

We ask that The City of Victoria not allow ANY sheltering in Pemberton Park, and strictly enforce the removal of any sheltering that may occur in this park at any time in the future.

The safety and well-being of our children is at stake. This park is inside the 50m limit between a now approved shelter site and a school (GNS Middle and Senior Schools). Allowing any sheltering by the council is contravening the bylaws. Pemberton Park is also located just outside the 50m bylaw restriction of Margaret Jenkins primary school.

Children walk and cycle past Pemberton Park morning and afternoon on their way to and from various local schools. The playground is frequently used by the numerous school aged and pre-school aged children in the area, as well as for baseball and softball throughout the summer months. It is also a popular off-leash dog park well used throughout the day and one of the only all day off-leash dog parks in the area.

Allowing the park to be used for sheltering by the homeless would significantly increase the likelihood that local children will be exposed to well-documented dangerous and anti-social behaviour including illegal drug use and drug dealing, untreated mental health behaviour, theft, threats or acts of personal violence, and even death. There is extensive documentation available showing such incidents have been rapidly rising during the Covid-19 pandemic, making it even more inappropriate to allow Pemberton Park to be recommended as a sheltering site.

The risks are simply unacceptable. The decision to allow this has been made without any consultation with the affected local population and did not follow due process.

Should the Council allow the sheltering to occur, the risk of harm is high. Should such an incident occur, the Council's liability will be extreme.

Therefore we petition the City of Victoria to take the safest and most appropriate action and remove Pemberton Park from the list of suitable sites for sheltering, effective immediately and strictly enforce the removal of any such sheltering that may occur at any time in future.