



Twerton Infant School and Nursery Play Policy

The school undertakes to refer to the play policy in all decisions which affect children's play

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"*.

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play. Therefore this time needs to be coherent and planned for. Changes in society such as heavier traffic, busier lifestyles, fewer areas for play and awareness of risk have led to 'play deprivation' for many of today's children. This makes their play opportunities at school even more vital.

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 skill.



The Children's Role in Play

The children will all have access to their own version of the Play Policy, Appendix 1. In it will also include the rights and responsibilities of the children to:

- Have ownership of their play and outdoor learning experiences
- Respect and look after each other their environment, equipment and toys.
- To be aware of sanctions surrounding purposely dangerous or unsafe behaviour
- Ensure that playtimes are fun for everybody

This children's policy will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with School.

The Adults Role in Play: The 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;
- Play 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: The 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'.

'HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential dangers'. (HSE, 2013)

In additions to standard risk/benefit assessments the school will practice 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 reception the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging models so that children can quickly find and adult and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.



The Adults' Role in Play

We, as an entire staff, are fully committed to working with children to provide the play experiences that they want and need in their school. We will have a continuing dialogue with children about the play provision in the playground which will include regular play assemblies, CAT Team involvement, Surveys and other Pupil Voice outlets.

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.

The play-worker's core function is to create an environment which will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced play-worker 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. Play-workers 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 both themselves, through their freely chosen play.

We will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing, encouraging the children to value natural or found objects for play;
- include the children when planning for play and learning outdoors;
- ensure that the outdoor area offers all children the opportunity to investigate, take risks and explore and use their imagination and creativity;
- expect the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things;
- give children the opportunity to manage the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors;
- enrich the quality of the environment to maximise variety of play types and increase play value;
- ensure that the playground and outside areas are an integrated area where all children from YR to Year 2 can play safely.
- teach children their responsibilities with regard to maintaining the quality of their outdoor space, and the equipment available and ensure they take an active part in doing this;
- promote children's pride for the outdoor space that belongs to them.



APPENDIX 1

Children's Play Policy

We have the right to have fun at playtimes. We have the responsibility to make sure that everyone has fun and our play does not stop this.

We have the right to make our own decisions about our play and choose what we do. We have the responsibility to make sure our decisions don't affect others in a negative way.

We have the right to choose who we play with. We have the responsibility that no one is left out of play or forced to do something they don't want to.

We have the right play with lots of different toys and have a well looked after environment. We have the responsibility to take pride in, respect and look after our environment and toys.

We have the right to explore be creative and take thoughtful risks. We have the responsibility to think about what we are doing and talk to a play maker about the risks we are taking if they ask us too.





Date adopted: 12th March 2019

Next Review date: March 2020