

Guidance for reopening your Playground safely

The UK Government has published its guidance for reopening playgrounds and outdoor gyms on the 26th June, and we hope this document proves useful to help you remain compliant while reopening yours and most of all to allow children to return to play safely.

The Covid19 outbreak has caused millions of children to be kept away from their friends and the playgrounds they love so much. We hope to see as many of them reopen as soon as possible so children can exercise and socialise with their friends again. To do this Playground owners will need to take a few extra measures, but these will be well worth it and can easily be achieved.

The [Government guidance](#) in places assumes sites are staffed, however, this is not the case for the vast majority of UK playgrounds, but this does not mean reasonable precautions cannot be taken and that these will not be sufficient to allow safe play.

Risk Assessment

The Government expect playground owners to carry out a Risk Assessment which includes Covid19 infection, you might choose to add this is a hazard to your existing Risk Assessments or to have a separate Covid19 Risk assessment in addition to your current assessments, either is perfectly acceptable. If you employ less than five staff, then the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) does not have to be written down. However, this does not mean you don't need to consider these issues.

The Risk Assessment shall identify the hazards, who might be affected, what the control measures are and assess the scale of the risk remaining with these controls in place.

To help you consider these, we have listed a few of the reasonable controls, including those recommended in the Government Guidance documents. As ever some of these controls are more or less effective than others. The hierarchy below shows the increasing level of risk control of some of those suggested and is topped of course by vaccination, however, we know this is some way off and not in the control of the average playground owner!



We also felt it might be useful for you to see an example Covid19 Risk Assessment for a playground. These will, of course, need to be developed by the playground owner to show the controls that are possible in their playground.

Those additional considerations will include:

- **Size of the play area**, how many children can safely use the space and continue to social distance, this may be less than pre-COVID times.
- **Accessibility**, entrances and exits, are there pinch points where distancing becomes difficult, and how will you manage these?
- **Provision of hand sanitiser**, this helps reduce the possibility of spreading the virus and is best provided at the entrance to your playground and **as per Government guidance preferably an automated touch-free dispenser such as [PlayClean](#)**
- **A number of children on each item of equipment**, some equipment is designed for single users, such as traditional swings, but you may decide that a team swing should be limited to 1 person or multiples where they are from the same household. **Signage**, signage to remind users of the social distancing requirements, numbers of users on each item, reminders to wash/sanitise hands and dispose of rubbish in bins or take rubbish home with them.
- **Cleaning**, do you have the resource to be able to clean the frequent touchpoints periodically. For high user numbers, this would be more often than low. You may also encourage parents and carers to bring cleaning wipes so they can clean frequent touchpoints such as handles and grips before and after use.
- **Eating and drinking** should be prohibited.
- **Those with symptoms**, It is essential to remind those who have symptoms or share a house with someone with symptoms not to use the playground and return home, contact the Government Track and Trace helpline (119) and isolate as per Government Guidance.
- **Inspection**, unfortunately, all playgrounds have sat unused for some time now, and you may have suspended your inspection and maintenance schedules during this time. It is imperative that you inspect the playground before reopening. You may do this yourself using the Playdale Inspection and maintenance schedules which are available via our [website](#), or you may decide to get an expert in.

FAQ's

Should users wear a face covering? Government guidance does not require this and can introduce additional risks, especially for young children. If a user does want to wear one, that is fine, but they should take care of putting them on and taking them off not to touch their mouth, nose or eyes. Always wash hands before putting on and taking off.

Do I need to provide hand sanitiser? It is advantageous to do so as many users may not have some or may forget to apply it. The Government Guidance states, **"where practicable, providing hand sanitiser (automated where possible) or handwashing facilities at the entry and exit points, in addition to public toilets/washrooms."**

Do I need to have staff on site all the time it is open? No, by providing signs and clear guidance for parents, carers and older children of the ways to keep them safe while playing and ensuring the equipment is safe and maintained including periodic cleaning play can safely return. It may be wise to check the playground is being used as hoped and act if the controls do not appear to be being followed.

Is sanitiser safe for unsupervised children? - if you can provide an **automatic** dosing unit that operates with **an alcohol-free sanitiser**, then those children who are of an age to be unsupervised at a playground can use it safely.

Should my child wear gloves in the play area? No, wearing gloves leads to not washing and sanitizing hands, and the virus and other germs can be spread just as easily on a glove as a hand.

Checklist:

	What you could do	Control / what have you done
Inspection	Inspect and maintain playground before reopening	
Covid19 Risk Assessment	Carry out Covid19 Risk assessment and put laminated copy on show in playground. Set a review date to check it is working.	
Signage	Post 2m Social Distancing, Please use Hand Sanitizer and Max no. of persons on each item of equipment	
Cleaning schedule	Set up a rota for staff/volunteers to wipe down the touch points with disinfectant wipes.	
Hygiene / Hand sanitizer	Install a PlayClean hand sanitization unit at the entrance to the Playground.	
Access points	Where there are more than one gates into the playground make them one way either entry or exit to prevent pinch point.	
Numbers of users	Set a maximum number of people in the area to allow safe social distancing, encourage people to come back later if the playground has reached capacity.	