



Keynsham Town Council



PLAY POLICY TO INCLUDE THE DESIGN, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCILS PLAY AREAS

Amended and Approved 16 September 2025

1. Introduction

The right of every child to play is endorsed by the Government on the Declaration of the 'Rights of the Child', endorsed by the United Nations in 1991 - Children have the right, to rest and leisure; engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31 of the Human Rights Act).

"Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practice skills. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. Children's play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious".

This policy sets out the Town Councils understanding of play and confirms its commitment to ensuring that quality play environments are available to all children in Keynsham. The policy includes design and equipment of play areas for the following reasons:

- ❖ To support the promotion of healthy living
- ❖ To encourage children and young people to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age
- ❖ To ensure the appropriate designs and layout of playgrounds
- ❖ To ensure that appropriately designed play equipment, for a suitable age range is installed at play areas

2. The need and benefits of play

The Town Council recognises that modern society's impact on children's lives has the effect of limiting their opportunity to play freely. It is therefore committed to encourage play provision that is accessible, free, local, stimulating and challenging whilst free from unacceptable levels of risk. The benefits of play are:

- ❖ Play helps to keep children healthy and active
- ❖ Play encourages children more likely to become active adults
- ❖ Play promotes social inclusion. It helps children to learn about their environment and to develop a sense of community
- ❖ Play promotes children's development, learning, independence and creativity
- ❖ Play can help with emotional stress and provides an opportunity for children to expend energy and have fun

3. Risk

Play provision is uniquely placed to offer children the chance to learn about risk in an environment designed for that purpose, helping to equip children to deal with hazards in the wider world and later in life.

The Town Council's play areas and equipment are inspected daily with one weekly documented inspection of all play areas carried out by a qualified grounds maintenance worker. This inspection document takes into account a general site check covering access, pathways, signs, fences, gates, seats, litter bins, surfacing and cleanliness. In addition each item of play equipment is checked in relation to its supports, seats, moving and static parts, and means of access, safety features and safety surfacing. Yearly inspections are carried out by Rospa (legal requirement)

Any necessary action is taken either in house or through reputable contractors and where necessary, play equipment is taken out of use by the installation of hazard warning tape and notices. Remedial action is taken as quickly as possible. Inspection documents are retained in accordance with the Management of Records Policy.

Unacceptable Risk – adults are responsible for ensuring that 'risks' are taken with the context of an environment that offers challenge and stimulation but where it is reasonable to assume children will not come to harm; this includes, but extends beyond, ensuring that the physical aspects of the site are free from unacceptable risk.

Removing all possibility of challenge and failing to distinguish between 'acceptable risk' and 'unacceptable risk' limits children's capacity to develop positively, undermining the service objectives of play providers.

4. Provision of new or replacement equipment

In considering the provision of new or replacement equipment the Town Council will:

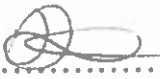
- ❖ Give consideration to the provision of equipment suitable to the age range but which might also be used by older children/adults in appropriate areas
- ❖ Endeavour to include equipment which is DDA compliant
- ❖ Request designs from at least three reputable play equipment providers
- ❖ Obtain quotes from at least three reputable play equipment providers
- ❖ If a *new* (not replacement) piece of equipment consult with representatives from nearby schools, the youth service, parents/children and other interested parties as appropriate in each case following local advertisement
- ❖ Ensure that all surfaces are constructed in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations for each piece of play equipment
- ❖ Ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are adhered to during construction/refurbishment of surfaces and/or play equipment

Approved by the Town Council on 16 September 2025

Amendment History

Paragraph	Detail	Committee or Town Council	Approval date
Original	Initial version	Town Council	17 th June 2014
	1 st review	F & P Committee	9 th September 2025
	1 st review	Town Council	16 th September 2025
	Review	F&P Committee	November 2027

Signed A. Beaumont..... Date 16 Sept 2025.....
Chair of Council

Signed ..... Date 15th September 2025.....
Town Clerk

