

The Play Team will carry out daily, ongoing risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards to a member of SLT

Risk Assessment Date: 21/10/22

Assessed by: Kate Hart & Carrie Jackson

Risk Matrix						
Likelihood	Consequence					
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
	Almost certain	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High

Description of Activity, Principle or Object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or Utility Or Related Policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Initial Action Date
Pupils using bags with straps : potential for neck injury and strangulation if used incorrectly.	Bags used for transportation so children can re-locate loose parts around the school grounds	All members of staff to be aware of risk of straps on bags when supervising outdoors. Children have been informed in assembly of how to use the bags sensibly and safely.	All staff on duty	6/6/22
Pupils using tug-of-war rope : risk of falling over by being tugged, as well as potential rope burns on hands	Tug-of-war will encourage the development of problem-solving and negotiating, as well as building cognitive skills. Children learn to compromise and work as a team. Upper body strength can be developed, as well as core strength, plus the development of language and gross motor skills.	All members of staff to be aware of risk when supervising main field. Rope to be distributed by member of Play Team and returned to staff member at the end of the play session.	All staff on duty	9/5/22

Pupils using sensory trail : risk of loose parts separating from main structure, as well as potential cuts to hands and feet if shells/bark/cones etc. are sharp	Sensory play encourages learning through exploration, curiosity, problem solving and creativity. It helps to build nerve connections in the brain and encourages the development of language and motor skills.	All members of staff to be aware of risk when supervising main field. Regular checking of trail to ensure loose/sharp parts are re-cemented/glued back down.	All staff on duty	25/4/22
Pupils using wooden tee-pees : risk of structure falling over, or of children being 'trapped' inside tee-pee if a tarpaulin is used over the top of it	Tee-pees offer a small social space for children to play in	All members of staff to be aware of risk. Regular checking inside tee-pees to ensure they are being used safely and correctly.	All staff on duty	25/4/22
Pupils using OPAL storage sheds : risk of trapped fingers, or being 'locked' in shed through door swinging shut or padlock being closed	Sheds required for storage of play equipment – enables pupils to manage independent choice of play.	All members of Play Team to ensure door hooks are securely fastened when opened (including café). Sheds to be unlocked on a Monday morning and then locked at end of lunch on Friday afternoon. All padlocks to have one key which all Play Team staff need access to.	Kev Morris to maintain door hooks; provide appropriate padlocks + all staff on duty	28/9/21
Pupils climbing on walls : risk of falling or scraping themselves on wall	Benefit of physical development at height, increased coordination and strength	All members of staff to be aware of risk. Pupils briefed in assembly about which walls can be climbed (not to climb wall into digging zone by dress-up shed). Use of purpose-built climbing wall by studio to have crash mats when in use; children briefed about using red and yellow grips only for feet, and to traverse across the wall, rather than up.	All staff on duty	Reviewed 7/7/21 17/5/21 17/6/19
Pupils using sandpit : potential for sand in eyes; sand can become infested without proper aeration; risk of toxoplasmosis from animal faeces; risk of consumption of sand; allergies on skin.	Sand provides a natural resource for children's play and can develop: language play, social skills, problem-solving and communication, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, creativity and imagination.	Sand to be constantly aerated (dug over) and raked – this will happen naturally with year-round use. Use of a net covering to deter interest from wildlife – cover to be removed and sandpit checked for contamination daily. Cover to be pulled over at the end of each session. Soft brushes stored near sandpit to brush off sand from skin. OPAL long-sleeved tops offered for sensitive skin. Bottle water	All staff	19/4/21

		provided to wash out sand from eyes. Weather conditions to be assessed before sandpit is opened. Monitor and regulate the number of children in the sandpit if necessary. Discuss risks with children – model phrase “the sand stays low, or out you go”, “No doggy digging” to avoid sand in eyes. Play Team to rake over sand before use in very hot weather, to avoid children burning themselves on hot sand.		
Pupils using digging zone (The Glade): potential for soil ingestion, ingestion or absorption of plants, allergies, Use of small spades could cause harm to individuals/others if used incorrectly.	Fine and gross motor skills are developed when lifting, mixing, stirring and pouring. Digging with open-ended materials provides a creative stimulus and sensory experience.	All children frequently reminded of Forest School values – “no picky, no licky.” Staff to remove hazardous plants (e.g. stinging nettles). Staff to be vigilant when supervising children using spades. Play Team to hand out/collect in spades each day.	All staff	19/4/21 24/4/22
Pupils using scooters and wheeled toys : potential risk of falling off, causing bumps and scrapes.	Scooting builds on lower-body strength, confidence, self-esteem, hand-eye coordination and prediction & planning skills. Also provides opportunities for play through movement.	Play Team to ensure the scooters/bikes are checked and maintained on a weekly basis. Scooting area is clearly marked out using cones, and all movement is to be within the same-direction travel. A member of the Play Team will supervise this area within close range. Higher risk of using helmets due to ill-fitting helmets which may cover eyes and obstruct view.	Play Co-ordinator and members of the Play Team	2/12/19
Pupils climbing trees : potential for falling onto grass, falling onto person below or hitting part of the tree as they fall.	Tree climbing builds strength, confidence, self-esteem, hand-eye coordination and prediction & planning skills. Also provides opportunities for pride and a sense of achievement.	Play Team to ensure the surface below the 3 trees are free from debris, stones and other large objects. Maximum of 2 in the tree at once; children only climb to height mark indicated by paint (1.5m). Check for damage following adverse weather.	Play Co-ordinator and members of the Play Team	11/9/19
Pupils playing with heavy loose play equipment , such as pallets, tyres, wooden planks and cable drums: potential for splinters, scratches from	Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way. Construction and assembly play offer	Encourage safe holding, moving and stacking. “Ready, steady, lift” – bent knees and straight back – children to be regularly reminded of this in termly assemblies. Large tractor tyres not to	Play Co-ordinator and members of the Play Team	19/6/19 and ongoing

