



## Outdoor Play and Learning Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Forest School Handbook
- Health and Safety Executive Guidance on Risk

### Rationale

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school during playtime. This time is valuable. Changes in culture and society have led to 'play poverty' in childhood which has numerous negative impacts.

Better play means happier children. Happier children means fewer unexpected behaviours, a more positive attitude to school, core skills development, fewer accidents and happier staff.

Fairlawn Primary School recognizes the importance of the need for high quality sustainable play for children regardless of their needs and abilities and that inclusive play is achieved by offering carefully considered outdoor spaces that allow a real choice of accessible play opportunities. We believe that play is essential for physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development.

Children need and choose exciting places to play, which inevitably means managing situations that are inherently risky. OPAL will enable us to spread play activities across the school, which we hope, will result in a reduction of collisions between children and will give children a wider range of play activities.

### **Links to learning**

Research shows that play can enhance problem solving; it is also widely regarded as providing opportunities for social interaction and language development. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types, e.g. through risk taking and exploratory play in formal and informal settings, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries.

### The Play Team

**Strategic leaders-** Hania Ryans, Emily Bruggy and Rosamund Clarke

**Curriculum Leaders-** Robert Evans KS2 and Rachel Peters KS1

## **Lead Play Rangers-** Heidi Brownlee and Nicola Milner

### **PTA – Will Cutler**

The play team hold a meeting one afternoon every half term for the whole team. Agenda will be set and minutes taken.

The play ranger team should meet half-termly for updates and training.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Strategic leaders**

- Meetings with the team and with play workers
- Ensuring feedback from children feeds in to any future developments and identifies play equipment
- Assemblies to report and share with children all new play offers and recap health and safety rules
- Ensure play is a central part of SDP
- Liaising with parents and the wider community
- Risk assessments updated as required and shared with all relevant parties
- Budgeting and seeking finance to fund OPAL

### **Curriculum Leaders**

- Evaluating and monitoring play within the school
- Making improvements and managing the maintenance of the outside areas
- Report to SLT any health and safety concerns
- Discuss resourcing with all children via Pupil Parliament
- Organise playground buddies to support play
- Train play rangers to check areas before use and to leave resources tidy
- Updating all staff on plans for OPAL
- Updating the notice board in the playground
- Ensure that twitter is used regularly as a medium to promote OPAL play
- Checking resources as they arrive to meet health and safety standards

### **Lead Play Rangers**

- Responsible for managing the play ranger team and directing as required. Including regular meetings.
- Evaluating and monitoring play within the school feeding back to curriculum leaders
- Coordinating activities during lunchtime
- Making improvements and managing the maintenance of the outside area
- Ordering and replenishing stock and the proper storage of all resources
- Ensure all areas are supervised during lunchtime and all play workers carrying bumbags for first aid
- Report and remove all faulty equipment immediately.

- Train play rangers including dealing with low level behaviour incidents.

## **Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk**

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled environment. Play provision should aim at managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm. Exposure to some degree of risk gives children the chance to learn about risk and consequences in a controlled environment.

Research shows that the uncertainty and challenge of much of children's play is a very large part of its appeal to them, and that it also enhances the development of their brains and bodies, making them more adaptable and resilient as they grow. Risk and challenge is not limited to physical risk – it includes the uncertainties involved in making new friends, playing with children from different backgrounds and building emotional resilience through trying out new experiences with the possibility of failure.

Children should be encouraged and supported to encounter and manage risk for themselves in an environment that is as safe as it needs to be rather than completely devoid of risk. The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

## **All Weather Play**

*'There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing'*

(Norwegian Head teacher, April 2005)

The school takes a 'whatever the weather' approach to play.

In order to allow for access to the whole grounds throughout the year; both pupils and staff are expected to have suitable warm and waterproof clothing in school at all times, including boots.

In extreme weather, however, such as torrential rain, icy conditions or intense sun, the decision will be made by SLT as to whether to limit or curtail play activities if it is felt that by not doing so the children will be at significant risk.

Date: Reviewed March 2021