

Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery 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 Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery, we want to be Welders, Footballers, Performers, Teachers, Scientists, Vets, Vloggers, Astronauts, Archaeologists, Pilots, Hairdressers, Engineers and Fashion Designers. We want to be confident in our own abilities and feel like we're a part of something bigger than us. We want to ask questions to expand our knowledge, becoming sociable learners and we want to use our experiences to take on greater adventures in life together, as a team. We need to remember that we can be perfect learners and we can achieve anything we put our minds to.

At Hollinswood Primary our curriculum develops four key values of respect, resourcefulness, resilience and responsibility in our children.

Being respectful:

- Children are encouraged to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others regardless of race and culture.
- Children are encouraged to treat others fairly and with kindness, respect and encouragement.
- Children are taught to respect, value and support each other as learners and their learning environment.
- Children are taught about the environment and how they impact on the environment and the world around them.

Being resourceful:

- Children will become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners.
- Children will have the mental agility to transfer the skills and knowledge they have learned to solve problems and embrace new opportunities.
- Children will be able to build on prior knowledge and skills.

Being resilient:

- Children will be encouraged to take pride in their work and the work of others.
- Children will be confident to take risks.

- Children will develop a 'have a go attitude.'

Being responsible:

- Children will recognise their own mistakes and errors as a learning opportunity.
- Children will have high expectations for themselves – learning behaviours, progress in learning, presentation and personal conduct.
- Adults and children establish positive working relationships in the classroom and around school.

3. Definition and value of play

Play is defined as a process that is intrinsically motivated, directed by the child and freely chosen by the child. Play has its own value and provides its own purpose. 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 Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery, 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 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.
- 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

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.

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). [Children's play and leisure: promoting a balanced approach \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/publications/childrensplayandleisure.htm)

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.

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 possible or beneficial. Supervisors will 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.

This will be part of the school's dynamic risk assessment benefits as part of this we have taken on the use of OPAL's Rapid Response to managing risk.

OPAL have developed the five-part R.A.P.I.D. Response to managing risk in your school approach which should be followed alongside the guidance on managing loose parts set out in OPAL Loose Part Guidance.

1. Risk-Benefit Assessment - means you should look at your usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place, and keep a written record of the areas in the table below using the risk-benefit template provided. Your assessments should cover hazards deemed to have the potential for unacceptable risk of death or serious injury. Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery has developed our own Risk Benefit assessment and this has been shared with staff and parents, and is available on the school's website.

2. Assemblies - OPAL Play Assemblies as described in guidance Doc 3.10. These should be held regularly with children to discuss, inform and negotiate risks that arise during play. A brief written log must be kept noting risks discussed and how they will be managed.

Regular assemblies will be delivered when new equipment is introduced into the school environment and to remind the children and staff of the school values which relate to play.

3. Policy - a play policy approved by the governing body and leadership is essential and should form the basis for all staff understanding and decision making about managing risk in play. This should include formal adoption of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance. This information is part of the play policy section on supervision.

4. Inspection - technical reports of engineered fixed play equipment. Fixed equipment should have an annual inspection by a certified inspector. Ongoing visual inspections should be carried out by a member of staff and a record kept.

A record is kept of any inspections or equipment that is found to be damaged and needs fixing.

5. Dynamic Risk Management - means that staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place. They should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity of harm whilst preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain 'relaxed vigilance'. This means that the quality of play will suffer if the adult's attitude is one of hovering, anxious over-attention. There should be an assumption that most play is not dangerous and that children can develop a high degree of competence, given practice, over time. However, staff should also be vigilant, they should be aware of the kinds of play and resources being used in their patch, who is playing and what the likely risks are.

Intervention – if staff think that serious harm (meaning death, life-long debilitating injury or hospitalisation), is imminent or probable they should intervene to either stop or manage the risk. If they think that serious harm is possible but not probable, they should remain vigilant.

