



## **WOODTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL**

### **Play Policy**

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## Woodthorpe Infant School Play Policy

### Intent

We will refer to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play. We are committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all our children.

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate and experience 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 Woodthorpe Infant School, our vision is for the entire school community to be brave, be kind, and be happy. Through our play provision it is our aim to support and promote resilience and appropriate risk-taking. We encourage our children to be brave and not be afraid to make mistakes, thus increasing our motivation and engagement.

Our values are intrinsically linked to the way we work, behave, learn and play. We use these values to achieve our vision, and the children will be developing respect, resourcefulness, resilience, reflectiveness and reciprocity through our quality play provision.

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. The children will be an integral part of the development and implementation of our play provision.

### Aims

In relation to play our school aims to:

- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- Allow children to be brave, take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.



- Provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Provide a range of environments that will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- Promote independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.

### Benefit and Risk

- 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. (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. Our school vision is to encourage our children to be brave and develop resilience. Through our play provision we aim 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 practice dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

Commented [LK1]: Is this where the quote is from?

### 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. The school recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervisors will use ranging and remote supervision models, so that children can quickly find an



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 adult's role in play**

- The school 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 can enrich 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.

### **Equality and diversity**

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school's general duties which are to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations
- We understand the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.
- 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. <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf>.

A rich play setting not only provides a safe and nurturing environment for children, but it also promotes essential life skills such as confidence, teamwork, and self-advocacy. By engaging in collaborative play, children learn to work together, communicate effectively, and respect each other's ideas, fostering social and emotional growth.

We want to encourage a deep connection with nature, helping children develop a love for the outdoors. This early appreciation of nature lays the foundation for environmental responsibility, as children learn to care for and protect the world around them through hands-on experiences in a supportive, enriching environment.

### **Impact**

- Play will support children's physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual development by providing varied and stimulating environments that encourage active engagement and creativity.
- Children will be empowered to take appropriate risks during play, helping them develop resilience, problem-solving skills, and the confidence to tackle challenges without fear of making mistakes.
- Play will foster stronger peer relationships, teamwork, and communication skills, helping children develop respect and empathy for others, irrespective of their backgrounds or abilities.
- Children will have opportunities to engage in self-directed play, promoting independence, creativity, and critical thinking as they explore and learn through imaginative activities.
- Outdoor play will nurture a deep connection with nature, fostering environmental responsibility and a love for the outdoors from an early age.
- Play will help children develop key life skills such as teamwork, communication, and self-advocacy, enhancing their confidence and emotional intelligence.
- The policy ensures that play is accessible and welcoming to all children, promoting equality and diversity while creating an inclusive environment where every child can thrive.