



Play Policy

This policy sets out Burnhope Primary School's commitment to ensuring quality play opportunities are available to all children. As a school we aim to improve the way we think and provide opportunities for play. We believe that play is essential for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development. In a time where outdoor play environments and opportunities are on the decline, the school grounds provide a crucial place for children to experience self-initiated play.

Rationale

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in playtime. This time is valuable and needs careful planning.

Better play means happier children. Happier children mean fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school, more effective lessons, core skills development, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary problems, fewer accidents and happier staff.

We believe that play has a vital role in children's happiness and wellbeing. It creates children who are independent, confident, imaginative, adaptable, social and able to self-assess risks.

Play England drew up The Charter for Children's Play which sets out a vision for play and states that:

- children need time and space to play at school;
- adults should let children play;
- children value and benefit from staffed play provision;
- children's play is enriched by skilled playworkers;
- children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play.

Links to Learning

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning, a finding confirmed by many studies of early childhood. Research shows that play can enhance problem solving; it is also widely regarded as providing opportunities for social interaction and language development. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types e.g. through risk taking and exploratory play in formal and informal settings, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries.

Our Aims

Our school aims are:

- to provide children with a play setting which is enjoyable, stimulating and challenging;
- to allow children to take risks;
- to provide children with a range of play opportunities which will support children's learning across the curriculum and about the world around them.

We aim to give the children the opportunity to:

- explore the world around them through playful experimentation;
- develop social skills, enhancing communication, collaboration and problem solving;
- encourage resilience and self-confidence;
- think creatively;
- develop independence and take responsibility for themselves and others;
- develop physical health;
- develop emotional health, allowing the balance between acting freely and allowing everyone to have their rights. Our rights and responsibilities are displayed in every classroom;
- to develop skills in self-assessing and managing risk

What is Play?

Play is any freely chosen activity which a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. It may be serious or light hearted. It may produce something, or it may be done simply for its own sake. It allows children an opportunity to be creative and make decisions.

We recognise that play may need to make a noise, get dirty, make a mess and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults. We believe the role of the adults is to support the play process. Children will also have the opportunity for 'free range' play within the school grounds.

As a result of implementing this policy within school we believe that children will:

- be happier;
- increase self-awareness and self-esteem;
- improve language and communication skills;
- improve concentration;
- improve their imagination, independence and creativity;
- improve social skills;
- be resilient, confident, good problem solvers;
- be ready for anything as a result of negotiation and independence of thought;
- be better at problem solving;
- develop life skills; and
- improve physical development, co-ordination and fitness.

Respecting Rights

*All children have a right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of activities (Article 31).
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

At Burnhope Primary School we promote children's rights from the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. We see children's rights as a central focus in all we do.

Through our belief in children's rights, we aim to provide a secure, caring environment where all children are happy, intrinsically motivated, relaxed and able to reach their potential.

Children have the right to an education (Article 28) therefore to respect this right the children must follow instructions, use equipment without hurting others and have fun. Adults respect this right by providing opportunities for creative, exciting play, use conflict resolution to support children and supporting children who have additional needs at playtime.

Children have the right to be safe (Article 28) therefore to respect this right children must follow instructions, use equipment without hurting others, assess risk and tidy equipment away. Adults respect this right by assessing risk daily, encouraging children to assess risk also and helping children to tidy up.

Children have the right to play and relax (Article 31) therefore to respect this right the children must follow instructions, use equipment without hurting others and help others who need it. Adults respect this right by developing new opportunities for play, listening to children's ideas about play and supporting children who have additional needs to access play.

Benefit, Risk assessment and play

An essential element of exploration within the medium of play is the opportunity for children to experience freely chosen activities, where they can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond their existing capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risk develops their ability to judge risk independently and learn new skills.

All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences. Children would never learn to walk, climb stairs or ride a bicycle unless they were strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving a risk of injury. (Play England)

Carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be reviewed on an annual basis, or whenever significant change or development in play provision/equipment or child circumstances takes place. The benefit risk assessment at Burnhope Primary school is reviewed annually in line with the Play Policy.

To manage the levels of risk we will follow the following guidelines:

- recognise the need for professional judgement in setting the balance between safety and goals;
- ensure risks are as apparent as possible to staff and children;
- design spaces where the risks of hazards are clearly apparent;
- ensure risks that children may not appreciate are controlled and managed;
- provide staff with training to supervise play setting.

Environment and Clothing

To be able to enjoy the vast space and activities children should always come to school with a coat as our yard is exposed to the wind even in the summer. We try to keep all of the school play zones open all year so the children will play on the field even in the winter months. In the winter, they are expected to wear wellington boots and waterproofs (which are provided by school) on the field, particularly in poorer weather. A welly store has been created at the top of the school yard and children have been asked to provide wellies or old outdoor shoes for use at playtimes. Children then return to the welly store and place their shoes back on. Hand washing facilities are provided both in classroom bathroom areas.

Remote Supervision

We may not be able to see every child all of the time, especially when in the tress, however Play Leaders are designated to an 'area' daily. It is expected that staff will move around throughout playtime, finding out what the children are doing and where the children are playing. Staff can then check in on the children's play throughout playtime. All staff will follow the school's behaviour policy over lunchtimes and playtimes with the aim of solving conflict by working alongside children where possible. For further details please see school's Behaviour Policy.

Inclusion

All children are entitled to welcoming and accessible play provision, irrespective of gender, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin or individual abilities. It is our responsibility to ensure adequate provision is provided. Play opportunities will hold no barriers to any of the children within our school.

Review

This policy will be closely monitored by the head teacher and play leader. A working play group, led by the head, comprising of play leader, lunchtime supervisor and play governor, will take responsibility for managing the action plan for play.

This policy has been shared by the whole school community.

Revised and reviewed on 1.6.20 by Jayne Peaker, OPAL Leader.

Ratified by Governors on