If serious harm is very unlikely then they should probably focus their attention elsewhere or act to further improve the quality of the play offer.

Dynamic risk assessment has been introduced to all members of staff as part of a school, Inset Day- regular meetings held with lunchtime supervisors around their use of dynamic risk assessments.

8. 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.

Roles and responsibilities	
Governor play champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and assess play within the school. • Evaluate and monitor play within the school. • Give feedback and support to the play team. • Help to make improvements to play in the school. • Attend play team meetings once a term. • Gain feedback from the children. • Report to and share with governors what has been observed and how play has been developed within the school. • Share contributions and ideas from the wider community. • Create links in the community that will develop play in the school, eg for sourcing loose parts or encouraging local councillors to see the importance of, and prioritise, play.
Curricular Lead for play	<p>The curricular lead for play is responsible for driving all play related initiatives forward within the school. In one form entry schools, they will be in SLT or an experienced teacher. In two form or above, they will be in SLT. This post requires one hour a week during the first year of the OPAL Primary Programme and one hour a fortnight after that.</p> <p>The curricular lead for play is the person who has responsibility for the school's play action plan and the inclusion of play in the school improvement plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating and monitoring play within the school. • Being responsible for, supporting for and managing the play team and their professional development. • Managing the play coordinators and their professional development. • Reviewing and updating the school's play action plan at least three times a year. • Working closely with the play coordinator to deliver the schools play action plan. • Carrying out observations of playtimes once every half term.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with service support and/or the business manager regarding the maintenance and improvements of the outside area. • Liaising with the play coordinator and the play team regarding the ordering and replenishing of loose parts and resources for play. • Work with the play coordinator to ensure regular play team meetings are held to train in playwork practice and improve play at the school. • Incorporating pupil voice for play into the school's communications plan • Liaising with the play coordinator to ensure regular play assemblies are conducted using OPAL's CINI format. <p>Discuss resources with the children (school council) and use their views to create development plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and carry out the replenishment of resources through: • Securing funding from internal or external sources. • Purchasing resources as required. • Coordinating appeals within school and local communities for resources. • Collecting resources from sources such as the scrapstore.
Play coordinator	<p>The play coordinator will support and facilitate meaningful and productive child-initiated play during the school day in accordance with the play policy.</p> <p>Ensure wellbeing of pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise pupils in designated areas of the school (including playground or external spaces) during the lunchtime/break times and to ensure their safety, welfare and general conduct through appropriate application of the school's policies and procedures. • Establish safe and proper behaviour, by appropriate intervention or referral to senior staff, as appropriate. • Identify and report any unauthorised visitors on school premises. • Complete any relevant documentation required by the school in relation to incidents occurring during the lunchtime break period and to participate in review/medical meetings, as required. • Be aware of any special medical conditions, eg haemophilia, and the relevant precautions and treatments necessary. • Take any immediate action to attend to sickness or accidents by carrying out minor first aid and summoning relevant assistance. • Report any major accidents or bumped heads to the class teacher and record in the accident book.- this is done by our first aiders - need to look at and clarify. <p>Ensure a diverse range of playable resources is provided for, and is accessible to all children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure resources are stored appropriately. • Check the quality and condition of resources and repair or remove any resources that are not in a suitable condition for continued use. <p>Provide support and training for other school staff or pupils as required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build playworker expertise and practice within the play team. • Organise and support pupil playground buddies with their role. • Facilitate peer-led play opportunities. • Provide suggestions for playmaker activities and games.

	<p>Ensure enriching play events or opportunities are created</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and plan with pupils/staff and school council. • Implement planned activities. • Review activities to promote self-evaluation and play development. <p>Create opportunities for play to support the social and behavioural development of pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a rich and varied set of play opportunities is available for all children to engage in. • Provide engaging playwork interventions where pupils who find positive behaviour choices challenging.
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9. Equality and diversity

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs, we will ensure all children, regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs, can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school.

10. 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