



St Cuthbert's RC Primary School Play Policy

Date February 2018

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Play Policy

This policy sets out St Cuthbert's 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.

Our Aims

Our school aims are:

- To provide children with a play setting which is both stimulating and challenging.
- To allow children to take risks.
- To provide children with a range of environments 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, tolerance 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 it should give children the opportunity to play with all ages and that it is the role of the adults to support the play process. Children will also have the opportunity for 'free range' play within the school grounds.

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 St Cuthbert's Primary School we promote children's rights from the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. We see that children's rights are a central focus in everything we do, as a framework for our teaching and learning and at the heart of our ethos.

The school has a rights respecting ethos. In our communal areas, such as the playground, sports hall and the dinner hall we use the following rights.

We have the right to be happy.

We have the right to be safe.

We have the right to play and relax (Article 31)

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 a right to be happy therefore to respect this right the children must follow instructions, use equipment without hurting others, assess risk and tidy equipment away. 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 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 tidy up.

Children have the right to play and relax 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.

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.

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.

Remote supervision

We may not be able to see every child all of the time, especially when the children are using the trees and hillside. 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.

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.

Review

This policy will be closely monitored by the head teacher and play leader. A working group, led by the deputy and PE leader, comprising of lunchtime staff, teaching assistants, governor and outdoor specialist, will take responsibility for managing the action plan for play. This policy has been shared by the whole school community.

For further information re Principles and Risk Benefit see attached appendices

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Health and Safety Risk 2012

Appendix 2 Play work Principle