

Playground Policy

At Broadway Primary we believe that Playtime is as important as any other part of the day. We encourage the children to take safe risk and, whilst wearing suitable clothing, can explore their learning outside.

1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions which affect children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

2. Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. The school acknowledges the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31, and supports the child's right to play. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities. We are supported by OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) regarding all aspects of our playground including Risk Benefit.

The OPAL programme rationale is that *"...better, more active and creative playtimes can mean happier and healthier children, and having happier, healthier, more active children usually results in a more positive attitude to learning in school, with more effective classroom lessons, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary behavioural problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life"*.

3. Definition and Value of Play

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity which a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. We believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play is critical to children's health and wellbeing, and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, different concepts and different ideas.
- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, with individuals, and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these, including sadness and happiness, rejection and acceptance, frustration and achievement, boredom and fascination, fear and confidence.
- Play encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.

- Play maintains children’s openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.
- Play allows children to learn in countless ways ensuring every minute of the school day is purposeful.

4. **Aims**

In relation to play our school aims to:

- ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- allow children to have a choice in their play and be an individual
- enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- aid children’s physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- provide a range of environments which will support children’s learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- promote independence and teamwork within children.
- build emotional and physical confidence and resilience.

5. **Rights**

Our school recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which includes *the right to play, recreation and leisure* (Article 31) and the *right of children to be listened to on matters important to them* (Article 12). We acknowledge that we have a duty take these rights seriously and listen to children’s views on their play.

6. **Benefit and Risk**

‘Play is great for children’s well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool’

Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (2012)

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document ‘Children’s Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach’ (September 2012) as the principle value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’: An Implementation Guide*.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the

chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. In the words of the play sector publication 'Best Play', play provision should aim to *'manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm'*.

In additions to standard risk/benefit assessments the school will practice dynamic risk management with children encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

Each week the school holds a 'Playground' assembly. This gives the school an opportunity to discuss with the children

- Concerns that may have arisen from the playground team or the children
- Reminders regarding the various types of play or the equipment
- An opportunity to discuss what we like about our playtime and also what areas we would like to develop further.

We also have a team of Playground Pupil Leaders – this is formed from our School Council. This group of children will listen to and feedback what they like about playtime but also any concerns or developments that need to be made.

The children are all encouraged to bring, and leave, appropriate clothing for playtime. To support the children in what they need to wear for playtime we have adopted a system

Playtime 1 – this is a playtime that does not require additional clothing – for example, a coat is not required unless children are using the designated mud areas

Playtime 2 – this playtime requires a coat – it could be raining or cold.

Playtime 3 – this playtime requires waterproof clothing – a minimum would be wellies and a waterproof coat but waterproof trousers would be preferred. Spaces in the playground will be made available – PolyTunnel, Eco Classroom for shelter.

Playtime 4 – this playtime has been deemed unfit and therefore children will all remain in their classrooms.

Playtime numbers can change, during a playtime, due to the change in weather.

7. **Supervision**

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adults present outdoors. The school recognizes OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging. However, the school recognise that some areas of play will present more risk than others. It is within these areas that some staff members will be placed.

The staff all follow a rota system. Members of staff are assigned to a specific area. Staff are all provided with a High Vision Jacket, First Aid Kit and a Walkie Talkie.

8. **The Adults' Role in Play**

The school will help children maximize the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who are informed by and work in accordance with the Playwork Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed, and ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment which nurtures children's self-directed play.

The playworker's core function is to create an environment which will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced playworker is capable of enriching the child's play experience both in terms of the design and resources of the physical environment and in terms of the attitudes and culture fostered within the play setting. Playworkers are a channel of access to new materials and tools and they can act as a stimulus to children to explore and learn. They are also available to participate in the play if invited. Staff are encouraged to play with the children wherever possible. A teacher is scheduled onto the playground at morning play to engage with children.

9. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable/unnecessary risks and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore for themselves through their freely chosen play.

We will strive to continually improve the quality and diversity of our school's grounds to enhance play. We will use the document 'Best Play' – To guide us on what a quality play environment should contain.

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/best-play/>

Our playground is checked each day and a timetable of more detailed safety inspections is also followed. The children are also taught to identify themselves the potential risks and alert a staff member should a hazard be found.

This policy was reviewed on 26/10/24 and will continue to be reviewed annually.