**MANOR PARK SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

**PLAY POLICY**



The Play Policy in respect of Manor Park Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

Last updated: December 2020

To be reviewed: December 2022

Play Policy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:** | Sarah Jeffery |
| **APPROVED:** |  |
| **signed:** |  |
| **to be reviewed:** | December 2022 |

**Introduction**

This policy sets out Manor Park Primary School and Nursery’s commitment to ensuring that quality play opportunities are available for all children. In line with article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Playwork Principles and the Play Safety Forum’s publication ‘Managing Risk in a Play Provision’, our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allows them to explore, manipulate and experience their environment, free from unacceptable levels of risk. 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.

**Background**

Children spend up to 20% of their time in school at play. This time is invaluable and needs

clear planning. 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.

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

Manor Park Primary School fully recognises its duties and responsibilities to support children’s

playtime while they are at our school.

**Definitions**

* A play policy sets out the values and principles which a group of people agree that they hold in common and that will inform the decisions that they make.
* A play strategy sets out priorities and objectives for action by which these principles will be put into practice.
* A play implementation or action plan sets out the specific actions and improvements to be undertaken and will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed.

**What is Play?**

The *United Nation’s Committee on the Rights of the Child* defines play as:

*“any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end”.*

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 activity meets the four components of a child’s development:

* **Physical** (direct impact on physical development, co-ordination and fitness)
* **Intellectua**l (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).

At Manor Park Primary School, we recognise that great play involves:

* Children being creative and cooperative
* The adult being responsive to children’s invitations and requests
* It may be solitary or social
* It invites investigation
* It makes children happy and happy children are better learners

**Aims:**

Our aims at Manor Park Primary School and Nursery are:

* To provide children with a play setting which is both stimulating and challenging.
* To develop social skills, enhancing communication, collaboration and problem solving.
* To encourage children to develop independence and take responsibility for themselves and others.
* To allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
* To develop skills in self-assessing and managing risk.
* To enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
* To aid children’s physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
* To provide children with a range of environments which will support their learning across the curriculum and about the world around them.
* promote self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.
* build emotional and physical resilience.

**Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk**

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children

legitimately spend time playing. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter

acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment.

Therefore, play provision should aim to successfully manage the balance between the need

to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm.

Research shows that the uncertainty and challenge of much of children’s play is a very large

part of its appeal to them, and that it also enhances the development of their brains and

bodies, making them more adaptable and resilient as they grow. Risk and challenge is not

limited to physical risk – it includes the uncertainties involved in making new friends, playing

with children from different backgrounds and building emotional resilience through trying out

new experiences with the possibility of failure.

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.

Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to independently judge risks 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***

We will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance *‘Children’s Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach’* (Appendix 2) as the principal document informing our approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, we will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in ‘Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide’. We will also follow OPAL’s five-part R.A.P.I.D response to risk management. This includes:

* Risk-benefit assessments – we will carry out risk-benefit assessments on all aspects of our play environment deemed to have the potential for unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.
* Assemblies – we will regularly discuss risks that arise during play with children and negociate appropriate control measures with them. A brief written log will kept noting risks discussed and how they will be managed.
* Policy – this policy forms the basis for all staff understanding and decision making about managing risk in our play provision.
* Inspection – fixed play equipment and the condition of trees should have an annual inspection by a certified inspector. Ongoing visual inspections of the play environment will be carried out by members of staff and a record kept of any actions required and carried out.
* Dynamic risk management – supervising staff will be supported to use dynamic risk-benefit assessments, assessing risks as they emerge in play and using their professional judgement to make decisions.

Carefully considered and comprehensive risk-benefit assessments of 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.

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

* Recognise the need for professional judgment in setting the balance between safety and goals.
* Ensure risks are as apparent as possible to staff and children.
* Ensure risks that children may not appreciate are controlled and managed
* Provide staff with training to supervise play settings.
* All staff are responsible for ensuring that adults are in place before the children are allowed outside

**Remote 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 recognises OPAL’s three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will 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. We therefore may not be able to see every child all of the time, especially when the children are using the trees.

**The Adults' Role in Play**

We believe that it is the job of a Play Leader 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. Play Leaders ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way. At Manor Park Primary School we will use the nationally recognised Playwork Principles (Appendix) as key guidance in the development of play staffing

**First Aid**

There is an outdoor first aid station, which contains basic First Aid equipment and all of the Play Leaders have Emergency First Aid training

Any head bumps must be reported to parents via a first Aid slip which must be handed to the class teacher. If an incident involving a child requires a phone call home this must be discussed with the class teacher prior to the call being made. All First Aid incidents should be recorded using the duplicate slips which are stored in the First Aid stations.

**Clothing**

During the colder and wet weather wellies or walking boots should be worn by staff and children when walking on the school field or in The Spinney. Children should also wear coats during cold weather.

**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.

**Health and Safety**

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

periodic basis. These checks will be kept on file in the office.

Risk-benefit assessments for areas, equipment and activities 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. All previous assessments will be reviewed as and

when appropriate.

The play leaders 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 play leaders.

It is the responsibility of all 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 the Play Co-ordinator on duty to act upon any concerns and to ensure that

any deficiencies are rectified immediately and to report to the SLT as soon

as possible.

**Review**

This policy will be closely monitored by the head teacher and deputy. A working group, led by the deputy, comprising of play leaders, parents, governor and other teaching staff, will take responsibility for managing the action plan for play.

This policy has been shared by the whole school community.

**Appendix Playwork Principals**

**2. UNDERSTAND PROCESS**

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.

**1. UNDERSTAND NEED**

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 well-being of individuals.

**8. CHOOSE INTERVENTION STYLES**

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

**6. LEARN AND REFLECT**

The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, reflective practice

**7. UNDERSTAND ADULT IMPACT**

Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people’s play on the playworker.

**5. CREATE SPACES**

The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

**4. ADVOCATE FOR PLAY**

For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

**3. SUPPORT PROCESS**

The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.