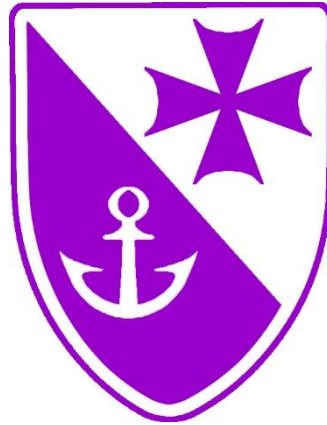


St Clement's and St John's Infant CE School



“I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord...
”plans to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Play Policy

Play Policy	Date created: October 2023
	Review date: October 2024
	Author: Nikki Rutherford
	Governors approved: Nov 2023

Statement of Intent

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions that 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 our children.

Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment.

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 to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their 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.

The OPAL Primary 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."

Our school values of confidence, creativity, compassion and curiosity are developed through the play opportunities provided.

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. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. It may be serious or light-hearted. It may produce something, or it may be done simply for its own sake. It allows children an opportunity to be creative, to make decisions and to assess and manage risks.

At St Clement's and St John's Infant School we recognise that play may be noisy, dirty, make a mess and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults. We believe that the role of the adults is to support the play process.

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, as well as different concepts and ideas to develop their **creativity**.
- Play enhances children's **confidence** and self-esteem. It develops their **compassion** and 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 **curiosity** and openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

Purpose and 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.
- 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 that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Provide a range of environments that 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 resilience.
- Allow children the right to assess risk, get out and tidy away equipment
- Ensure adults respect these rights, providing inclusive opportunities for creative, exciting play, use of restorative justice to resolve conflicts and to support children who have additional needs at playtime.

Benefit and risk

'Play is great for children's wellbeing 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 (Play Safety Forum, 2012)

We use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach (September 2012: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>) as the principal value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, we adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/8625/1/00942-2008DOM-EN.pdf>).

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. As outlined in 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 addition to standard risk-benefit assessments we will practise dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

Supervision

The law requires that children in school are supervised but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adult's present outdoors.

We have generous ratios of adults to children for playtimes and lunchtimes. We recognise OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging.

Except for new children in Reception, whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed, the school does not believe direct supervision is always possible or beneficial. Supervisors will mostly use 'ranging' and 'remote' supervision models, so that children can quickly find an adult and adults can move around the site to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

Term	Definition
Supervisor	The competent, trained adult providing the supervision. They will make decisions on what is acceptable play practice and what to do if unacceptable practice occurs and what to do in case of accidents.
Direct Supervision	This is where the supervisor(s) will be able to see the area(s) of play and be close at hand.
Remote Supervision	This is where the supervisor(s) are located at a relatively static location some distance from an activity.
Ranging Supervision	This is where the supervisor(s) move around the play areas. This may be within zones.

The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who will use and refer to 'The Principles of Playwork' when appropriate interventions are needed, but ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment which nurtures self-directed play. All classroom-based adults working at the school are part of the 'Play Team'.

Playworkers will:

- Create an environment that will stimulate children's play
- Allow children freedom to explore, take risks and try new things
- Enable children to solve problems and build resilience through explicit teaching and modelling of behaviours.
- Be responsive to children's invitations and requests
- Carry out dynamic risk assessments to weigh up the risk and benefits of play activities and help develop the children's risk awareness.
- Observe and intervene where necessary
- Participate in the play when invited!

The playwork principles

Keep a reflection diary to understand how you do these things

1. Understand Need

All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals.

2. Understand Process

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. Children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

3. Support Process

The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.

4. Advocate for Play

For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. Create Spaces

The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

6. Learn and Reflect

The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, reflective practice.

7. Understand Impact

Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Choose Intervention Styles

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

Play Environment

We aim to provide effective play spaces that:

- are bespoke to our children
- are well located
- are stimulating and free from unacceptable or unnecessary risk
- make use of natural elements
- provide a range of play experiences
- are accessible to all pupils regardless of ability, gender or experience
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunity to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- is *safe enough** for play

We will use the document 'Best Play' to guide us on what a quality play environment should contain.

www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf

* '*safe enough*' describes the understanding that play cannot always be safe. Sometimes children fall over, hurt themselves or accidentally hurt others whilst playing. Risk assessment minimises this risk, however it cannot completely remove risk – therefore we must always look to ensure that play is '*safe enough*'.

Health and Safety

To ensure a safe play environment, we will:

- Staff will lead the children in regular conversations around expectations and risk within the play environment, through assembly times.
- Children will be shown new and unusual resources and materials to develop their understanding of safe use.
- Visual reminders used to support pupil understanding.
- Have a clear process for the collection and introduction of resources and loose parts.
 - All collected/donated resources initially stored in designated area
 - Only the play leaders or coordinator can move these into the play zones for children
 - All resources checked for safety before being introduced to the children. Checked by Play leaders, coordinator or site manager.
 - All play workers will constantly assess the safety of the materials and resources used by the children, removing anything broken or unsafe.
 - Any broken or unsafe resources or materials will be instantly removed and placed into the 'damaged' area for disposal.
- Guide pupils, through modelling and conversation, to take appropriate risk. Staff will stop any unsafe practice by redirecting the pupils and demonstrating safer practice.