

Boldre Parish Council Play Area

COVID-19 (Corona Virus)

Guidance & Risks

1. Introduction

With the current Government measures being eased Boldre Parish Council (BPC) is now able to open our Play Area facilities. However, there are a number of restrictions that must be observed by all parents/relatives/guardians (**referred to as guardians throughout the remainder of this document**) who accompany children to our facilities which are detailed in the document below.

Playgrounds, including Play Areas, are recognised as valuable community assets and may be defined as outdoor structures designed for children to play in or on.

Playgrounds and outdoor gyms have been closed under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020. As announced by the Prime Minister on 23 June, playgrounds and outdoor gyms can reopen from 4 July 2020.

Owners and operators responsible for playgrounds and outdoor gyms have discretion over when they consider it safe to open for activity permitted by legislation, and may decide to keep these areas closed should they feel they are not able to facilitate their safe usage. It is recognised that owners and operators will require time to prepare for the safe reopening of playgrounds/outdoor gyms.

The full HMG guidance that we have received may be viewed at [COVID-19: Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms](#)

In addition, your attention is directed to the notices posted at the Play Area site alongside Boldre War Memorial Hall.

The Association of Play Industries (API) has advised that placing the entire burden of responsibility on owners/operators such as BPC is unworkable and that this should largely be a matter for personal/parental responsibility.

if you or your children feel unwell or are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, please do not enter the playground

BPC has:

- carried out a Risk Assessment which is shown on page 3
- continued to make our weekly safety checks
- cleaned points on the equipment that are normally handled by the children with detergent and water, as well as gate latches on entrances.
- this cleaning will continue weekly.
- produced signage that is displayed on-site

However, it is not feasible for BPC to provide the following:

- Provision of stewards
- A booking system
- Relocation of equipment to provide social distancing
- Cleaning equipment daily
- Cleaning or hand sanitising materials
- Creating separate entrances and exits

BPC has been that to help owners and operators decide what actions to take, and to ensure the equipment in their playground and outdoor gym is safe, we must carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, just as we would for other health and safety related hazards. This risk assessment has been done in consultation with our workers. The BPC Risk Assessment is shown at the bottom of these notes on page 3.

If the owner/operator has fewer than 5 workers, they do not have to write anything down as part of the risk assessment. However, a risk assessment will help owners/operators to decide whether everything required has been completed. BPC has only 2 employees but has nonetheless decided to issue this written advice.

BPC reminds guardians that the use of playground equipment is at your own risk.

2. Social Distancing

Social distancing aims to reduce social interaction between people to minimise the opportunity for transmission of COVID-19. Following a review of social distancing guidance, 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigations (where 2 metres is not viable) are acceptable. Owners/operators should consider and set out the mitigations they will introduce in their risk assessment. BPC recommends that at least 2 metres is maintained between guardians and children unless they are members of the same household.

3. Advice to parents

Scientific advice suggests that the COVID-19 virus can survive for up to several days on some hard surfaces. The risks are reduced when outdoors, where surfaces may be subject to UV light and/or rain. Whilst all possible practical measures have been put in place the user of this equipment does so at their own choice and risk.

Further advice from BPC may be summarised as follows:

- DO NOT visit our play area if you or any members of your family group are showing symptoms of the COVID-19 virus
- For the use of children of 14 years and under only
- The maximum number of people in the Play Area at any one time should be twelve
- 1 guardian to accompany no more than 3 children
- Please retain 2 metre distance from other users e.g. pushing swings
- To enable as many children as possible to use each item please limit to 5 minutes
- Use of your own hand sanitiser gel or wipes when using the equipment
- When using equipment do not touch faces
- Consumption of food and drink within play areas is not permitted
- Please use bins provided or preferably take litter home

4. Cleaning & Hygiene

As mentioned the points where children normally make contact with handles, steps, chains and grab points have been cleaned with detergent and water during week commencing 12th July 2020. This cleaning will continue weekly. However, parents should use their own hand sanitiser after equipment is used by their children. The refuse bin will continue to be emptied but parents are encouraged to please take home their own waste materials for disposal. Children's hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when home is reached.

5. Covid-19 Play Area Risk Assessment

Area of concern	Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Risk Factor	Action Taken to reduce risks
Equipment	Contact with grab points (e.g. handles, supports and chains)	Children	High	Weekly cleaning by BPC using detergent and water. Parents advised to provide and use hand sanitiser, followed by hand washing when back home.
Food and drinks	Virus transmission from infected hands	Parents and children	High	Food and drinks PROHIBITED in the Play Area.
Litter	Possible infection	Parents and children	Medium	The litter bin will be emptied by BPC Parents strongly urged to take their litter home
Stewarding	Lack of social distancing	Children and parents	Medium	BPC stewards are NOT available. Parents have full responsibility.
Toilets and washing facilities	Infection	Children and parents	Medium	There are NO facilities on-site. Parents have full responsibility.
Dogs	Infection	Children and parents	Low	As always dogs are NOT permitted on-site.

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