



Flying
High
Partnership



Launde Primary School

Opal Play Policy

Document Owner: C Johnston

Issue Date/Approved by Govs: September 2025

Revised Date:

Review Frequency: *Annually*

Date Approved by Governors:

Opal Play Policy

At Launde Primary School we believe that children learn in a caring and fun environment and that every child should feel valued, included and secure. We believe their physical, emotional, social and cultural education is as important as the National Curriculum.

We recognise that children's self-esteem is paramount to their learning. To ensure children are motivated and achieve high standards, our entire wider curriculum, both in and outside of the classroom, is exciting, stimulating, broad and balanced, offering children outstanding learning opportunities.

The quality of our teaching is not just confined to the classroom. We recognise the importance of outdoor play and learning especially for today's children. We seek to provide the children of Launde Primary School with the opportunity to develop key life skills through play such as resilience, independence and risk management. We recognise that children should be the masters of their own learning and the OPAL provides staff the opportunity to allow children to be autonomous and share their personal skills and talents inside and outside the classroom.

We believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. With skilled teaching staff who celebrate play, both inside and outside of the classroom, we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

At Launde Primary School, our curriculums are guided by our unwavering commitment to creating well rounded and aspiring pupils, ready to make a full impact on the world. We envision a school where every child feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive in a positive and inclusive environment.

Through our behaviour curriculum, we aim to instil in our students the values of **respect, kindness, resilience, curiosity and confidence**. We believe that by working together, parents and school staff can create an environment where these values are not just words, but are integral to everything we do and how we treat each other. These values will be present and discussed within every part of school life, fostering an environment where everyone feels safe and respected. We believe that by nurturing each child's individual strengths and talents, we can develop the whole child as a learner.

At Launde, we know that children need to be taught expected behaviours, which is as essential as teaching them academic skills like reading and maths. These will be revisited and rehearsed throughout the year so that they become learnt and instinctive behaviours. This forms part of the OPAL curriculum as they are the basis of safe play. If a child does not meet an expectation of behaviour, then instead of punishing them, we will take the opportunity to reteach our expectations so that they can learn to do better for next time. Through an approach of reflective review, children will take onus on their own behaviour, the consequences of their behaviour on themselves and others and how to ensure it isn't repeated.

Our school values are embedded into all of our curriculums and this links to our school's strap line **creating curious minds, kind hearts and bright futures**. It reflects our commitment to nurture compassionate individuals, to foster a love of learning and exploration and to empower children to achieve their full potential. We want our children to be ready to learn and confident to make mistakes. Our expectations are designed to be taught from EYFS to Year 6 and are adapted to suit the needs of those with SEND and other additional needs.

The purpose of this policy

- This policy is intended to be a practical working document. Many aspects of this policy have already been discussed and agreed by teachers at staff meetings and have been consulted with parents and children.
- It outlines a basic level of good practice and provision which is to be matched in all of our play areas. We deem outdoor play and learning as an important part of Launde Primary and recognise the benefits championing this play can bring to our children. This policy will develop over time.
- This policy ensures all staff and parents know what OPAL play offers and how Launde Primary School will implement it in their own way.
- All staff will be expected to follow the practices within this policy. This policy will ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities when implementing play practices and know that offering these play skills is an integral part of their role in developing children's play skills, independence and resilience. It seeks to inform anyone working with children on practical strategies with regards to risk benefit, supervision and managing play situations.

1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

2. Rationale

Launde Primary School believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. The school acknowledges 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 Primary 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 that a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. We believe play has many benefits, including:

- 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.

Launde Primary School values play and believes:

- Play brings uninhibited joy to children.
- Play allows children to explore freely only for intrinsic fascination.
- Play gives children the opportunity to express themselves and lead their own learning.
- Play develops awe and wonder in the natural world around them.
- Play is inclusive to all.

How play supports our school values:

- We **respect** each other - Play at Launde will give children the opportunity to respect each other's wishes with regards to play choices, respect each other's opinions and reconcile differences with role models within play.
- We are **ready to learn** - Play at Launde allows children to learn through their own interests, real experiences and learn from more knowledgeable others. Play gives children the opportunity to develop their ideas and take their learning in any direction, adapting ideas with peers or alone in the moment.
- We are **kind** and care for each other - Play at Launde gives children from all backgrounds equal opportunities to a range of experiences. The play space is designed and discussed alongside children who recognise the importance of their ideas.
- We are **safe** – Play at Launde allows our children to make decisions, assess risk and explore. We encourage children to play collaboratively and follow the play rules we have created for each area.

How play supports our school priorities:

- Mental health and physical health - Play allows children to build their resilience, confidence and it gives them access to as much outdoor space as possible. We can provide all children the opportunity to manage their physical health and mental wealth through a range of outdoor activities.
- Pupil self-leadership and management of risk - Through our playtimes, children are encouraged to risk assess their own play, they are supported to decide upon the 'rules' of play themselves in our play assemblies and they are supported to make their own decisions around their play.
- Pupil Voice - The child's voice is paramount at Launde. We have listened to the children's views to improve play for all. We look to plan opportunities for play based on the children's ideas and interests.
- Quality of Education - We recognise the impact outdoor play has on a child's education. We seek to give every child the opportunity to experience the play and the outdoors freely, leading their own learning

4. Aims

In relation to play our school aims 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 that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Provide a range of environments that 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 to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

6. Benefit and risk

'Play is great for children's wellbeing 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 (Play Safety Forum, 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 principal value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. See appendix 1

In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012)*. See **appendix 2**

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. As outlined in 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*'.

