



**Outwoods Edge
Primary School**

Every Child. Every Day. Every Future.

Play Policy

Signed by:


_____ **Headteacher**


_____ **Governor**

Date: 13.09.2021

Date: 13.09.2021

Date of next review: September 2023

Outwoods Edge Play Policy

1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions which affect children's play. At Outwoods Edge, we are committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

2. Rationale

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years 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, fewer areas for play and awareness of risk have led to 'play deprivation' for many of today's children. This makes their play opportunities at school even more vital.

At Outwoods Edge, we believe that better quality play leads to happier children and happier staff. With better quality play opportunities there are fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school and improved skills development and learning. As the children improve their quality of play and have more enriching play times, there are fewer accidents and classroom learning is enhanced as the children come in from play happy and ready to learn.

At Outwoods Edge, we believe that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. We acknowledge the UN Convention 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.

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

3. Definition and 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. We believe play has many benefits, for example:

- Play is critical to children's health and wellbeing and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, different concepts and different ideas.
- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, with individuals, and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these, including sadness and happiness, rejection and acceptance, frustration and achievement, boredom and fascination, fear and confidence.
- Play encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.

- Play maintains children’s openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

4. Aims

In relation to play, at Outwoods Edge we aim to:

- ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- aid children’s physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- provide a range of environments which will support children’s learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- promote independence and teamwork within children.
- build emotional and physical resilience.

5. Rights

Our school recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which includes *the right to play, recreation and leisure* (Article 31) and the *right of children to be listened to on matters important to them* (Article 12). We acknowledge that we have a duty take these rights seriously and listen to children’s views on their play.

6. 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: An Implementation Guide (2012)

The school 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 its approach to managing risk in play (see

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>). In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in ‘*Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide*. (see <https://www.hands-on-international.net/wp-content/uploads/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>)

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. 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’*.

In additions to standard risk/benefit assessments, the school will practice dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

7. Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day, there should be one or more adults present outdoors. The school recognizes OPAL's three models of supervision: **Direct**, **Remote** and **Ranging**. Except for new children in EYFS (Reception), the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will usually take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

8. The Adults' Role in Play

We are working with OPAL (www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk) to help guide a strategic approach to developing play at Outwoods Edge. We will help children maximize the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who are informed by, and work in accordance with, the Playwork Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed and ultimately will strive to facilitate an environment which nurtures children's self-directed play.

The Play Leaders' core function is to create an environment which will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced Play Leader is capable of enriching the child's play experience both in terms of the design and resources of the physical environment and in terms of the attitudes and culture fostered within the play setting. Play Leaders 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 also available to participate in the play if invited.

9. The Children's role in Play

The children will all have access to their own version of the play policy. (Appendix 1). In it will also include the rights and responsibilities of the children to:

- Have ownership of their play and outdoor learning experiences
- Respect and look after each other their environment, equipment and toys.
- To be aware of sanctions surrounding purposely dangerous or unsafe behaviour
- Ensure that playtimes are fun for everybody

This children's policy will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with our School Council. Our 'Pupil Play Leaders' will support children's play and learning outside.

10. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable/unnecessary risks and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore for themselves through their freely chosen play.

We will strive to continually improve the quality and diversity of our school's grounds to enhance play. We will use the document 'Best Play' – To guide us on what a quality play environment should contain.

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/best-play/>

Our Play Policy for Children

We have the **right** to have fun at playtimes. We have the **responsibility** to make sure that everyone has fun and our play does not stop this.

We have the **right** to make our own decisions about our play and choose what we do. We have the **responsibility** to make sure our decisions don't affect others in a negative way.

We have the **right** to choose who we play with. We have the **responsibility** that no one is left out of play or forced to do something they don't want to.

We have the **right** play with lots of different toys and have a well looked after environment. We have the **responsibility** to take pride in, respect and look after our environment and toys.

We have the **right** to explore be creative and take thoughtful risks. We have the **responsibility** to think about what we are doing and talk to a Play Leader about the risks we are taking if they ask us too.