



OPAL

Handbook

Raeburn Primary School





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OPAL Vision



At Raeburn we recognise that play is an essential part of a happy and healthy childhood. We aim to provide high quality, enjoyable play experiences for all children across school. We will do this by providing carefully considered outdoor spaces, play structures and resources that offer a rich choice of accessible play experiences for every child. We will refer to our school's vision and this play policy in all decisions that affect our children's play. We are committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

We provide a wide range of balanced learning opportunities in a caring and stimulating environment; this extends to the learning, and health and well-being experiences that can be achieved at play times. We aim to seek the maximum potential development for children at Raeburn and quality opportunities are key to their learning, development of strong friendships and sense of being well.



Mission Statement



At Raeburn we acknowledge Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that ‘a child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.’ We believe that all children need opportunities to play which 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.

At Raeburn we seek to attain the highest standard for all our children, in all aspects of school life. With children spending up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play, it is imperative that this time needs to be coherent and well thought out. Current societal conditions, for example, heavier traffic, busier lifestyles, fewer areas for play and concerns about various risks have led to children having less time, space and permission for play in the wider public realm. This makes their play opportunities at school even more vital.

When speaking to children in January 2024, there were many comments about them enjoying playtimes, but some children requested “more things to do”, “a bigger choice of activities, not just toys” and “more space to play”. As a result we aim to maximise our use of the school grounds and to invest our efforts in increasing the range of play resources. Improving the play value of our site is key to children’s enjoyment of school, will support their learning, creativity, friendships and in turn their sense of well being and resilience. Playing and being well are as key to children's enjoyment of life as they are to their development. Furthermore The benefits of ‘Quality play’ are key to the realisation of our school vision and our Citizenship Award.



Play and Risk Management Policy



Definition and Value of Play

The United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child defines play as: "any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end".

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning; a finding confirmed by many studies of early childhood. 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, children can experiment, try new things and push their boundaries in a secure environment. At Raeburn we believe that children should have the opportunity to experience different types of play, see Appendix 1 'Best Play' – Play Types. By having these opportunities, our children will have the potential to reap the many benefits that play has.

Better quality play leads to happier children and happier staff. With better quality play opportunities/ there are fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school and improved skills development and learning. As the children improve their quality of play and have more enriching play times, there are fewer accidents and classroom learning is enhanced as the children come in from play happy and ready to learn, see Appendix 2 'The Case for Play in Schools'.

Aims

In relation to play, we aim to:

- Ensure that children have access to a wide range of opportunities for play which they enjoy.
- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment, which encourage children to explore, learn about and process the world around them.
- Allow children to take risks and use a balanced approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other, but also for play to be co-operative or solitary.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Promote self-regulation, independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience amongst our children.
- Ensure that children have a right to play with anything they choose from the playground resources, as long as it is reasonably safe for them to do so, regardless of age, gender, social or cultural background.
- Encourage adults to be responsive to children's invitations and requests, and to carry out dynamic risk-benefit assessments to weigh up the risk and benefits of play activities and develop the children's risk awareness.

Our Play policy has been approved by Governors, The policy will be reviewed every 2 years. The policy can be accessed by all staff on the school drive in the policy section.

Our Play Charter was developed by staff and pupils to help strengthen the values we want to install around our lunchtime provision. Each class displays this.



Charter for Children's Play



- **We all have the right to play at playtimes!**
 - It's our responsibility to respect that everyone's play is important and no one's play is more important than anyone else's.

- **We have the right to choose how we play and what we do.**
 - We need to make sure our choices don't upset or harm others.

- **We have the right to decide who we play with.**
 - It's our responsibility to make sure no one is made to do something they don't want to.

- **We have the right to use lots of different things to play with and enjoy a nice environment.**
 - To keep that right, we need to take care of the toys and spaces we use.

- **We have the right to explore, be creative, and try new things.**
 - We must think carefully about what we're doing and talk to the play team if they ask us about any risks.

- **If the play team thinks something is dangerous or disruptive, we must listen.**
 - We'll stop, talk about it, and find a safer or better way to play.



