



South Wonston Primary School Play Policy

1. Commitment

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 of our children.

2. Rationale

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

At South Wonston Primary School, the play curriculum has been expertly tailored to enable pupils to become resilient, co-operative and managed risk-takers. Our committed OPAL team and dedicated play team will ensure that pupils are given opportunities to gain important skills and knowledge to develop their learning journey through the means of play.

3. Definition and value of play

Play is any freely chosen activity which a child finds satisfying and creative. 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 and make decisions.

Here at South Wonston Primary School we recognise that play may need to make a noise, get dirty, make a mess and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults. We believe the role of the adults is to support the play process. Children will also have the opportunity for 'free range' play within the school grounds.

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.
- 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.

4. Aims

Our school play aims:

- To provide children with a play setting which is both stimulating and challenging.
- To allow children to take risks
- To provide children with a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- To provide a range of environments that will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- To explore the world around them through playful experimentation
- To develop social skills, enhancing communication, collaboration and problem solving.
- Encourage resilience and self-confidence.
- To think creatively.
- To develop independence and take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Develop physical health.
- To develop emotional health, allowing the balance between acting freely and allowing everyone to have their rights.
- To develop skills in self-assessing and managing risk.

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

6. 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)

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document *Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach* (September 2012) as the principal 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* (Play Safety Forum, 2012).

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 the school will practise dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

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.

Except for new children in reception, the school does not believe direct supervision of playtime is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol the playground to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging. We will ensure that the numbers of staff available and patrolling the play area to support play are assessed and are suitable for the number of children at play.

8. First Aid

All lunchtime staff carry a bag, which contains basic First Aid equipment. There is also additional First Aid equipment stored in the Quiet area.

Any head bumps must be reported to parents via medical tracker; this will be completed by the member of staff dealing with the child.

If an incident involving a child requires a phone call home this must be discussed with the SLT. All First Aid incidents should be recorded on Medical Tracker.

9. 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 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 that nurtures children's self-directed play.

The playworker's core function is to create an environment that 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.

10. Equality and diversity

All children are entitled to welcoming and accessible play provision, irrespective of gender, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin or individual abilities. It is our responsibility to ensure adequate provision is provided.

This policy will be closely monitored by the SLT and the OPAL working party and reviewed based on the needs of the adults and children in the school.

The policy will be reviewed in line with the SEND code of practice to ensure all children are able to access the play provision (this may mean with support for some children).

All parts of play provision can be accessible. Please see our Equality and Diversity Policy which can be found on the school website.

11. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable or 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.

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

To manage risks

- Our Site Manager performs regular Health & Safety checks of the play areas:
- The Opal working party and all playtime supervision staff will check for dangers/ risks when outside with the children

- The children will be made aware of possible risks and helped to manage those via staff alerting them, for example slippery or wet surfaces
- Separate the play area into zones to maintain a risk/benefit management system creating quiet areas as well as areas for physical play.
- All loose parts will be managed and maintained through a regular audit cycle overseen by the play co-ordinator and play leader.

13. Clothing

We would advise as staff that all children come prepared for outdoor/ all weather play.

- During the colder and wet weather wellies or walking boots should be worn by staff and children when walking on the school field or in the woods.
- Children should also wear coats during cold weather. Children need to be responsible for managing their outdoor clothing. This includes being prepared before they go outside to play. In the summer children will need sun cream and hats to protect themselves.
- Part of outdoor play means children may get muddy. We will endeavour to reduce this as much as possible but free play means allowing children to explore the areas they like. A uniform is designed to give children a sense of belonging but also a way to protect their 'good' clothes they wear at home.