



ANDOVERSFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Play Policy

Rationale

This policy sets out the school's commitment to ensuring that quality environments for play and informal recreation are available to all its children, and aims to improve the way we think about, and provide, opportunities for play. In line with Gloucestershire Council policy, the school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment within challenging settings, free from unacceptable levels of risk.

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

Purpose

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.

- 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 meet formal educational goals

Play and Risk

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."

An essential element of exploration within the medium of play is the opportunity for children to experience freely-chosen activities, where they can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond their existing capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to independently judge risks and learn new skills.

'Without opportunities to take acceptable levels of risk children's development is inhibited, undermining their capacity to deal with the wider unsupervised world.'

At Andoversford, we recognise the importance of risk in children's play and understand that children want to and need to take risks within their play. We offer children stimulating and challenging play opportunities which enable them to explore and develop their abilities. We understand that risk cannot and should not be eliminated from the play settings.

It is the school's responsibility to strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. We assess the risks against the benefits that play can bring. (see our Loose Parts Risk Assessment).

Carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be reviewed on an annual basis, or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment takes place.

External Links:

- <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-implementationguide.aspx>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>
- http://www.skillsactive.com/PDF/sectors/Playwork_Principles.pdf