

Christ Church CoE Primary School

School Policy Document



PLAY POLICY

Date Written	February 2024
Date Approved by Full Governing Body	Spring 2024
Date of Next Review	Spring 2025

Christ Church CoE Primary School



Play Policy

This policy was formulated to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Governing Body recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This policy will ensure equality and fairness regardless of race, sex (gender), sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, disability or age.

Learning & Growing Together in FAITH, HOPE & LOVE.

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.

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."

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 Christ Church Primary school we recognise that in play we 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:

- Play is critical to children's health and wellbeing; it is 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.

Aims

- Provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively and that will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them
- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- Enable children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.
- Promote independence and teamwork within children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Ensure adults provide inclusive opportunities for creative, exciting play and use restorative justice to resolve conflicts and to support children who have additional needs at playtime.
- Allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.

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.

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.

Please refer to the full HSE Managing Risk Document which is attached as an appendix to this policy.

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.

Christ Church Primary School recognise OPAL's three models of adult supervision for outdoor play: Direct, Remote and Ranging.

Except for new children joining the school in F2/Reception - whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed - the school does not believe that direct supervision is always practical or beneficial. Playtime supervisors and lunchtime playworkers 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.

The adult role in play

We 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.

PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES	
1	All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
2	Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3	The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4	For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5	The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6	The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7	Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8	Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

An adult may suggest wider opportunities to develop play or to enhance it. This may include adding new resources or play equipment. Adults may ask questions to deepen understanding or peek interest in play, like *"Wow, this is amazing. How does it work?"* or *"I love what you have made. Why did you choose to do it like that?"*.

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.

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the OPAL Working Party