



# Play Policy

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Rights Respecting  
Schools linked article:



unicef  CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD  
for every child



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REST, PLAY,  
CULTURE, ARTS

<b>Approved</b>	SLT
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## Statement

Play is essential for a child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. The school grounds provide a crucial environment for self-initiated play.

This policy aligns with **Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which recognises the right of the child to rest, leisure and play. The OPAL Primary Programme rationale guides us:

*"Better, more active and creative playtimes mean happier and healthier children. This results in a more positive attitude to learning, fewer behavioural issues, and fewer playtime accidents."*

## Definition of Play

At Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School, play is defined as:

- **Intrinsically motivated:** the child does it for their own sake, not for an external reward.
- **Freely chosen:** The child chooses what to do, how to do it and whom to do it with.
- **Child-directed:** The child sets their own goals and rules.

## The Value of Play

We recognise that high-quality play offers extensive benefits:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Increases physical activity and acts as a natural outlet for stress and anxiety.
- **Cognitive Skills:** Fosters problem-solving, imagination and language development through creative and dramatic play.
- **Social and Emotional Capabilities:** Requires ongoing communication, negotiation and conflict resolution, helping children navigate complex social structures.

## Inclusion

Play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, regardless of gender, economic circumstances, cultural background or individual abilities.

- **All-Weather Play:** *Children will have access to the full school grounds (including fields and grass) all year round.*
- **Clothing:** *To facilitate this, parents are expected to provide outdoor footwear (wellies/old trainers) and appropriate waterproof coats. "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing."*

## Risk, Challenge, and Benefit-Risk Assessments

Children require opportunities to experience challenge and manage risk to develop self-confidence and life skills.

- Our school adopts a **Benefit-Risk Assessment** approach (in line with Health and Safety Executive and Play England guidance). We weigh the potential risks of an activity against the developmental benefits it offers.
- We aim to make play **"as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible."**
- Staff will practice dynamic risk management, intervening only when a child is in danger of serious harm, rather than stopping play just because it is messy, boisterous or challenging.



## Types of Play

To accommodate the diverse needs of our pupils, our school grounds are organized into flexible, evolving play zones, utilising both natural and loose-parts resources:

Play Zone	Examples of Resources / Activities
<b>Loose Parts &amp; Construction</b>	Tyres, wooden pallets, crates, cardboard boxes, ropes and tarpaulins for den building.
<b>Mud Kitchen &amp; Digging</b>	Soil, mud, pots, pans, trowels and large digging tools to foster sensory and imaginative play.
<b>Wheeled &amp; Active Play</b>	Scooters, trikes, skateboards and balancing blocks.
<b>Quiet &amp; Creative</b>	Large chinks, bubbles, dressing-up clothes, music/performance areas and reading corners.
<b>Nature &amp; Tree Climbing</b>	Managed tree climbing, puddle jumping and exploring wilder, wooded areas of the site.

## The Play Team

The role of supervisory staff during break times shifts from "policing" behaviour to facilitating play.

- **Play Work Principles:** Staff operate under play work practices, observing from a distance and allowing children to resolve their own minor disputes.
- **Supervision:** Staff are stationed strategically across zones to maintain sight and sound awareness while ensuring a supportive environment.
- **Resource Management:** Staff help children in the rotation, care and tidying away of loose parts at the end of each session.

## Partnerships

- **Parents:** We will communicate regularly with parents regarding the types of play occurring and requests for "scrap" loose parts donations.
- **Governing Body:** The Governing Body will review the impact of the OPAL policy, evaluating its effect on behaviour, classroom focus and physical health.