



Fairlawn Play Policy

We are linked with OPAL (outdoor play and learning) This is a mentor-supported school improvement program addressing all 18 areas a school must plan for if they want to sustainably improve the quality of play.

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 incidents of unexpected behaviour, a more positive attitude to school, core skills development, fewer accidents and happier staff.

Fairlawn Primary School recognises 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 offer a real choice of accessible play opportunities. We believe that play is essential for physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development.

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.

OPAL team

Strategic leaders	Hania Ryans, Emily Bruggy, Ros Clarke
Curriculum Leaders	Rob Evans KS2 and Rachel Peters KS1
Lead Play worker	Heidi Brownlee
Parent champion	Charlotte Hardy
PTA	Victoria Thompson-Hill, Anna Chaddock and Philippa Jones

Meetings one afternoon every half term for all the team. Agenda will be set and notes taken.

Play worker team to meet half termly for updates and training



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 workers 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 workers

- Being responsible for managing the play 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 proper storage of all resources
- Ensure all areas are supervised during lunchtime and all play workers wear hi viz, carry bumbags for first aid and walkie talkies for communication.
- Report and remove all faulty equipment immediately.
- Train play workers including how to deal with low level behaviour incidents.



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 resulting in a reduction of collisions between children and giving children a wider range of play activities.

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 Headteacher, 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.