Working Group



Ms Bushell
Headteacher

Ms Davis
Play Governor

Miss Kennedy
Play Curricular Lead

Miss Johnson
Play Curricular Lead

Mr P Costain
Care Taker

Mr G Costain
*Play Coordinator
Site Manager*

Mrs C Dunbar
*Play Team
Parent Champion*

Mrs A Calland
*TA Staff member
Parent Champion*



Play Team



Ms Davis
Play Governor

Miss Johnson
Play Curricular Lead

Miss Kennedy
Play Curricular Lead

Mr G Costain
Play Coordinator
Site Manager

Mrs C Dunbar
Play Team
Parent Champion

Mrs D Williams
Play Team

Mrs P Cousins
Play Team

Mrs L Gill
Play Team

Mrs J Oliver
Play Team

Mrs S Laidlaw
Play Team

Mrs S Little
Play Team



Job Descriptions



Job Description- Curricular lead for play

The curricular lead for play is responsible for driving all play-related initiatives forward within the school. In one form entry schools, they will be in SLT or an experienced teacher. In two form or above, they will be in SLT. This post requires one hour a week during the first year of the OPAL Primary Programme and one hour a fortnight after that.

The curricular lead for play is the person who has responsibility for the school's play action plan and the inclusion of play in the school improvement plan.

The curricular lead for play will report to:

- SLT
- Governors
- PTA

What the role entails:

- Evaluating and monitoring play within the school.
- Being responsible for, supporting and managing the play team and their professional development.
- Managing the play coordinator and their professional development.
- Reviewing and updating the school's play action plan at least three times a year.
- Working closely with the play coordinator to deliver the school's play action plan.
- Carrying out observations of playtimes once every half term.
- Liaising with service support and/or the business manager regarding the maintenance and improvements of the outside area.
- Liaising with the play coordinator and the play team regarding the ordering and replenishing of loose parts and resources for play.
- Work with the play coordinator to ensure regular play team meetings are held to train in playwork practice and improve play at the school.
- Incorporating pupil voice for play into the school's communications plan
- Liaising with the play coordinator to ensure regular play assemblies are conducted using OPAL's CINI format.



Job Descriptions



Job Description- Play Coordinator - 11 hours per week

Purpose

- The play coordinator will support and facilitate meaningful and productive child-initiated play during the school day **in accordance with the play policy.**

Line management:

- The post holder is responsible to the headteacher and P.E. leader for fulfilling the duties set out in this job description.

Statutory requirements:

- The post holder will have a responsibility to promote and safeguard the safety and welfare of children in accordance with the schools' safeguarding incorporating child protection policy; anti-bullying policy; behaviour policy; and in line with the school's values and mission statement.

Responsibilities

Ensure wellbeing of pupils

- Ensure that all play team staff are completing their main duties to a high standard and that all staff are facilitating play development.
- Ensure that you and your play team have read the play policy and are fully supportive of it.
- Ensure the safety, welfare and general conduct through appropriate application of the school's policies and procedures.
- Establish safe and proper behaviour, by appropriate intervention or referral to senior staff, as appropriate.
- Identify and report any unauthorised visitors on school premises.
- Complete any relevant documentation required by the school in relation to incidents occurring during the lunchtime break period.
- Participate in OPAL/team around the child (TAC)/medical meetings, as required.
- Ensure you and your play team are aware of children's special medical conditions and the relevant precautions and treatments necessary.
- Take any immediate action to attend to sickness or accidents by carrying out minor first aid and summoning relevant assistance.
- Report any major accidents or bumped heads to the class teacher, headteacher and pastoral leader and record in the accident book.



Job Descriptions



Job Description- Play Coordinator - 11 hours per week

Ensure a diverse range of playable resources are provided for, and are accessible to, all children

- Ensure there are sufficient resources to promote each of the 'play types' as listed in the play policy.
- Check the quality and condition of resources and repair or remove any resources that are not of a suitable condition.
- Ensure resources are stored appropriately.

Discuss resources with the children (school council) and use their views to create development plans

Organise and carry out the replenishment of resources through:

- Securing funding from internal or external sources.
- Purchasing resources as required.
- Coordinating appeals within school and local communities for resources.
- Collecting resources from sources such as the Scrapstore.

Provide support and training for other school staff or pupils as required

- Build play team members expertise and practice.
- Organise and support pupil playground leaders with their role.
- Facilitate peer led play opportunities.
- Provide suggestions for playmaker activities and games.

Ensure enriching play events or opportunities are created

- Discuss and plan with pupils/staff and school council.
- Implement planned activities which promote play development.
- Review activities to promote self-evaluation and play development.

