



Att Ms Jo Maxsted
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Please ask for:
Peter Francis
Environmental Health
Direct Line: (01903)737695

Our Ref: EHPF/C204577

Dear Ms Maxsted

Environmental Protection Act 1990
Noise complaint re new playground
Summerlea County Primary School Rustington

I write with regard to noise complaints this department has received from eight separate residents of Orchard Park a static retirement home site in Worthing Road, Rustington. These complaints relate to the new playground area and the screaming and shouting noise of the pupils at play for a number of hours during the day.

The complainants have no issues with the school being there despite the fact that school numbers have greatly increased in the last few years with additional classrooms being added. Some have stated they have in the past enjoyed hearing the children playing in the distance. But what is now seriously impacting on their lives is the constant raucous background noise from the new playground which is sited adjacent to a number of static homes.

In general residents living near school playgrounds except the playground hubbub because it is restricted to set times and does not intrude after school hours, however in this case the residents have little or no respite from the noise as groups of children are rotated throughout the school day, so the playground can be in constant use. After school activities groups then use the area, so high noise levels from the playground can span from 8.45am in the morning until 4.30pm in the afternoon.

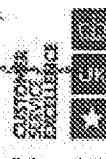
The complainants feel aggrieved that they were not made aware at any time of the siting of the playground nor consulted on its possible impact on them, whilst they saw a notice for the new classroom they were not given the opportunity to raise any concerns or objections to the playground.

Many static homes do not have a high level of insulation and this causes additional problems during hot weather as residents need to open doors and windows to cool their homes. However this of course exacerbates the level of noise they then have to endure. Whilst complainants understand it is vital for children to be able to express themselves in play, at times residents are unable to have a normal conversation or be able to hear a phone conversation, this impacts on their lives and the enjoyment of their home. Currently those that are able go out during the school day to get away from the constant noise.

It is generally accepted and recognised by the World Health Organisation and others that prolonged exposure to high noise levels can impact on people's health, symptoms being the inability to concentrate, stress, annoyance, high blood pressure and sleep loss even after the noise has stopped.

Nigel Lynn Chief Executive
Nigel Cross Resources Director and Deputy Chief Executive

Environmental Health
Littlehampton and Bognor Regis
Customer Services Help Points



After we had asked for and received noise diary sheets, monitoring equipment was installed for one week on 19th June 2014, and subsequently reinstalled on the 28th July in order to compare noise levels with the playground being used, and to get background noise level when the school is closed.

Our initial monitoring results do show a high level of noise throughout the day whilst the playground is in use. Whilst I except there is an element of subjectivity related to noise from children playing, because of the level and duration of the noise it may well be considered to be a statutory nuisance and as such liable to enforcement procedure by way of a Noise Abatement notice.

Clearly it is not route that we would wish to go down at this stage without first exploring all the options available to lessen the impact of the playground on this elderly community. I would therefore ask for your thoughts on a way forward on setting up a dialogue between the school and its neighbours to find a resolution to this issue.

Yours sincerely

Peter Francis
Pollution Officer