchtimes	M	<p>Supervision for wet break / lunchtimes takes into account the school layout and activities allowed in different areas.</p> <p>☑ Lunchtime supervisors have been trained in their role for wet break / lunchtimes.</p> <p>Allowance has been given for SEN and pupils that require closer supervision.</p>	<p>All staff to apply wet break / lunchtime procedures and report problems to the HT / DHT</p>	L	All staff
Risk presented by weather – both summer and winter	M	<p>SLT will decide if weather conditions are suitable or not for outdoor activities.</p> <p>☑ Staff to ensure that pupils have appropriate clothing.</p> <p>☑ Digging area to be closed when high levels of water are present.</p>	<p>SLT to decide as required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gritting Risk Assessment in place.</li> </ul>	L	HT & DHT
Lack of first aid	M	<p>The school has adequate first aid provision and this includes the provision of first aid at lunchtime and breaks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervision can be maintained when first aiders are dealing with injured pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep training up to date and review.</li> </ul> <p>There are currently eleven trained first aiders who work either full or part time covering the entire school day including breakfast club and after school club.</p>	L	HT to review first aid cover annually
Injuries from activities on the playground	M	<p>Ball games are only permitted in designated areas to create quiet areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils only allowed to play games that are considered within pupil's individual capabilities as decided by staff.</li> <li>Games can be stopped at any time by staff if considered unsafe or inappropriate. Discussion regarding safety will take place.</li> <li>Activities to be age appropriate and reflect the mix of ages within the school as well as special needs of pupils.</li> <li>The school's behaviour policy applies on the playground</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to enforce school rules and report behaviour problems to School Management</li> </ul>	L	All staff

Manual handling		<p>Pupils are encouraged to move equipment around designated play areas to encourage outdoor play, physical activity and teamwork/collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to store equipment away in designated areas encouraging teamwork.</li> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to keep designated play areas tidy particularly at the end of lunchtime.</li> <li>• Lunchtime has a specific time for children to tidy up. (10 minutes approximately prior to the end of lunchtime period).</li> <li>• Staff encourage children to tidy up, supervising the moving of equipment and items placed in correct areas.</li> <li>• Staff are only expected to manually handle wheeled equipment located in the shed. i.e. take out and put away. Children are not allowed in the shed.</li> <li>• Children with specific needs are monitored by 1:1 support</li> </ul>		L	
Tree/shrub/bush lined		<p>Boundary of school is tree and shrub lined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds maintenance contract in place.</li> <li>• Staff visually inspecting areas.</li> <li>• Pupils are not allowed to climb trees in the main school playground/field.</li> <li>• Soil erosion identified around Fencing/Field gates. Fencing has been extended.</li> </ul>		L	
Rear gate access and boundary wall		<p>Gate locked and secure at all times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds Maintenance carried out during lesson periods.</li> <li>• Grounds staff sign in to main office.</li> <li>• Visually inspected signs of wear and tear present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitored</li> </ul>	L	
Slips, trips and falls	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated play areas identified.</li> <li>• Playing field uneven but appropriate footwear worn by pupils and staff.</li> <li>• Grounds Maintenance contractors in place.</li> </ul>	Staff to report any concerns	L	
Unsure condition and / or us of play equipment & furniture	L	<p>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment is to be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily pre-use checks are carried out by lunchtime supervisors and recorded.</li> <li>• All furniture is kept in good condition. i.e. free from splinters, loose joints, protruding bolts or screws etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Play Assemblies to take place regularly. Safety will feature in each assembly – encouraging children to think about their own safety and their peers.</p> <p>Only years 4, 5 &amp; 6 students are permitted to use the exercise equipment after training and under close supervision.</p>		