Create opportunities for play to support the social and behavioural development of pupils

- Ensure a rich and varied set of play opportunities is available to all children.
- Provide engaging playwork interventions for pupils who find positive behaviour choices challenging.



Job Descriptions



Job Description- Play Coordinator - 11 hours per week

Resources and support:

This post will carry an entitlement to appropriate support from the headteacher and P.E. leader.

Review:

The job description sets out the principle responsibilities for the post but does not describe each of the tasks that it may be necessary to carry out.

The job description may be reviewed from time to time in consultation with the post-holder in order to address the changing circumstances of priorities within the school.

Knowledge, experience and training:

Essential:

- Prior experience of working with children in an educational or playwork setting is essential.
- Relevant qualifications or experience of working with children.

Desirable:

- Playwork level 2 or above.



Job Descriptions



Parent play champion

Brief for parent play champion role

The parent play champions will:

- Observe and assess playtime within the school at least once a year.
- Sit on the OPAL working party and attend development meetings.
- Support other parents to understand the school's approach to play.
- Advocate OPAL's approach and for children's play within the PTA and school community.
- Share contributions and ideas from parents and the wider community.
- Support the ongoing resourcing of loose parts from parents and the wider community.



Job Descriptions



Governor play champion

Brief for governor responsible for play

Governor responsible for play at the school will be required to:

- Observe and assess play within the school.
- Evaluate and monitor play within the school.
- Give feedback and support to the play team.
- Help to make improvements to play in the school.
- Attend play team meetings once a term.
- Gain feedback from the children.
- Report to and share with governors what has been observed and how play has been developed within the school.
- Share contributions and ideas from the wider community.
- Create links in the community that will develop play in the school, eg for sourcing loose parts or encouraging local councillors to see the importance of, and prioritise, play.



Playwork Principles



1. Understand Need

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.

2. Understand Process

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. 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. Support Process

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. Advocate for Play

For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. Create Spaces

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. Learn and Reflect

The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, reflective practice.

7. Understand Impact

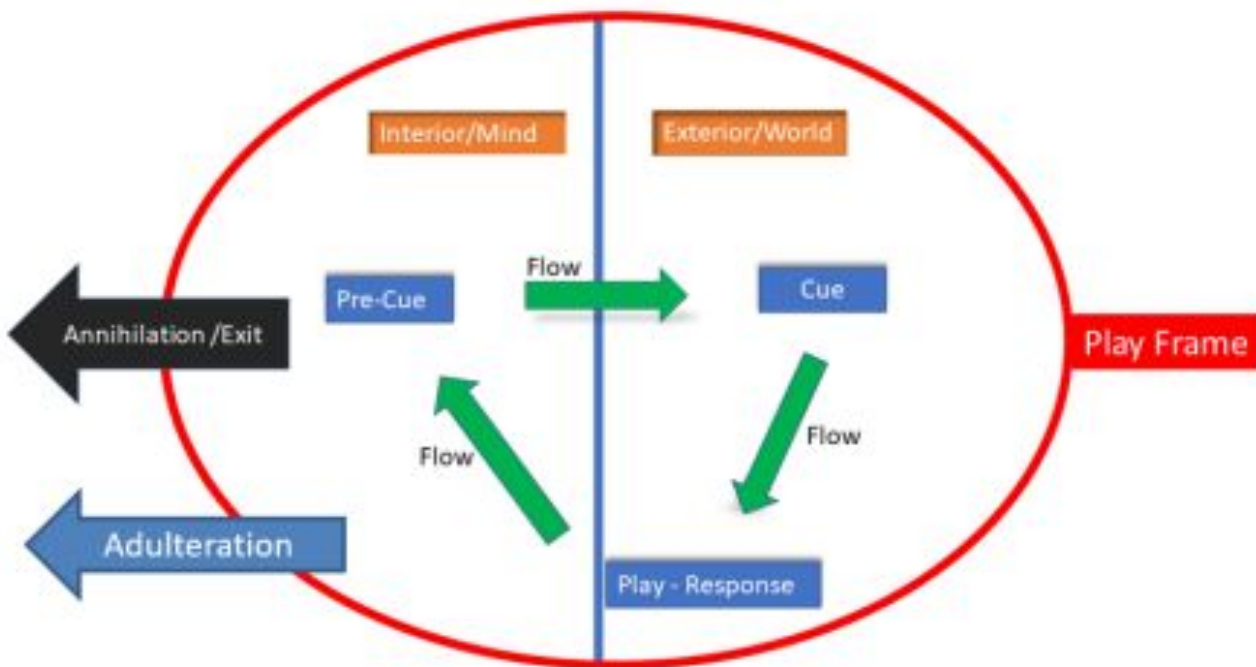
Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Choose Intervention Styles

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

The play cycle is the way playworkers explain what is happening in play within the child, and what impact the adult has on the child. It is a very valuable tool for supporting reflective practice whenever adults are intervening in the play process.

