



Elveden C of E

Primary Academy



Play Policy

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Completed by: Z Maguire

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Our PLAY Policy

1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

2. Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. 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.

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."*

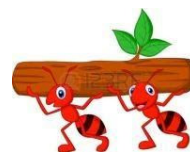




Our Play Aims and Principles

Elveden C of E Primary Academy is committed to providing a high quality learning experience for all pupils and our Play provision is no exception. As a Church school, we have 5 clear aims which are inextricably intertwined with our Christian vision, mission statement, physical and mental wellbeing and Building Learning Power. These 5 aims can be learnt and observed during play and therefore are regarded by us, as being the utmost importance to enhancing our children's holistic development. Our five aims are:

- **Ready to learn:** Children have a positive, confident attitude to learning. They are both physically and emotionally ready to learn.
- **Resourceful:** Children show initiative, asks well thought out questions and are prepared to use a variety of strategies to learn.
- **Reflective:** Children are curious, able and willing to learn from their mistakes and can describe their progress.
- **Resilient:** Children are prepared to persevere and stay involved in their learning, even when the process is challenging.



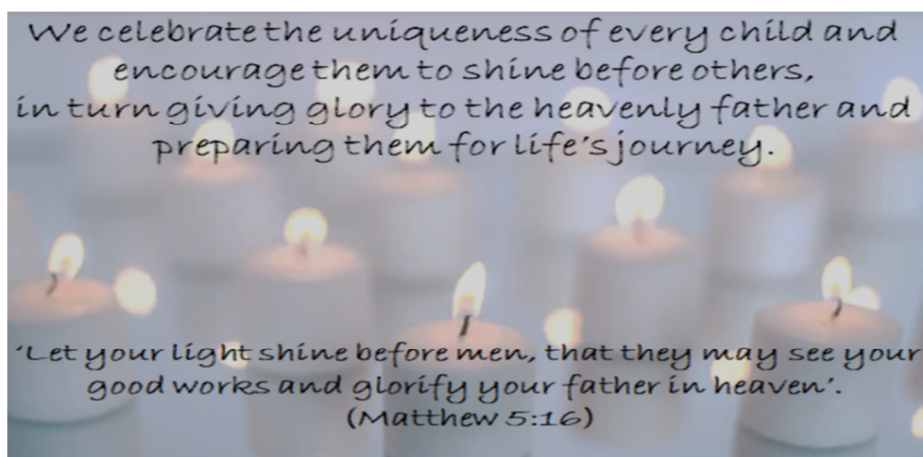
Our Play opportunities enrich our children's wellbeing and actively enhance their physical development. Our play takes place each day at lunchtimes and during this time all children have the opportunity to interact and play with peers of all ages. This encourages solid relations to be built with different aged children and allow them to socially connect with those they may not have previously. Our play opportunities are intrinsically child-led, which allow our children to have ownership of their play, not only can they be totally imaginative and creative in free flow play, but they also learn key skills of instigation and facilitation of play with others. Our play opportunities provide them with a stimulating but safe environment, where transferable skills such as taking risks, building resilience and making autonomous choices are acquired. It offers them all a safe and nurturing environment through hands-on activities; where our 5 aims are sufficiently interwoven within Free Play ideology.

In the outdoor space, our play opportunities also actively encourage all learning styles and can uncover 'multiple intelligences' in our children, which not only supports their holistic development, but allows them to be the individuals that they deserve to be.





As a Christian school family, we feel it is paramount that our play sessions prepare children for their future and builds on our key values of hope, trust, respect and forgiveness. Children deal with conflict through play, build better relations and learn to be empathetic to others. They learn to forgive and be respectful through play. Play is also an opportunity for us to celebrate diversity and value all God's children with dignity. We also believe that play is a great opportunity for our children to 'Let Their Light Shine before others, so that they may see their good works' and through daily play experiences they can do this.



Through play opportunities, our children have become more confident and resilient learners, who are also more imaginative and inquisitive about the world around them. Through discussions with children and parents, play at Elveden has shown to have a positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of our children.

3. Definition and value of 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. We believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play 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.
- Play 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 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.

4. Aims

In relation to play our school aims 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.

5. Rights

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 take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

6. 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*.





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*'.

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.

Appendix 1- H&SE Managing Risk Statement

7. 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 recognizes 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 play zones will be made aware to the children before their opportunity to play and they must decide in which zone they wish to play. Each zone will be supervised by 2 adults from our Elveden Play Team.

8. The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximize 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 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.

Appendix 2- copy of the Playwork Principles

9. Equality and diversity

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

Please see Our Equality and Diversity policy on school website.

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 for all our children. We are aware of the importance of safeguarding and how a rich play environment support this, how it helps our children develop confidence in team building and advocating for their own rights, how it can increase their social and emotional capabilities and help them to develop a love and zest for the outdoors; a key foundation for life-long caring for the environment. We will use the document 'Best Play' to guide us on what a quality play environment should contain.

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

