

Play Policy

Policy Review Period:2 years

Policy Review Date:26.01.25

Our School Values

Collaboration – we help and support each other, through partnership, teamwork and friendship.

Aspiration – we try to be the best we can, aiming for excellence, innovation and creativity.

Respect – we care for everyone and our environment, with relationships built on trust and kindness.

Endeavour – we focus on our learning, displaying resilience and perseverance.

Introduction

Filton Avenue Primary School recognizes that good play opportunities are a children's right, essential for children's well-being and balanced development regardless of age, sex, ability or background.

Commitment

Filton Avenue Primary School is committed to using this play policy in all decisions it makes which have an impact on children's play.

At Filton Avenue Primary School, we want to help children to be safe, reliable, independent and respectful of others, embodying our Calm School Code. We want to ensure each child is making appropriate progress in line with school achievement aims. We aim to give our children confidence and a desire to achieve their full potential.

Filton Avenue Promise:

- To treat children's right to play as a serious right, in line with guidance from the UN in General Comment 17.
- To implement the changes set out in this policy gradually and systematically.
- To be informed by the children and work with the children to create a space that is exciting, engaging and enthuses children. where they feel safe to take risks and explore their world.
- To work in partnership with parents and the community making use of local expertise.

Rationale

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in playtime. This time is valuable and needs coherent planning. Changes in culture and society have led to 'play poverty' in childhood which has numerous negative impacts.

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.

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 play workers.

- Children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play.

Filton Avenue Primary School fully recognises its duties and responsibilities to support children's playtime while they are at Filton Avenue.

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 which gives EAL learners a chance to practice. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types eg through risk taking and exploratory play in formal and informal settings, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries.

The other area of focus for the impact of play and play work on education and learning is the role of play at school break periods and the impact on children's behaviour and learning in class.

As a result of implementing this policy 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.
- improve physical development, coordination and fitness.

Definition

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

Physical (direct impact on physical development, co-ordination and fitness);

Intellectual (cognitive development, imagination);

Educational (the knowledge and understanding of academic outcomes); and

Social (the development of values, beliefs and self-perception and the parallel communication skills, leadership and teamwork this enhances).

Filton Avenue Primary School recognises that:

- great play allows children to be creative and co-operative;
- adults' roles in great play is to be responsive to children's invitations and requests;
- great play may be solitary or social;
- great play invites investigation; and
- great play makes children happy and happy children are better learners.

Rights, Equality and Access

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Filton Avenue acknowledges General Comment 17 from the UN which reminds all state parties they have a duty to uphold children's right to play and to choose the kind of play that is suitable for them whatever their age, gender or background.

Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk

Children should be encouraged and supported to encounter and manage risk for themselves in an environment that is as safe as it needs to be rather than completely devoid of risk. The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

Filton Avenue Primary will use the Health and Safety Executive's 'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balances Approach' (2012) as its primary guidance source in decisions related to risk and play. (Appendix 2). The school will use a 'risk benefit' approach to balance its duty of care to protect and its duty of care to provide.

The Adults' Role in Play

Filton Avenue Primary believe that The Play Work Principles should be the main source of information and guidance for adults whose principle roles are to supervise, resources and support children's free play. (Appendix 3)

We believe that it is the job of the Play Team to ensure that the broadest possible range of play opportunities are available to children, to observe, reflect and analyse the play that is happening and select a mode of intervention or make a change to the play space if needed.

The Play Team ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way.

Environment

At Filton Avenue we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing.
- include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors.
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity.

- encourage the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things.
- give children the opportunity to manage, play in and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors.
- enrich the quality of the environment to maximise variety of play types and increase play value.

Strategic Aims and Practices

Filton Avenue Primary School has entered into an agreement with OPAL Outdoor Play and Learning CIC to support the development of the quality of our playtime provision.

1. The Outdoor Environment

Filton Avenue Primary School will create plans to transform the school grounds over several years to promote the continued creation and recreation of the play space by the children. Our ultimate aim is to have an integrated playground from reception to Year 6. In order to do this we have to landscape the playground and provide plenty of open ended materials for play opportunities.

2. Loose Parts

Research shows that the greater the range of experiences presented by a play environment, the more children will naturally explore and learn through play. The vital ingredients for these experiences are loose parts: attractive, flexible materials that children can readily change, manipulate and control for themselves.

The school intends to provide plentiful loose parts across the site, offering a fully accessible and controllable environment for children to play how they want to. These elements lead to a high level of ownership which is a powerful ingredient in providing a positive play and learning experience for a child.

3. Supervision

Job descriptions and person specifications of staff at Filton Avenue Primary School will continue to be drawn up with the advice of OPAL. The school will move towards a much greater emphasis on play work roles and skills for play supervision. See Appendix 4 for definitions of types of supervision.

4. Monitoring

The school will continue to use the OPAL audit tool and pupil surveys to monitor implementation of its play policy, strategy and action plan. An annual report should be presented to governors.

5. Health and Safety

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

Our Site Team carries out a daily site walks as well as a visual check of the playground equipment weekly. We have a statutory annual check by ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).

A risk assessment for Play will be held on file in the office for inspection. All new activities which involve potential significant risk will be subject to individual or generic assessment as part of the planning process.