THE PLAY CYCLE



- Interior/Mind** What is happening in the child's head
- Exterior/World** What is happening in the real world
- Pre-Cue** The moment when a playful thought, idea or urge forms in the child's mind
- Cue** The moment when a playful movement, noise or act becomes external
- Play - Response** The feedback the child gets from people, environment or their senses
- Flow** → The deepening loop of action, reaction and understanding in play
- Play Frame** The conditions which hold the flow of play together
- Adulteration** ← The destruction of flow through imposed adult values or presence
- Annihilation /Exit** ← The point at which the child leaves, or is forced to leave the cycle

PLAY TYPES

Symbolic Play

Locomotor Play

Recapitulative Play

Creative Play

Exploratory Play

Communication Play

Role Play

Fantasy Play

Socio-dramatic Play

Object Play

Mastery Play

Deep Play

Rough and Tumble Play

Dramatic Play

Social Play

Imaginative Play

XPLAY CENTRAL
www.playcentral.org

A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types by Bob Hughes

enrolawry.com

Schema are common patterns of enquiry children are drawn to explore through their play. All good play environments will support deep exploration of all schema for all ages.



Trajectory: is all about movement in a clear direction, including running, riding, and throwing.



Rotation: is the exploration of anything circular, especially anything that rotates.



Enclosing: is about being enclosed in cosy and comfortable spaces or enclosing others.



Enveloping: is similar to enclosing but is about wrapping up, or placing objects inside other objects.



Positioning: is the placement of objects or themselves in lines patterns or sequences



Transporting: the movement of everything from one place to another



Connecting: exploring how to join objects, people and materials together.



Transforming: how materials or people can change their nature and appearance.



All weather and seasonal access



Access

All areas of the school site will be used when staffing levels allow. The Play Coordinator will allocate staff to different zones on the yard, and Mrs Gill will oversee overall staff deployment.

Wellies and clothing

All children will have access to wellies and will change their shoes when moving between different zones. If they get messy or wet during playtime, they can change into their spare clothes when they come back inside. We recognise that children have autonomy over their bodies and may feel warmer than adults after running around, so they will decide for themselves whether to wear their coats at lunchtime. However, for safety, they must take their coats outside with them to ensure there are no children left in the corridors.

Wet lunchtimes

In the rare case of a wet lunchtime, Mr Costain (the play coordinator) will make the final decision on whether classes need to stay indoors. During these times, classes will remain in their classrooms and have the opportunity to use play equipment available indoors. However, these instances will be incredibly rare and only in cases of extreme weather, so please ensure your children are prepared for all kinds of weather.



Communication



Assemblies

At least once every half term, an assembly will focus on lunchtime topics. This might involve reminding children about the Play Charter, explaining how to use equipment properly, or sharing examples of best practice. Weekly assemblies will also include celebrating children's play through the Play Team's Citizenship's stickers.

Parents

Parents will be kept informed about OPAL updates through various channels, including the headteacher's newsletter, the termly PE newsletter, and X (formerly known as Twitter). Additionally, there is a general OPAL tab on the school website that will be regularly updated.

The Playteam

The working team will meet once each half term, and the headteacher, along with the play curriculum leads, will meet with the play team at least six times a year. Any future developments and ideas will be shared with all staff during briefings.

Governors

The designated OPAL governor will conduct an informal observation once a year and will observe play. Staff will provide updates to the governors about OPAL through year group partnership meetings, and the OPAL governor will meet with the play team. The curriculum leads will report to the full governing body three times a year to keep them informed about OPAL initiatives.



Maintenance and Replacement



Mr G. Costain and Mr P. Costain are actively involved in the OPAL working team. They inspect the yard each morning for any potential issues, with records maintained as part of their procedures. They also take a leading role in maintaining fixed equipment, including coordinating annual checks and addressing any concerns raised in ROSPA reports.

At the end of each lunchtime, staff assist pupils in returning equipment to the designated storage area, giving pupils the responsibility for this task.

