

Leyburn Primary School

Play Policy



YCAT

Yorkshire Collaborative
Academy Trust

The school undertakes to refer to the play policy in all decisions which affect children's playtimes outside

Rationale

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

‘A child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities

appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.’

Children spend 1.4 years (or 20%) of their primary school attendance in playtime and therefore it is essential that we use this time effectively by providing all of our children with opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. At Leyburn Primary School, we recognize that play is hugely beneficial to children, both for their physical wellbeing, as well as for their emotional wellbeing. Play enables children to become more resilient, more creative, to learn important social skills, become more confident and be able to assess and manage everyday risks.

By providing our children with a wide variety of play opportunities, we enable our children to be ready to learn during lessons after having a successful and happy playtime. Our inclusive outdoor environment offers the children different choices at break-time through careful management and use of different spaces, as well as the provision of different toys and equipment. Playtimes are therefore viewed as an extension of the children’s learning; by providing a variety of rich, stimulating environments, every child is able to learn vital life skills that enable them to be happy and well-rounded individuals.

The Value of Play

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity which a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. The Charter for Children’s Play describes the key benefits of play for children:

- Playing is fun: it is how children enjoy themselves.
- Play promotes children’s development, learning, imagination, creativity and independence.
- Play can help to keep children healthy and active.
- Play allows children to experience and encounter boundaries, learning to assess and manage risk in their lives; both physical and social.
- Play helps children to understand the people and places in their lives, learn about their environment and develop their sense of community.
- Play allows children to find out about themselves, their abilities, their interests and the contribution they can make.
- Play can be therapeutic. It helps children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances such as emotional stress or medical treatment.

At Leyburn Primary School, we recognize the huge benefits that providing opportunities to play outside has for our children. We have a fantastic outdoor space and believe it is every child's right to be able to enjoy and learn from it.

The adults' role in play

As Playmakers, our role is to maximize the benefits that our children can gain from play by ensuring that a wide variety of play opportunities are provided for every child. Our role is to facilitate play, rather than to direct play. The children should have the freedom to choose what they do during playtimes and not be interrupted by an adult unless necessary. A Playmaker may facilitate a child's play by modelling good practice or by suggesting different ideas, but, where possible, we believe that our children should be allowed to complete tasks without interruption so that they learn from their own mistakes and how to manage their own risks. Observations are therefore crucial for Playmakers to undertake so that they are able to 'step in' where necessary, and also to adapt any spaces to ensure inclusion or to extend the children's play opportunities, where appropriate. Playmakers 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 available to participate in the play if invited.

We will have a continuing dialogue with children about the play provision in the playground which will include regular play assemblies, School Council involvement, surveys and other pupil voice outlets. Areas will then be adapted or changed as a result in order to ensure maximum usage for our outdoor space.

Supervision

During the school day there should be at least two adults present outdoors. Areas may be 'closed' or 'opened' depending on the number of supervisors available that day. We recognize OPAL's three models of supervision Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, we do not believe that direct supervision is possible or beneficial to the children and can instead hinder a child's development. Supervision will therefore take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult if required, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging, and act accordingly.

Environment

At Leyburn Primary School we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing, encouraging the children to value natural or found objects for play and to know when it is appropriate to move those objects or not
- include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors through regular assemblies and meetings
- ensure that the outdoor area offers all children the opportunity to investigate, take risks and explore and use their imagination and creativity in a safe way
- expect the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things
- give children the opportunity to manage the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors
- enrich the quality of the environment to maximise variety of play types and increase play value
- ensure that the playground be an integrated area where all children can play safely
- Teach the children their responsibilities with regard to maintaining the quality of their outdoor space, and the equipment available and ensure they take an active part in doing this
- Promote children's pride for the outdoor space that belongs to them
- Involve parents and the local community in maintaining and improving our outdoor space by using their skills and resources

Benefit and Risk

‘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: Implementation guide published for Play England 2012 (Appendix 3)*

Play provision aims to offer children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. The social, physical and mental benefits to children of managed risks are vast. Children become more resilient, adaptable and are keen to try new experiences. 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’.

The Health and Safety Executive states:

‘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)

At Leyburn Primary School we 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 our approach to managing risk in play. We will adopt a benefits/risk approach as detailed in ‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’ implementation guide.

The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments. We will also use dynamic risk assessments created alongside

the children to encourage them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

Health and Safety

All activities, play areas and equipment will be subject to standard checks on a daily and/or periodic basis.

Risk-benefit assessments for areas, equipment and activities will be held on file for inspection and available for all staff to view online in the shared staff area. All new activities which involve potential significant risk will be subject to individual or generic assessment as part of the planning process. All previous assessments will be reviewed as and when appropriate.

The Playworkers will be responsible for the site, equipment and resources in general, which are intended to be open access. They will also be responsible for any activities which are directly led by the Playworkers. Visiting carers, teachers and parents will be responsible for the conduct and behaviour of those in their care. They will be responsible for ensuring that those persons in their care use the site and equipment in a safe, controlled and appropriate manner to ensure the wellbeing of ALL users on site.

It is the responsibility of all visitors and staff to work within agreed policy and procedures and to adhere to all control measures imposed as a result of assessments. It is the responsibility of all carers to bring any potential hazard or concerns regarding the site, equipment or activities to the attention of the Playworker on duty. It is the responsibility of the Playworker on duty to act upon any concerns and to ensure that any deficiencies are rectified immediately and to report to the Opal leader as soon as possible.

Appendix 1

CHILDREN'S PLAY AND LEISURE – PROMOTING A BALANCED APPROACH

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

Appendix 2

Structure of adult roles in practice

OPAL Team

This is the team working directly with OPAL to ensure policy is in place and develop play and outdoor learning at Leyburn. It consists of:

The Head Teacher (Sarah Beveridge)
Play Co-ordinator (Hannah Burn)
Play Leader (Kelly Such)
Associate Governor (TBC)
Parent Representatives (Elise Barron, Samantha Heseltine)

Leyburn Primary School Play Team

All adults working at the school are part of the play team and have a responsibility to follow this policy. When on the playground at playtimes staff all should act as Playmakers. However, more specifically, at lunchtimes the following structure exists:

Play Co-ordinator – Hannah Burn
(Leads and manages strategy)

Play Leader - Kelly Such
(Leads and manages playtimes)

Assistant Play Leaders – The SLT
(Supports play leader and steps up in their absence)

Play Makers – all teachers, teaching assistants and supervisors
(Support children's play)

Appendix 3

Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide published for Play England 2012

See PDF: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/172644/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>