The Play Team will be responsible for the site, equipment and resources in general, which are intended to be open access. 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 well-being 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 staff on duty.

It is the responsibility of the staff on duty to act upon any concerns and to ensure that any deficiencies are rectified immediately and to report to the Play Team as soon as possible.

Availability of policy

This policy is available via the school office or on request.

Policies

This policy links to other school's policies on:

Anti-bullying policy

Behaviour policy

Complaints procedure policy

Health and safety policy

Safeguarding policy

Appendix 1

Play Types

There are acknowledged to be a number of different play types (around 16) which provide play workers, managers and trainers with a common language for describing play. There are in no particular order.

- 1 Symbolic Play – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of depth, e.g. using a piece of wood to symbolise a person or an object or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring.
- 2 Rough and Tumble Play – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display. This type of play allows children to participate in physical contact that doesn't involve or result in someone being hurt. This type of play can use up lots of energy.
- 3 Socio-dramatic Play – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature, e.g. playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row.
- 4 Social Play – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended, e.g. any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e. games, conversations, making something together.
- 5 Creative Play – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. Allows children to design, explore, try out new ideas and use their imagination. They can use lots of different tools, props, equipment. It can have a beginning and an end, texture and smell, e.g. enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools for its own sake. Self-expression through any medium, making things, changing things.
- 6 Communication Play – play using words, nuances or gestures e.g. mime / charades, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, whispering, pointing, debate, street slang, poetry, and text messages, talking on mobiles / emails / internet, skipping games, group and ball games.
- 7 Dramatic Play – play which dramatises events in which the child is not a direct participator, e.g. presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.
- 8 Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction for its own sake, e.g. chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.
- 9 Deep Play – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear, e.g. light fires with matches, make weapons, conquer fear such as heights, snakes, and creepy crawlies. Some find strength they never knew they

had to climb obstacles, lift large objects, etc. e.g. leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam, roller skating, assault course, high jump.

- 10 Exploratory Play – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects, e.g. engaging with an object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content, such as stacking bricks.
- 11 Fantasy Play – This is the make believe world of children. This type of play is where the child's imagination gets to run wild. Play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way that is unlikely to occur, e.g. playing at being a pilot flying around the world, pretend to be various characters/people, be where ever they want to be, drive a car, become be six feet nothing tall or as tiny as they want to be the list is endless as is a child's imagination.
- 12 Imaginative Play – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply, e.g. imagining you are or pretending to be a tree or ship, or patting a dog which isn't there.
- 13 Mastery Play – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments, e.g. digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires.
- 14 Object Play – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements, e.g. examination and novel use of any object, e.g. cloth, paintbrush, cup.
- 15 Role Play – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature, e.g. brushing with a broom, dialling with a telephone, driving a car.
- 16 Recapitulative Play – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

Appendix 2

See H&SE document.

Appendix 3

The Principles of Playwork

School can benefit greatly by using the skills knowledge and principles of the playwork sector in areas of workforce development related to free play opportunities.

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole.

They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people.

They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

- All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals.
- Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
- The prime focus and essence of play work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- For play workers, the play process takes precedence and play workers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
- The role of the play worker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- The play worker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
- Play workers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the play worker.
- Play workers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All play worker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

Appendix 4

Type of Supervision

Direct – This is where the supervisor(s) will be able to see all areas of play, and be close at hand, circa a maximum of 20 metres away. Some play features in these areas such as play houses or planting may offer semi-hidden opportunities. This will be most common in nursery and reception classes.

Remote – This is where a supervisor or supervisors are located at a relatively static location some distance from an activity, e.g. supervisor on the playground and activity 20 metres or more away. This style is widely used in other countries and its purpose is for an adult to be present to respond rapidly to an accident or serious behaviour incident.

Ranging – This is where the supervisor moves around the play area, usually on a set course/schedule. The distance from pupils therefore differing but can be 20 metres or more away. On a large site supervisors should have zones so that they know which parts of the site they are covering and they should modify their attention based on the kinds of play and their judgement about areas of highest risk.

DEFINITIONS

The following are the definitions for terms used in the document and some more detailed explanation where appropriate.

a) Free Range Play – Free range play is where pupils are given permission to use and explore the school grounds or at least part of them without direct supervision.

b) Level of Supervision – The number of supervisors (competent adults) undertaking supervision indicated as a ratio to number of pupils being supervised.

c) Type of Supervision – OPAL Recommend that a paragraph on the school's intonated supervision styles is included in its play policy.

d) Supervisor – This is the competent adult providing the supervision and can be a play team member, teacher, teaching assistant, lunch break supervisor or a volunteer. In each case they will have been assessed as competent to provide the supervision necessary and been trained on what is acceptable practice, what to do if unacceptable practice occurs and what to do in case of accidents.

References

<http://www.playengland.org.uk>

Play England is a registered charity, no. 1150216, and a Company Limited by Guarantee, no. 07880687.

<http://www.hackneyplay.org>

Hackney Play Association, Charity No. 1145960.

<http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk>

Hughes, B. (2002) A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types, 2nd edition, London: PlayLink.