The OPAL team

Each week, the OPAL team will check the playground resources and make a list of any items that are running low. They will share this list with class teachers, who will include it in their weekly newsletters. If you come across any of these items and can donate them to the school, it would be greatly appreciated!

Did you know that we aim to have four loose parts per child?



Value of loose parts



Nearly all play requires stuff to play with

Loose parts refer to anything in the play environment that is not fixed and that children can use as part of their play. They can be natural materials like logs and stones, or man-made stuff like tyres, crates or planks. We can think about loose parts being like ingredients for a cook. However good your kitchen is, nothing great is going to be created unless you have a varied choice of ingredients!

Nearly all play requires stuff to play with, as well as places to play in. In schools, because there are a lot of children, an awful lot of stuff is required to play with. Schools which give their children lots and lots of varied loose parts to play with will always have much better quality play than those that don't.

There are some important golden rules to providing loose parts;

- **Plentiful** - Lots of children require lots of stuff. Around four pieces per child is a good guide.
- **Varied** - It does not really matter what it is but there should be lots of different stuff.
- **Accessible** - Children should always be able to get out and put away the loose parts themselves.
- **Safe Enough** - Adults should check and monitor the suitability and condition of loose parts.
- **Replaced** - When things are played with every day they'll get worn out or break.

Children are incredibly inventive and will find ways of using loose parts in ways that adults cannot imagine! However, a good playworker can always add some inspiration by setting up some loose parts in a new place or in a new way, and then step back to see what happens.

The things children make when they play are important to them. Near 'tidy-up time', give children some warning and, if possible, record important creations with a camera, or let them remain in place to be returned to another day.

Finally, the only way to manage tidy-up is for every child to pick up two or three things, take them to the loose parts store and chuck them in. The maximum time spent tidying up should be four minutes! This works especially well when accompanied by 'tidy-up' music.

The 'Theory of Loose Parts' (Nicholson 1971) says that the more moveable things there are in a play environment, the greater the number of possibilities there will be for invention, creation and imagination.



Risk Benefit



At Raeburn we believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, 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.

We commit to providing the children of Raeburn with all of the benefits of play, whilst managing any risks involved. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. In the words of the Health and Safety Executive:

'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.'

Many research studies establish social, physical and mental benefits to children of managed risks. Children become more resilient, adaptable and are keen to try new experiences.

We will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance *'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach'* (Appendix 3) as the principle document informing our approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, we will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *'Managing Risk in Play Provision': An Implementation Guide*. In addition to written risk benefit assessments, the school will practise dynamic risk-benefit management with playing children always ensuring they are as safe as necessary and encourage them to identify and manage risks for themselves in an environment where adults are present to support them.



3 modes of supervision



Supervisor

This is the competent adult providing the supervision and can be a play team member, teacher, teaching assistant, lunchtime supervisor or a volunteer. In each case they will have been assessed as competent to provide the supervision necessary and been trained in what is acceptable practice, what to do if unacceptable risks occur and what to do in case of accidents.

<h2>Direct</h2>	<p>This is where the supervisor(s) will be able to see all areas of play, and be nearby, around a maximum of 20 metres away.</p>
<h2>Remote</h2>	<p>This is where a supervisor or supervisors are located at a relatively static location at a good vantage point some distance from an activity, eg supervisor on the playground and activity 20 metres or more away, or supervisor in the middle of a flat school field.</p>
<h2>Ranging</h2>	<p>This is where the supervisor moves around the play area, usually on a set course/ schedule.</p> <p>The distance from pupils therefore differs but can be 20 metres or more away. On a large site, supervisors should have zones so that they know which parts of the site they are covering, and they should modify their attention based on the kinds of play and their judgement about areas of highest risk.</p>



