



## **St Bede's RC Primary School**

### **Play Policy**

Agreed by the Governing Body on	Spring 2020
Review Date	Summer 2022
Person Responsible	E Alderson (Head Teacher)

## **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*

### **Introduction**

St Bede's RCVA Primary recognises that good play opportunities are a child's right, essential for children's well-being and balanced development regardless of age, sex, ability or background.

### **Commitment**

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

At St Bede's, we want to help children to be safe, reliable, independent and respectful of others, embodying our respectful relationships policy. 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.

### **St Bede's 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.

St Bede's fully recognises its duties and responsibilities to support children's playtime while they are at school.

## **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. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types e.g. 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; and
- improve physical development, co ordination and fitness.

## **Definition**

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. 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).

St Bede's 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.

St Bede's 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.

St Bede's 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. 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**

St Bede's Primary believe that The Playwork 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.

We believe that it is the job of a play worker 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 workers ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way.

### **Environment**

At St Bede's 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; and
- 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**

St Bede's Primary 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**

St Bede's Primary 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 accessible play shed provides 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. Monitoring**

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

## **4. 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.

It is the responsibility of all staff, 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 Head teacher.

## **Policies**

This policy links to other school's policies on:

[Anti-bullying policy](#)

[Behaviour policy](#)

[Complaints procedure policy](#)

[Ethos and Vision statement](#)

[E-Safety 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 playworkers, 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 eg 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 eg 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 eg any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols ie 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 eg 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, 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 eg 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 eg chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.
- 9 Deep Play – play which allows the child to encounter potentially risky experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear eg conquer fear such as heights, snakes, and creepy crawlies. Some find strength they never knew they had to climb obstacles, lift large objects etc eg leaping between tyres, 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 eg 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 eg 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 eg 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 eg 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 eg examination and novel use of any object eg cloth, paintbrush, cup.
- 15 Role Play – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature eg 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.

## 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.