Standing Risk Benefit Assessment

The purpose of Risk Benefit Assessments is to enable us to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in a play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose. They can help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm.

In addition 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. Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility. The greater the risk, the more thought and planning is involved.

HSE Health and Safety in Schools - see appendix 3

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 recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervisors will use ranging and remote supervision 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.

Supervision Guidelines

Remote- This applies when adults are visible and reachable by children within the play environment so that they can quickly respond to an accident or incident. The assumption is that every action by every child will not be seen, but that clear processes are in place to deal with incidents should they happen, and that they can quickly be identified and acted on. It is expected that risk will be controlled by managing the environment and building competence in the children.

Ranging -This applies on large school sites which might have areas away from open view, such as around corners, over mounds, in woodland or long grass. The Play Team would range over the site so they have an idea of the kind of play going on

and where children are. This kind of supervision relies on children being supported in identifying and managing risk, and building self regulation skills and social skills. This kind of play will take place in an environment where risk–benefit assessments have been made.

Direct -This is when adults need to see what every child is doing at every moment and all children are in relatively close sightline of adults. This would be applicable in situations where there is considerable danger of death or serious injury, it is judged that children have very low levels of competence and where they are unlikely to be able to manage risk or self-regulate behaviour.

Supervision Site Map - See Appendix 4

8. The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who are informed by and work in accordance with the Play work Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed, and ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment that nurtures children's self-directed play.

The playworker's core function is to create an environment that will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced playworker 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. Playworkers 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.

Managing play situations

When managing play situations, we follow the steps below.

1. Wait - Do you actually need to intervene at all or can you just stay observant and stand-by?
2. Observe - Are the children inviting you to join in their play? Do they clearly need or want your help? If you are unsure, move in a bit closer.
3. Support - Support children to experiment and explore different ways of doing things and acting, even if it is not the best way. They need to be able to conduct experiments and make mistakes. This is how they learn.
4. Act - Act decisively and swiftly if you think you really need to for safety or protection.
5. Withdraw - Remember your goal is to hand back ownership and control of the play to the children. You may be able to sneakily resources their play without them even noticing.

Playwork Principles - See Appendix 5

9. Equality and diversity

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs we will ensure all children, regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs, can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school. Equality and

diversity in play opportunities has been discussed with all stakeholders ensuring all children's needs are met.

Gross motor structure, communication spaces and areas have been considered in the planning process with the idea that all children can access the whole school site.

10. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable or 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. www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf

It is a varied inspirational and interesting physical environment that maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness and challenge. It is a place where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms.

Quality play provision offers all children and young people the opportunity to freely interact with, or experience, the following:

- **other children and young people** - with a choice to play alone or with others, to negotiate, co-operate, fall out, and resolve conflict
 - **the natural world** - weather, the seasons, bushes, trees, plants, insects, animals, mud
 - **loose parts** - natural and man made materials that can be manipulated, moved and adapted, built and demolished
 - **the natural elements** - earth, air, fire and water
 - **challenge and risk taking** - both on a physical and emotional level
 - **playing with identity** - role play and dressing up
 - **movement** - running, jumping, climbing, balancing, rolling
 - **rough and tumble** - play fighting
 - **the senses** - sounds, tastes, textures, smells and sights
- feelings** - pain, joy, confidence, fear, anger, contentment, boredom, fascination, happiness, grief, rejection, acceptance, sadness, pride, frustration.

Monitoring and review

This policy is scheduled to be reviewed every three years but we are aware of the need to review the school play policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, changes in practice etc.

The next review will be October 2026, earlier if required.

Appendix 1 - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm>

Appendix 2 - <https://www.playscotland.org/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-implementation-guide-2nd-edition-4/>

Appendix 3 – <https://www.hse.gov.uk/education/sensible-leadership/>

Appendix 4 – Site supervision map

Playground Zones – 12.15 – 1.15			
Zone 1 – Top Playground	Zone 2 – First half of field and sandpit	Zone 3 – Second half of field up to football pitch	Zone 3 - Ball Court
Demi	Hemaxi Patel	Harjinder/Nina	Hayden - Monday and Friday Nina Tuesday – Thursday
Zone 5 – New playground and lower field	Zone 6 – Main playground	Zone 7 – Main playground near Royal Lawn	Zone 8 – Outdoor classroom
Lisa	Heather Low	Shabnam	Laura
Zone 9 – small playground	Zone 10 – Fairy Tree and tyres	Zone 11 – Small grassed area down side of main building	Zone 12 – The front of main building
Shabira Asif-Jussab		Farha Mohammed	Alma
1. Children			
TA have ½ hour lunch outside and swap with partner			
Mariam and Kelsey		11.45 -12.15 cover Farha take Ayah to Dining Hall	Fatiha 12.15 – 12.45 cover Ayah
	Shabira cover for Ibrahim 11.40 – 12.10 (Jade on Lunch)	Jade 12-10 – 12.45 covers Ibrahim	Fatiha 12.45 – 1.15 cover Ibrahim

Appendix 5 – Playwork Principles



THE PLAYWORK PRINCIPLES

You'll encounter playwork principles in the Level 2 Playwork apprenticeship. But what are the playwork principles and why are they important?

The playwork principles were created by the Scrutiny Group, a cross-section of experienced playworkers who represent the views held by all Playworkers across the UK.

The play principles describe what play is, why play is different to other behaviours we associate with young people and childhood, how you should approach play and how you can support play as an adult and playworker.

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 and communities.

1

2

PLAY IS A PROCESS

It 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.