Grounds plan



and supervision zones



Updated
Raeburn's
grounds
for OPAL

Summer
2025



Written Risk



Benefit Assessments

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominate d person	Action Date
<p>Pupils playing with heavy loose parts including large tyres, pallets and planks of wood. Potential for crushing type injuries to hands and feet, or straining type injuries associated with heavy lifting. Risk of serious injury is relatively low where heavy lifting is done carefully.</p>	<p>Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way. Imaginative play. Physical exercise, musculoskeletal development, core strength, sense of autonomy, potential for teamwork, opportunities to further extend play.</p>	<p>Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving, lifting and stacking. Emphasise the importance of asking for help and working together when lifting heavy objects. Advise children on “Ready, steady, lift”, using bent knees and straight back. Heavy objects must not be carried above head height.</p> <p>Playtime staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts.</p>	<p>JB Assem bly</p>	<p>9.4.24 Ongoing</p>
<p>Playing with pallets. From OPAL guidance doc 6.12: ‘The main risks from pallet play usually come from unstable stacks, from toppling over when balanced edgeways on, slipping between gaps, from nails popping up, from slats breaking under pressure from stamping feet, or from minor splinter injuries caused by hands-on roughly sawn wood.’</p> <p>Minor splinters are not considered a serious injury and are an accepted part of playing with rough sawn timber.</p>	<p>From OPAL guidance doc 6.2: ‘Children can use pallets in many different ways; building forts, house, dens and structures, climbing on, sitting on, bracing other loose parts so they don’t easily move, as bridges over ditches, combining with large cable spools and planks to make mega-structures and as simple theatre stages for dancing or rehearsing a show on.’</p>	<p>Staff will check pallets for nails, significant damage, large splinters or sharp points before providing them to children. All pallets will then be checked for further damage on a weekly basis. Damaged pallets will be removed from the play environment until repaired or disposed of. Playtime staff briefed on inspecting pallets for damage and testing the stability of structures.</p> <p>Pupils briefed in assembly about what to look out for in terms of damage to pallets, removing damaged pallets from the play environment and informing staff, and the following guidelines in respect of playing with pallets:</p> <p>The use of pallets on tarmac for standing on will be limited to a maximum fall height of 60cm (4 pallets high when laid flat on top of each other). Pallet structures for standing on above this height will only be allowed on grass and soil. Here a maximum fall height of 1.5m will be used.</p> <p>Children and staff should talk about and test the stability of all pallet structures before playing in them (e.g. dens) or on them.</p> <p>Standing on pallet structures will be limited to those that are stable and strong, with pallets tied or braced together if necessary.</p> <p>More permanent structures will be tested by staff for stability at least once or twice a week.</p>	<p>GC/ PC check pallets weekly.</p> <p>assembly briefing.</p> <p>Play time staff</p>	<p>09.04.24</p>



Written Risk



Benefit Assessments

<p>Playing with tyres: From OPAL guidance doc (6.11) Potential injuries could come from nails left in tyres, protruding wires or little wear left. With larger tyres, there is a risk of injury when moving. The risk with smaller tyres will arise from their use. Children will want to stack them, get inside them, roll them around and build large structures.</p>	<p>Imaginative, creative play. OPAL guidance doc (6.11) 'Children can make houses, forts shops etc from tyres and wood.'</p>	<p>Pupils briefed and reminded of stacking tyres and climbing on tyres no higher than themselves (on grass or soil)</p> <p>Playtime staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier tyres.</p>	<p>Play assembly</p> <p>Play time staff</p>	<p>09.04.24</p>
<p>Playing with ropes. From OPAL guidance doc (6.6) 'The main dangers from rope is from looped rope suspended at height. If ropes are taken into the trees and bushes there needs to be more active supervision and better training with the children.'</p>	<p>From OPAL guidance doc (6.6) 'Ropes can be used for making rope swings, crafts, tying things together, pulling each other around, skipping, tug-of-war, jumping over and all kinds of object and imaginative play.'</p>	<p>Play Assembly on Rope play. One to one sessions with each class on rope play in the forest.</p> <p>Play time staff briefed on rope play and supervision across all zones.</p> <p>The following considerations are taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thicker rope is safer than thinner rope • Wires should not be in the play environment • Looped ropes in tree should be closely supervised • Looped ropes should be removed at the end of play • Ropes tied at height on fixed play equipment are under direct supervision. • Ropes tied on to branches should be moved monthly. 	<p>09.04.24</p>	
<p>Tree climbing. Guidance from OPAL doc (6.4) The main risk of tree climbing is the potential falling out of the tree. Also, falling on to someone else.</p>	<p>Guidance from OPAL doc (6.4) 'Tree climbing provides many benefits to children and for many schools is the only affordable way to allow children to have opportunities for upper body strength and coordination. Tree climbing builds self-esteem, confidence, physical strength, hand-eye coordination, prediction, planning and provides opportunities for pride and a sense of achievement. The urge to be up high is very strong and instinctive in children especially as they gain confidence in their bodies.'</p>	<p>Suitable climbing trees identified and labelled with colourful ribbon to identify height.</p> <p>Children allowed to climb to a maximum of 1.5m (height of feet) grass or loose soil.</p> <p>Play assembly on safe tree climbing</p> <p>Guidance (6.4) shared with children: The rule of three Keep close to the trunk Stay off the dead - Test weak branches Always think about falling If it doesn't feel right, don't do it Never help up, only talk down</p> <p>Guidance shared with play time staff. Reviewed regularly.</p>	<p>No trees with low branches on the school's site</p>	



