

9. EXTERNAL AREAS

This section includes guidance on landscaping, external and site areas.

Outdoor Playground Equipment

When planning to purchase any new equipment consideration must be made to the age range of pupils who will have access to the equipment. The installer should provide the technical specification for the equipment which will include the intended age range that the equipment is designed to be used by. This information will be used in the risk assessment to ensure that adequate levels of supervision and signage are in place.

It is essential that staff who are given responsibility for moving and assembling physical education equipment are given suitable training for safe lifting techniques. Setting up of equipment like netball posts must not be carried out by pupils and they should be kept clear of equipment until it is securely in place.

Inspections

An inspection schedule should be supplied with the equipment. It is recommended that play equipment is inspected as follows:

- **Post-installation** an independent inspection carried out immediately following installation and before the equipment is used. The inspection should be carried out by a competent person, normally an engineer. The inspection report should confirm compliance with EN 1176 and EN 1177, identify any hazards and rate any risks;
- **Daily** a routine visual inspection should be carried out by the site maintenance team/site controller/caretaker or by a playground supervisor to identify any hazards from for example vandalism, rubbish, use or weather. Loose-fill areas should be checked for hazards such as animal faeces, broken glass, drink cans etc.;
- **Every term** before the start of each term an operational inspection by the site maintenance team/site controller/caretaker to check the operation, stability, wear etc. The results of the inspection should be entered into a permanent record which should be available for examination if required;
- **Annually** a certified detailed inspection should be carried out by a competent person, normally an engineer, see Post-installation inspection above, and the results also entered into a permanent record which should be available for examination if required.

Training on the Routine Inspections of Play Equipment

Site Controllers, Caretakers and anyone else who is responsible for the routine inspections of play equipment should be trained so they understand the inspection procedures and can assess the risks. To book a place training Email: CorpServ.Training@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

Further information can be found on Page 17 in: <http://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/05-school-premises-management.pdf>

Boundary Fences

Ownership and responsibility of boundaries and fences may depend on how the land was acquired and inherited responsibilities. It may be necessary to refer to the original legal conveyances/title deeds to determine ownership. Further details may be obtained via Corporate Property's Property Records Officer in the first instance. It should be noted that the School's own boundary fencing may not align with the Council's title. This could be due to various reasons such as natural features such as stream banks, existing boundary fences in a neighbour's ownership.

In some cases the ownership of fences may be different from the ownership of boundaries e.g. the neighbour has erected a fence alongside the school's boundary. These anomalies may be due to various historical reasons so it is difficult to make assumptions or give one set of guidelines that will apply in all situations.

Lee Clark, Property Records Officer
Tel. 01344 352472
lee.clark@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

School Playing Fields

Playing fields are defined as land in the open air, which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation.

Playing fields are protected under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which empowers the Secretary of State to protect school playing fields in England from disposal or change of use. Local Authorities, Governing Bodies and Foundation Bodies in England wishing to dispose, or change the use of school playing fields, will require the prior consent of the Secretary of State.



The Secretary of State has a general presumption against the need to dispose or to change the use of school playing fields. Revised guidance, Advice on the Protection of School Playing Fields and Public Land, was issued in November 2012. Consent is therefore required under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act from the Secretary of State for any disposals or changes of use of school playing field land.

Steve Booth – Head of Property and Facilities
Tel 01344 352479
steve.booth@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Rights of way across school premises

From 12 February 2003 local highway authorities in England can divert or close rights of way which cross school land to protect pupils or staff from violence, or threat of violence; harassment; alarm or distress, arising from unlawful activity; or any other risk to their health or safety arising from such activity.

If you have a right of way across your school land, which threatens the wellbeing of pupils and staff you should contact your local education authority to alert them to the problem. Either you or they should then approach the local highway authority to see whether it would be possible to make a special diversion or extinguishment order.

Before taking this step, schools should first consider what other measures can be used to improve or maintain school security. They should tell local highway authorities what steps they have taken, as it will help to demonstrate the need for action.

Where these powers are used, highway authorities are encouraged to seek diversion rather than closure. Schools may therefore also wish to consider suggesting an alternative route, where appropriate.

The DfE expect highway authorities to be sympathetic to any requests, but they are not required by law to act.

Grounds Maintenance

Grounds Maintenance contract for the Borough was awarded to Continental Landscapes Limited (CLL) and commenced on 1 October 2014. The majority of schools committed to being part of this contract and this commitment is for 7 years with an option to extend. The schools contract was part of the tendering process and priced as part of the main contract to achieve the best price with economies of scale.



