



Supporting the  
UK Play Industry

## Maintenance and Inspection

School playgrounds and outdoor learning areas feel the impact of thousands of pairs of feet every year. Wear and tear to play equipment and surfacing is inevitable. Keep your play and outdoor equipment safe by avoiding these 3 common mistakes:

### 1. No inspection, maintenance and repair regime

Put a thorough inspection, maintenance and repair regime in place to ensure your play and outdoor facilities are safe and compliant with standards. Carrying out visual checks of equipment and facilities is important, but documenting observations is vital in the event of a claim following an incident or accident involving damaged or worn equipment. Don't ignore this important aspect of safeguarding.

### 2. Poorly trained and qualified staff

Ensure staff are trained and qualified to inspect your play and outdoor facilities. The Register of Play Inspectors (RPII) is the official UK examination, accreditation and certification body for play inspectors and provides a register of competent inspectors working independently and for play companies. It accredits training courses for inspectors to ensure that playground safety standards are met and adhered to, and its qualifications give a measurable degree of competency for carrying out inspections of school facilities. Its new schools qualification (<http://playinspectors.com/schools.html>) is aimed at those managing routine and operational inspections of their outdoor playgrounds.

### 3. No Post Installation Inspection

Before a school opens a new play area, a Post Installation Inspection should take place. This is undertaken by an independent inspector and can be commissioned either by the school or the API member play company installing the equipment. Once this inspection is complete and satisfactory, responsibility for safety passes to the school which must put in place an inspection regime, as set out in BSEN1176, the standard for play equipment.

To keep your play and outdoor facilities safe, here's a guide to inspection best practice:

#### Routine visual inspection

A trained staff member to observe the play or other space, looking for obvious hazards like missing or broken parts, broken glass or vandalism. Frequency: weekly during low periods of use, daily during times of high usage.

#### Operational inspection

A trained staff member to undertake a more detailed structural examination of wear, tear and stability of equipment. Frequency: every 3 months during low usage periods, once a month during times of high usage.

#### Annual main inspection

An annual inspection by a qualified inspector to ensure compliance with standards and overall safety.

For more expert advice on inspections, maintenance and repair of school play and outdoor facilities, visit <http://www.api-play.org>