Written Risk



Benefit Assessments

<p>Playing with sticks as guns or swords (see doc 6.8). Potential for severe eye injuries from sticks being waved at eye level or impaling type injuries from falling on to sticks whilst running. Whilst there is no significant risk of injury from sticks being used as guns, there may be concerns from parents about this type of play behaviour.</p>	<p>Pleasure and enjoyment, friendship, comradery, peer attachment, emotion regulation, self control, imagination and fantasy play, playing with concepts such as right and wrong / heroes and villains / life and death.</p>	<p>Sticks are not allowed to be used as real weapons and will be taken away from children who do so. Where sticks are used as pretend swords, children need to be careful of who is around them and allow plenty of space so that they do not inadvertently hit another child. Children must not swing sticks around where there are other children close by who are not involved in the game. Sticks should only hit other sticks or inanimate objects.</p> <p>Play assembly on playing with sticks</p> <p>Playtime staff to supervise and intervene if children's behaviour is deemed reckless or if they are unaware of the risks they are posing to others.</p>	<p>Play assembly in May/ June</p>	
<p>Rough and tumble play. Playing fighting is unlike real fighting in that it usually occurs between friends, through voluntary engagement, and involves turn taking and exaggerated fake moves. However play fighting can also tip into real fighting and children may still accidentally hurt each other while playing. Serious injury is unlikely from play fighting except if children get carried away.</p>	<p>Pleasure and enjoyment, friendship, comradery, peer attachment, emotion regulation, self control, empathy</p>	<p>Rough and tumble allowed on the grass when it is between friends, when all involved are doing so voluntarily, where children are being careful and purposefully avoiding hurting each other.</p> <p>Playtime staff to discuss difference between play fighting and real fighting and when to intervene.</p> <p>Play assembly on rough and tumble (perhaps only deemed necessary if it becomes a problem)</p>	<p>assembly briefing.</p> <p>Play time staff</p>	<p>Play assembly in May/ June</p>



Written Risk



Benefit Assessments

<p>Digging in the earth and sand. Low risk in digging, or if children unearth some kind of hazardous material. Injury could occur if a child is inadvertently hit by a spade when another is working hard at digging.</p>	<p>Physical strength and exercise, determination and perseverance, sense of satisfaction, exploratory play, playing with the elements, extend opportunities for imaginative and creative playing.</p>	<p>Small hand held equipment to be provided for digging. Spades and trowels only. Digging only allowed in designated areas. Children to report anything unusual they find. Staff to supervise regularly, ensuring children have sufficient space.</p> <p>Play assembly on safe digging, emphasising the importance of giving each other room. Children not to eat anything they dig up!</p>	<p>assembly briefing.</p> <p>Play team Play Coordinat or</p>	<p>09.04.24</p>
<p>Playing with loose fabric, dressing up, small world pieces, lego</p>	<p>Exploratory play with extended opportunities for imaginative and creative playing.</p>	<p>Small world, lego, dressing up and fabrics for den building to be provided. Children to report anything unusual they dine. Staff to supervise regularly, ensuring children have sufficient space.</p> <p>Play assembly on safe play with pieces, and not putting in mouths.</p>	<p>Play assembly</p> <p>Play team</p>	<p>09.04.24</p>
<p>Pupils playing in different environment with new potential dangers: There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid.</p>	<p>Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves. Imaginative and creative play</p>	<p>All play time staff will carry their own 1st aid pouches and 1st aid records. Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated in situ. More serious injuries will be referred to First Aid area which will be in Y6 classroom, the first aider will deal with as appropriate, informing a member of SLT if the injury requires parental contact or hospital treatment.</p>	<p>All play time staff</p>	<p>09.04.24 On going</p>
<p>Pupils playing on scooters/ balance bikes in the tyre track area.</p> <p>There is an increased risk of falling off. Potential injury falling and hurting themselves or bumping in to other children.</p>	<p>Pupils enjoyment, imaginative and creative play. Benefits of exercise and movement.</p>	<p>Pupils briefed in assembly about using the scooters/ balance bikes and how to store them correctly. Playtime staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of scooters. GC and PC check scooters daily for wear/tear/breakages.</p> <p>We have not asked pupils to wear a helmet. OPAL guidance (6.9) states, <i>'Compulsory cycle helmets are likely to damage children's health more than they increase safety. Children's use of bicycles/scooters is different from adults. Children's healthy outdoor activity and freedom to play will be even more restricted by wearing a helmet. Where the risks to a healthy lifestyle are greater than the risks from "safety" measures then health should take priority – particularly when the increase safety is marginal at best.'</i></p>	<p>play assembly</p> <p>All play time staff</p>	<p>09.04,24 On going</p>



