



Play Policy

A Love of Learning for Life

Commitment

Ivydale Primary School is committed to using this policy and documentation in all decisions it makes which have an impact on children's play.

At Ivydale, we want to help prepare children to be safe, reliable and independent citizens for the 21st century. We are a values based school and everything we do is underpinned by our three core values of respect, responsibility and positivity. We have high expectations for our pupils in terms of social interactions, emotional growth and academic attainment, and believe access to play is an integral part of the whole child's development.

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, improved concentration in lessons, development of physical skills, development of problem solving skills, fewer conflicts and happier staff.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, Article 31**, recognises that schools have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that all children in their care have good access to high quality play opportunities, and that educational environments should play a major role in fulfilling these obligations.

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

Ivydale Primary School fully recognises its duties and responsibilities to support children's playtime while they are at school.

Definition

Play is recognized 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).

Ivydale Primary School 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.

Links to Learning

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning. 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, through risk taking and exploratory play in formal and informal settings, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries.

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, coordination and fitness.

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.

Ivydale acknowledges that every child has the right to choose the kind of play that is suitable for them whatever their age, gender or background.

Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk

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. The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

Ivydale will use the **Health and Safety Executive's guidance Managing Risk in Play and Leisure** (Appendix 1) as its principle guiding document in making decisions relating to risk and play.

The Play England and DCSF guide Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide (Ball D, Gill T and Spiegel B, 2008), which is endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive and RoSPA, provides useful advice on implementation of this statement.

The Adults' Role in Play

We believe that it is the job of a playworker 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 playspace if needed.

Playworkers ensure that the play space is inclusive - supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way.

Ivydale will use the nationally recognised Playwork Principles (Appendix 2) as key guidance in the development of play staffing.

Environment

At Ivydale we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing
- include the children and give them responsibility 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 use our value of respect when playing in the outdoor environment and with living things
- give children responsibility 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

Ivydale Primary School 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

Ivydale Primary School will create plans to transform the Phase 1 playground over three years to promote the continued creation and recreation of the play space by the children in Years 1-3.

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. We will continually collect loose parts through the school community, local business donations and recycled materials to enrich play opportunities. Loose parts will be examined regularly for quality/risk purposes and discarded/replaced as necessary, to maintain interest, value and safety at playtimes.

3. Green Space

Research shows that children using green spaces are more creative and play imaginatively and collaboratively. Ivydale Primary School will develop and build appropriate areas such as: a sand pit, a mud kitchen, wooden planks, crates, enclosures, climbing ivy and willow tunnels, in order to incorporate some greenery into the urban setting.

4. Supervision

Job descriptions and person specifications of playworkers at Ivydale Primary School will continue to be drawn up using LA model documents. The school will move towards a much greater emphasis on playwork roles and skills for play supervision.

5. Monitoring

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

6. 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 on the shared drive.

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 workers 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 workers, visiting carers, teachers and parents will be responsible for the conduct and behaviour of those in their care. They will be responsible for ensuring that those persons in their care use the site and equipment in a safe, controlled and appropriate manner to ensure the wellbeing of ALL users on site.

It is the responsibility of all 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 Playleader on duty.

It is the responsibility of the Playleader on duty to act upon any concerns and to ensure that any deficiencies are rectified immediately and to report to the Playleader as soon as possible.