



Allendale Primary School Play Policy

The school undertakes to refer to the play policy in all decisions which affect children's play. This policy supports the aims of our school amongst which are to:

- Develop each child's self-esteem and ensure they feel valued and respected
- Provide an environment where children feel safe to learn, take risks and express themselves appropriately.
- Support and celebrate every child's individual achievements in all spheres of life.
- Provide a challenging and stimulating learning environment to enable children to develop their full potential.
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers and other professionals.

We aim for all our children to:

- Communicate and express their feelings and ideas with both peers and adults.
- Become independent, confident, well-motivated and self-disciplined learners.
- Develop an attitude of tolerance and respect for all.
- Learn that they are responsible for their own behaviour and reflect upon their actions and choices.
- Enjoy their learning by sharing and celebrating their talents and achievements within the school and wider community.
- Engage fully with their own learning and challenge themselves to excel.

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 Charter 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.

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 behavioral problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life”.*



The 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 the learning opportunities of play include:

- Emotions, e.g. learning about oneself and others, sadness/gladness, rejection/acceptance, frustration/achievement, boredom/fascination, fear/confidence.
- Social interactions - enhancing self-esteem and understanding of others through freely chosen interactions e.g. within peer groups, with individuals, with groups of different ages, abilities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.
- Making choices, problem solving, being creative,
- Playing with scrap materials, tyres and other multipurpose objects
- Achieving and also coping with failing,
- Communication and negotiation skills

The Adults Role in Play

Our school will help children maximize the benefits they can gain from play by provision of trained staff who are informed by and work to the Playwork Principles.

- Play is essential for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, different concepts and ideas
- Encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices
- Play is critical to children's physical and emotional health, and enables them to explore and develop the balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others
- Free play can have a direct positive impact on a child's ability to reach their potential

Aims:

Our school aims to address the provision of improved play opportunities:

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



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: Implementation guide is published for Play England 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. It will adopt a benefits/risk approach as detailed in 'Managing Risk in Play Provision' Implementation Guide. Managing Risk in Play Provision Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children and young people legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning 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 practise dynamic risk management with children encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

Supervision

During the school day there will be adults present outdoors. The school recognizes OPAL's three models of supervision Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in Early Years 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 the site to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

The Adults' Role in Play

Staff 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.

Staff will create an environment which will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. Through regular assemblies and class sessions we aim to enrich 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. P Staff 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 available to participate in the play if invited.

Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to a stimulating environment that is free from unacceptable risk and thereby offer the opportunity to explore through their freely chosen play. We will strive to develop our school grounds, in consultation with children, staff, governors and parents in order to offer a diverse and interesting play offer to stimulate social and creative playtimes.

This policy will be reviewed in line our policy review cycle.

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January 2020