

## PLAY POLICY

Our school is:

- a safe, **supportive** stimulating learning environment;
- a **team** of respectful, tolerant, open minded citizens;
- a community where everyone **aspires** to be the very best they can be;
- a community of **resilient** lifelong learners;
- a centre of excellence where all achieve **success**.

### PURPOSE

Following the school's decision to partner with play specialist company – OPAL (Outside Play and Learning) to develop '*Amazing play, every day for every child*', this policy outlines our daily commitment to providing the strategic and daily operational leadership needed to provide and maintain, safe, high quality play provision for all our children. The OPAL initiative aligns seamlessly with our school vision and behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

Additionally, 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.

Review Date	June 2022
Reviewed By	Sarah Ferguson
Next review	June 2024
Summary of changes	Introduction of new play initiative in conjunction with OPAL.

**Approved By:**

**Head Teacher** ..... **Date** .....

**Chair of Governors** ..... **Date** .....

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Our school is committed to providing a **'whole'** education for children both inside and outside of the classroom. In 2022, it was decided that, following the implementation of 'The Arboretum Way' to further support our pursuit of 'exceptional' behaviour, a lunchtime play initiative would be implemented in partnership with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). As we strive to do our best for our children, we are dedicated to providing a rich play setting where 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.

The OPAL programme rationale is that "... *better, more active and creative playtimes can mean happier and healthier children, and having happier, healthier, more active children usually results in a more positive attitude to learning in school, with more effective classroom lessons, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary behavioural problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life.*"

## 2. PURPOSE AND AIMS

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play. Therefore, this time needs to be led and planned for to ensure high quality and varied provision is made available. Changes in society such as improved technology have led to 'play deprivation' for many of today's children. This makes school play with their friends even more vital. Moreover, research shows that play can enhance language development which is vital for all our children and in particular for EAL learners which is pertinent to our school context as well as those children with deprived speech and language. In spring and summer term 2022, we surveyed different key stakeholders to gain their views on play: pupils, staff and parents. Some of the comments were: *'There is not enough to do which then results in squabbles'*, *'Behaviour deteriorates when the children are outside compared to in the classroom'*.

### Aims

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 should meet the four components of a child's development: physical, intellectual, educational and social. At Arboretum Primary School, we believe play has many benefits therefore we aim to:

- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- Allow children to 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 which 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.
- 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.

These align seamlessly with our 3 school rules: ‘Ready, Respectful and Safe’ as well as our school vision of ‘Reach for the stars’ – see out ‘school is..’ statement.

### 3. 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. 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 ‘*Managing Risk in Play Provision’: An Implementation Guide*.

**‘HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential dangers’. (HSE, 2013)**

Arboretum Primary School will use the Health and Safety Executive’s guidance on Managing Risk in Play and Leisure ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) **(Appendix 1)** as its principle guiding document in making decisions relating to risk and play. Our role as play providers is to facilitate the maximum amount of enriching opportunities for children to encounter. They need to learn to 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. We will adopt a risk-benefit approach and will practice dynamic risk management **(Appendix 2)** to manage our duty of care to protect and provide for children's needs. This approach will encourage the children to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support this.

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’*.

Risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be reviewed on an annual basis or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment occurs.

## 4. 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. Arboretum Primary 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 structure of the Arboretum Play Team is as follows:

Head teacher

The Curriculum Lead for Play - Behaviour and Play Lead – Leads on strategy

Play Coordinators x 2/parent of school – Leads on operational deliver

The Play Team – supports children's play

Member of the Board of Governors

## 5. THE ADULT'S ROLE IN PLAY

Adults in school will continue to have a continuing dialogue with children regarding their thoughts about play. This will predominantly happen in weekly play assemblies following the CINI structure – Celebrate, Inform, Negotiate, Innovate, school council meetings and via the two-way dialogue that occurs due to strong pupil-teacher relationships that exist in school.

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 (**Appendix 3**). 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 play team'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 across the 16 play types (**Appendix 4**). A skilled and experienced member of the play team 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. The play team 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 or change the play space if this is required.

## 6. CHILDREN'S ROLE IN PLAY

The children will have access to their own version of the play policy entitled 'The Arboretum Way to Play' (**Appendix 5**). In it will also include the rights and responsibilities of the children which they will need to do in order to follow the behaviour policy – 'The Arboretum Way'.



These are linked to our 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' rules outside at lunch times as detailed below:

The play charter – 'The Arboretum Way to Play' will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing play assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with school council.

## 7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs, we will ensure children (regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs) can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school.

## 8. 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.

**Appendix 6** - <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/best-play/>

In particular, at Arboretum Primary School, we will make best use of the large field to provide whole year round enjoyment.

## Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Executive’s Guidance on Managing Risk in Play and Leisure

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>

## Appendix 2 – Benefit Risk Assessment Record Sheet

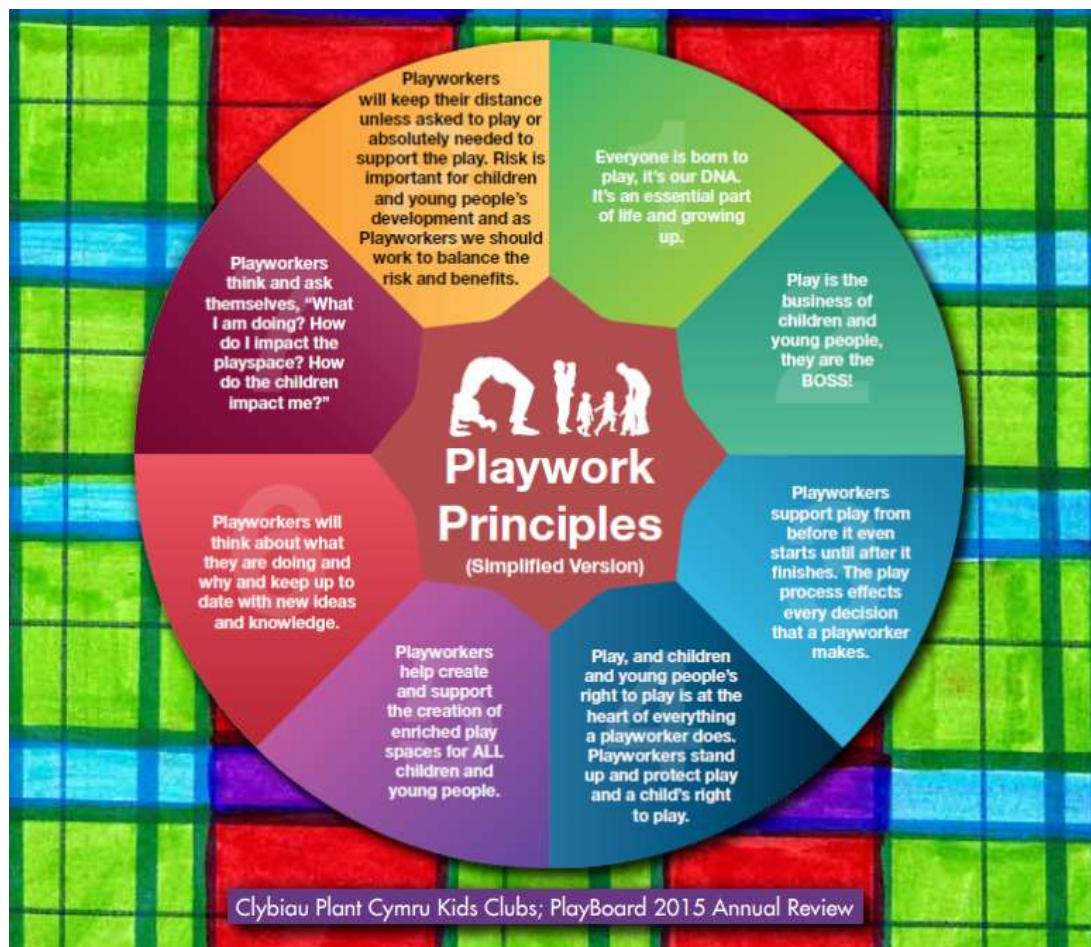
Benefit-Risk Assessment Record Sheet

Risk Assessment date: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessed by: \_\_\_\_\_



	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	Nominated person	Action Date

## Appendix 3 – Playwork Principles



## Appendix 4 – 16 different play types



## Appendix 5 – The Arboretum Way to Play

## PLAY POLICY

### The Arboretum Way to Play

At Arboretum Primary School we understand the importance of exceptional behaviour, not only for learning but for life. To support our aim to achieve this, we work with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) and promise to offer our children outstanding play opportunities. *'Amazing play every day for every child'*

At Arboretum Primary School, we have 3 school rules that are used every day. These are:

- **READY**
- **RESPECTFUL**
- **SAFE**

When you are playing outside this is what Ready, Respectful and Safe look like.



We agree that everyone should have amazing play time every day. We make sure that:

#### The Arboretum Way

##### Are you ready?

- Follow instructions straight away.
- Into legendary lines in 10 seconds.
- Follow the 'Stop' signal.



#### The Arboretum Way

##### Are you respectful?

- Say 'Please' and 'Thank you'
- Follow the rules of the game and be a good sport.
- Use kind words.



#### The Arboretum Way

##### Are you safe?

- Walk around school.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Use equipment safely.



### Appendix 6 – Best Play – What play provision should do for children

See <https://www.playscotland.org/resources>