



Healthy Empowered Ambitious Respectful Together

Our values are at the HEART of our school

Play Policy

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Date of Policy Review:	February 2023
Date approved by Governors:	March 2023
Next Review Date:	February 2026

Commitment and Rationale

This policy sets out Washingwell Primary School's Commitment to ensuring quality play opportunities are available to all children.

As a school, we aim to improve the way we think about and provide opportunities for play. We believe that play is essential for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.

The school grounds provide a crucial place for children to experience self-initiated play.

The school acknowledges the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31, and supports the child's right to play. 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 Washingwell Primary School, our values are at the **HEART** of our school

Healthy: We are aware of our physical and mental health

Empowered: We are confident, resilient, heard

Ambitious: We are motivated to be the best we can be

Respectful: We share a strong moral code

Together: We are empathetic and kind

What is play?

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity that a child finds satisfying and creative. 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, make decisions and assess and manage risks.

At Washingwell Primary School, we recognise that play may need to be noisy, dirty, messy and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults. We aim for children to have the opportunity for 'free range' play, within the school grounds, with adults supporting the play process

We believe play has many benefits:

- It is critical to children's health and wellbeing and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, different concepts and different ideas.
- It 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 be creative.

- It maintains children's openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

Our Aims

- To provide children with a play setting which is both stimulating and challenging.
- To allow children to take risks.
- To provide children with a range of environments which will support their learning across the curriculum and about the world around them.

We aim to give the children the opportunity to:

- Explore the world around them through playful experimentation.
- Develop social skills, enhancing communication, collaboration and problem solving.
- Encourage resilience and self-confidence.
- Think creatively.
- Develop independence and take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Develop physical health.
- Develop emotional health, allowing the balance between acting freely and allowing everyone to have their rights.
- To develop skills in self-assessing and managing risk

Managing Risk

Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to judge risks independently and to learn new skills. All children need, and want, to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capabilities. Children would never learn to walk, climb stairs or ride a bicycle unless they were strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving the risk of injury.

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. In the words of 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. 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'* Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (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 principle value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play.

In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in the guidance document. 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.

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, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging 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 to facilitate 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.

First Aid

All lunchtime staff carry a waist bag, which contains basic first aid equipment and are first aid trained.

Any head bumps must be reported to parents via a bump note; this will be completed by the member of staff dealing with the child. If an incident involving a child requires a phone call home, this must be discussed with the School Business Manager or SLT. All first aid incidents should be recorded in the accident books kept by the office.

Clothing

We advise that all children come prepared for outdoor/all weathers play.

During cold and wet weather, wellies or walking boots should be worn by staff and children when walking on the school field or in the woods. Children should also wear coats during cold weather. Children need to be responsible for managing their outdoor clothing. This includes being prepared before they go outside to play. In the summer children will need sun cream and hats to protect themselves.

Part of outdoor play means children may get muddy. We will endeavour to reduce this as much as possible but, free play means allowing children to explore the areas they like.

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.

To manage risks:

- Our caretaker performs regular Health & Safety checks of the play areas
- The Play Leaders will check for dangers/ risks when outside with the children.
- The children will be made aware of possible risks and helped to manage those via staff alerting them, for example slippery or wet surfaces.
- Separate the play area into zones to maintain a risk/benefit management system creating quiet areas as well as areas for physical play.