undetected nails, falling off from a height (onto grass) if climbing, and crush injury. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects, or attempting to crawl in tubing.	development of critical thinking skills, as well as gross motor skills.	be moved; smaller car tyres can be moved. Staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts. All pallets to be checked daily for protruding nails – nails hammered in or pallet removed from building zone for disposal. All large tyres to have drilled holes to avoid collection of stagnant water. Pupils reminded of 'no consumption' rule.		
Children playing with skipping ropes : potential for neck injury and strangulation if used incorrectly.	Use of jump ropes allow for development of gross motor skills, and cardio-physical play.	All ropes to be stored in a designated box, and only used on front playground. Play Team to enforce 'restricted area' use of ropes. All ropes regularly checked to ensure they are in good working order.	Play Co-ordinator and members of the Play Team	19/6/19
Pupils playing on field and behind mound : supervision difficult and risk of pupils being injured when out of sight.	Benefit of physical play on grass surface (ball skills, rolling, scrambling and jumping on mound).	Pupils briefed about varying ranges of supervision from the Play Team. Play Team wearing high-viz jackets for quick identification.	Play Co-ordinator and members of the Play Team	19/6/19
Pupils playing in different environments with different equipment could produce new potential dangers: There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid.	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	All members of the Play Team will carry their own 1 st aid pouches and 1 st aid record slips. Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated in situ. More serious injuries will be referred to SP who will deal with as appropriate, informing a member of SLT if the injury requires parental contact or hospital treatment.	Play Co-ordinator & members of the Play Team	19/6/19
Pupils have access to dressing up clothes , such as scarves, handbags, etc, as well as fabric sheets and cushions : potential for neck injury and strangulation if used	Benefit of exploring imaginative and creative play through role-play.	All members of the Play Team to be vigilant in their supervision of pupils use of dressing-up equipment, fabric and cushions. Zips on cushions could catch children if they are not being used	Play Team	19/6/19

incorrectly, or scratches from zips on cushions.		appropriately. Play Team to carry scissors for cutting, if necessary.		
Pupils can use sticks : potential for scratches, splinters, bruising if stick used on body part.	Use of natural resources from the local environment to support imaginative, spontaneous role-play.	Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe use of sticks: 'stick on stick/loose part' only, sticks no higher than shoulder level.	Play Team	19/6/19
Pupils using gym mats : potential to trip over corner of mats, fall from height if creating a 'human pyramid'.	Benefit of increased coordination, strength, flexibility and body conditioning. Value of communication and teamwork.	Pupils briefed to limit gym support structures to a height of no more than two people at a time.	Play Team	19/6/19
Use of fixed climbing equipment in wet weather: potential risk of slipping and falling on slippery surface.	Benefit of strengthening muscle flexibility and active 'cardio' play. Pupils also developing skill of making informed spatial judgements based on personal capabilities when using large apparatus.	Pupils briefed to self-assess the risk of slippery surfaces/bars and how to change behaviour/use of apparatus when there is a change in the climate.	Play Team	19/6/19

Benefit-Risk Assessment Record Sheet and Advice

The purpose of **Benefit-Risk Assessments** are to enable you to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in your play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose. They can help you to think about, predict and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm. You will need two approaches to managing risk: Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments and Dynamic Risk Management.

Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments means you should look at your usual environment and practices at least annually, and particularly when significant changes take place. Keep a written, dated record of the areas in the table below.

Dynamic Risk Management means that staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place, within the play environment. They should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action, if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity or harm with preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible, and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Common areas that need standing assessment: Boundaries to dangerous 'no-go' areas, tree management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying especially at height, water use and water features (when introduced).

Health & Safety statement

As an OPAL school, we aim to provide a balanced approach to children's play and leisure time. We believe that:

- Play is important for children's well-being and development
- When planning and providing play opportunities, our goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. We fully accept that accidents can, and will, happen during play.
- Our children's play opportunities focus on controlling the real risks, while securing and increasing the benefits.

