



Toner Avenue

Play Policy

September 2023

Toner Avenue Primary Play Policy

This policy sets out our school's commitment to ensuring that quality environments for play and informal recreation are available for all our children. We aim to improve the way we think about, and provide opportunities for play.

Rationale

Children spend up to 20% of their time in school at play. Therefore this time needs to be coherent and planned for. Changes in society such as heavier traffic, busier lifestyles, less areas for play and awareness of risk have led to 'play poverty' for today's children. This makes their play opportunities at school even more vital.

Better play leads to happier children and in turn less behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school, skills development, fewer accidents and more effective learning in the classroom as less staff time is spent resolving issues.

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. Our school acknowledges the UN Charter 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. We plan to implement the core values set out in this policy gradually and systematically as we develop areas in our outdoor space. We are being supported in our journey by OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)

The OPAL programme rationale is that *... "better, more active and creative play times 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".*

The Value of Play

Play is recognised as any activity that a child enters into that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated, and that actively engages the child. Play meets the four components of a child's development:

- Physical (direct impact on physical development, coordination and fitness);
- Intellectual (cognitive development, imagination);
- Educational (the knowledge and understanding of academic outcomes);
- Social (the development of values, beliefs and self-perception and the parallel communication skills, leadership and teamwork this enhances).

Bob Hughes (2002) identified 16 types of play which children engage in. It is our aim to enable children to access all of these different play types within our playground.

Our Aims

At Toner Avenue Primary School we aim to address the provision of improved play opportunities in the following ways;

- To ensure we provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- To allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to these risks and their benefits.
- To provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- To enable children to develop a respect for their surroundings and each other.

- To aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- To provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- To provide a range of environments which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- To promote independence and team work within children.
- To build emotional and physical resilience

Benefit and Risk

Children need and want to take risks during active play. As a school we aim to respond to these needs and wishes by offering stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, striking a balance between the risks and benefits. This is through risk assessment which:

- Ensures the likelihood of serious injury is extremely low
- Makes sure potential hazards are clear
- Uses practical ways to manage reasonable risk. .
- HSE 'promoting a balanced approach' document
- Use the HSE guidance on managing play and leisure (www.hse.gov.uk)

'HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understand 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)

The Working Party

We have created a team of staff members committed to supporting the development of play and OPAL in our school.

Nichola Fullard- Head Teacher - Strategic lead

Gemma Hunter - Curriculum Lead

Tracey Finnigan- Curriculum Lead

These 3 members of staff lead on strategy, finance and planning. They hold responsibility for play policy, strategy, budget, action plan and evaluation. They manage play co-ordinator and hold responsibility for the play team. They report to governors on play development. They support communication on play to the whole school community. Support development of effective playwork practice.

Jenny Noy- Teacher, working party

Sophie Cox- Teacher, working party

Glynnis Wales- Teaching Assistant, working party

Sharon Caudron- Senior Lunchtime Supervisor, working party - play co-ordinator

The Play co-ordinator leads on operational delivery. They report to the curricular and strategic leads, leads and supports the play team, maintains resources, and supports the development of the play environment, supporting effective risk management of play.

Lloyd Bryson- Caretaker

Graham Kelly - Governor - Play Champion