The Grounds Maintenance contract was not tendered with itemised prices as a Bill of Quantities type of contract. A total cost was required for all programmed work specified in the contract as a whole and within that a total cost for each of the internal customers who committed to the contract. In the case of schools each school had a total 'bottom line' price for current scheduled work undertaken at the time of tendering.

There is a pricing mechanism in the contract for additional 'ad hoc' works and this also covers any additional programmed works required and will be priced by type of work and measurement. This pricing cannot be used for any reductions in the work priced when tendered. Any requests for reductions in programmed work will need to be negotiated with the Environmental Services Contracts Manager because costs may still have to be paid as part of the overall tendered cost. Reductions in work can only be for reasons such as a new building on a grass areas and formal notice should be given as far as possible in advance e.g. when planning permission has been granted.

Street Cleansing ad hoc work can also be arranged for sweeping hard surfaces. This will be charged at contractual 'out of hours' overtime hourly rates.

Jennifer Coupland, Environmental Services Contracts Manager
Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing contact via e-mail below:
Environmental-Services.Admin@Bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Schools Grounds Maintenance SLA (being drawn up)

Trees

Where there are trees on site, in the interest of health and safety and to minimise any liability in respect of damage to adjoining properties, schools must ensure they obtain an annual tree survey to identify where tree works are required to ensure the safety of persons and property that could be affected by trees.

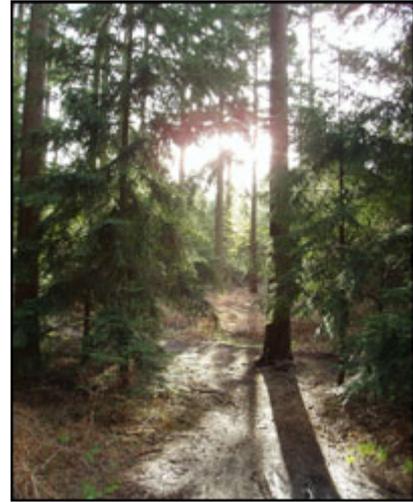
Schools can purchase a tree safety survey via an SLA provided by the Council.

[Tree Inspection SLA](#)

Schools must undertake any recommended emergency and high priority tree works identified in the safety survey from their devolved budgets.

Tree works can be commissioned via the Tree Service.

Jan Polnik - Principal Tree Officer
Tel. 01344 354115
email : jan.polnik@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)

SuDS is a drainage system which is designed to function in a sustainable way; by mimicking natural drainage processes, dealing with current and predicted rainfall, and enhancing the landscape and biodiversity where possible.

A well designed system will use drainage features which are either on the surface or close to the surface, so that the drainage system can be clearly seen and followed, from where the rainfall enters the system, to where it leaves the system. Therefore any inspection, maintenance and repair can be achieved without recourse to expensive below ground operations.

Maintenance

A drainage system should have a maintenance “manual” which is provided at the handover of the drainage system. This manual should set out the design of the system, the management train and the maintenance regime required.

The maintenance regime will vary depending upon the components used for the particular system which has been designed for the school. However, in general terms, the maintenance might consist of:

- A weekly visual inspection to ensure that the inlets and outlets to the various components are not blocked with litter for example, with removal of any blockages found;
- A weekly visual check on channels, ponds, etc; to ensure that they can function properly;

- A weekly/fortnightly removal of any litter, leaves, etc; from swales, channels, ponds, etc;
- Monthly visual check of any concrete or brick channels to ensure that they are not damaged, there is no loose mortar in joints, etc; repairs being arranged if necessary.
- Annual sweeping of permeable paving;
- Annual pond/wetland maintenance (if it is a wet feature which uses reeds or something similar);
- Annual check of filter drains to ensure that the surface is not clogged or overgrown;
- 5 yearly sweep and re-gritting of permeable paving;



Repairs

Repairs to SuDS will depend upon the components being used. Repairs might consist of replacing failed or damaged grass or planting; replacing clogged shingle in a filter drain; or localized settlement within permeable block paving.

SuDS should be designed with maintenance in mind, and as a result, due to the usually shallow nature of the components used, most repairs can be achieved fairly readily from the surface without too much disruption.

Most types of repair can usually be undertaken by the school caretaker or grounds maintenance contractor alongside their usual maintenance work, but on occasion repairs might be more substantial and need to involve a landscape, building or groundworks contractor.

Kevin Tidy – Senior Engineer
Tel. 01344 351170
email : kevin.tidy@bracknell-forest.gov.uk