Written Risk



Benefit Assessments

<p>Water Play</p> <p>Pupils playing with water on a hard surface such as concrete. There is a risk of slips, trips and falls, particularly when surfaces become wet. This may result in minor injuries such as grazes, bumps or bruises. Risk of serious injury is relatively low when space is supervised and appropriate footwear is worn.</p>	<p>Water play encourages sensory exploration, imaginative play and scientific discovery. Opportunities to explore cause and effect, develop motor skills, and work collaboratively. Supports OPAL principle of varied, sensory-rich and physically active play.</p>	<p>Children must wear wellies during water play to reduce slipping and keep feet dry. Water containers are filled at the start of play by OPAL Play Team to avoid pupils accessing taps. The area has been built near the drainage system to allow for safe water run-off and to minimise standing water. Water kept in low-level containers (e.g. troughs, trays, buckets) to reduce spillage. Spills swept or brushed as necessary. Pupils briefed not to run in water play areas and encouraged to play sensibly and cooperatively. Playtime staff to apply dynamic risk assessment and monitor conditions. Concrete surface regularly inspected for cracks, moss or loose grit. Spare wellies available if needed.</p>	<p>Nominated person: GC</p>	<p>Action Date: 01.07.25 Ongoing</p>
<p>Digging Zone</p> <p>Pupils using digging tools such as spades and trowels in a designated grassy area. There is potential for minor injury through improper use of tools (e.g. swinging or tripping), or encountering sharp stones or debris in the soil. Risk of serious harm is low when tools are used carefully and space is respected.</p>	<p>Encourages physical activity, problem solving, persistence and teamwork. Supports scientific exploration of soil and nature, and imaginative role play (e.g. treasure hunting, building). Promotes curiosity and connection with the natural world in line with OPAL principles.</p>	<p>Children to be briefed on safe digging – keeping tools below shoulder height, spacing out, digging away from others. Tools checked weekly for sharp edges, splinters or damage. Digging area visually checked before use for any hazardous items (glass, animal waste, metal). Children reminded to wash hands after digging. Staff to monitor and guide tool use, applying dynamic risk assessment during play. Area rotated if needed to maintain safe ground condition.</p>	<p>Nominated person: PC</p>	<p>Action Date: 02.07.25 Ongoing</p>
<p>Car</p> <p>A physical car used as a social space. Potential risk of pinched fingers in moving parts such as doors or seats, or minor bruises from climbing in and out. Risk of rust or sharp edges developing over time. Risk of serious harm is low where the car is fully immobilised and regularly maintained.</p>	<p>The car provides a unique, immersive space for imaginative and social play – role play, conversation, storytelling and dramatic play. Encourages mixed-age interactions, turn-taking, and supports OPAL's aim to provide real-world, open-ended play materials.</p>	<p>Car has been fully immobilised with battery and fuel removed. Petrol cap and boot have been soldered closed to prevent access. All internal seating has been fixed in place to prevent movement, and tyres placed underneath the car to ensure it is raised off the ground slightly, preventing rocking or suspension movement. Doors are checked to ensure they do not slam and may be fixed open or removed if necessary. Weekly checks carried out for rust, sharp edges, broken plastics or loose fittings. Pupils briefed not to climb on the roof or bonnet, and to avoid slamming doors. Staff to monitor play and apply dynamic risk assessment. Interior cleaned regularly and checked for hygiene and cleanliness.</p>	<p>Nominated person: GC</p>	<p>Action Date: 27/06/25 Ongoing</p>