



The John Wesley Church of England & Methodist Aided Primary School

Play Policy

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Flourishing in F.A.I.T.H. (Family, All Included, Thriving & Healthy)

At The John Wesley Church of England & Methodist Primary School, our vision of life without limits in all its fullness puts our children and families at the centre of everything. In our inclusive and unique community with two distinctively Christian foundations, every experience enables all to flourish as individuals and to thrive as God intended; mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The school welcomes everyone to its family and upholds the principles and teachings of the Christian faith. We provide a secure, caring learning environment, which supports and encourages all to fulfil their potential.

The John Wesley is a Church of England and Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School and our Christian values are at the heart of everything we do.

- ❖ **Koinonia**
- ❖ **Love**
- ❖ **Compassion**
- ❖ **Wisdom**
- ❖ **Forgiveness**
- ❖ **Service**

These are underpinned by our learning values:

- ❖ **Promoting curiosity** – asking questions, delving deeper and analysing
- ❖ **Developing communication** – listening, empathy and relationship-building
- ❖ **'Prove it' opportunities** – problem solving, decision making and exploration
- ❖ **Sharing views and opinions** – visual, spoken and written
- ❖ **Encouraging creativity** – innovation, imagination and spirituality

Our whole school vision is built upon and guided by these. Every school policy is written with this in mind and implemented in way that reflects our vision of our children being able to '**Flourishing in F.A.I.T.H**' (Family, All Included, Thriving & Healthy)' and as Jesus gave his disciples a vision of a life that is full of possibilities and dreams yet to be met, we encourage our children to live their life in all its fullness.

PLAY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out The John Wesley CEM 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 and many children may spend much of their time indoors, we recognise that the school grounds provide a crucial place for children to experience self-initiated play and the benefits this brings.

2. RATIONALE

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. 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.

Our school values of Koinonia, Love, Compassion, Wisdom, Forgiveness and Service are both learned through, and embedded in, our vision for play for our school. We believe that these values are a cornerstone to a successful school, both through work and play, and staff and children strive to embody them in our day to day lives, both inside and outside the classroom.

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. PURPOSE

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play. Therefore, this time needs to be led and planned for to ensure high quality and varied provision is made available.

Changes in society such as improved technology have led to 'play deprivation' for many of today's children. This makes school play with their friends even more vital. Moreover, research shows that play can enhance language development which is vital for all our children and in particular for EAL learners which is pertinent to our school context as well as those children with speech and language difficulties.

4. DEFINITION AND VALUE OF PLAY

Play is defined as: *a process that is intrinsically motivated, directed by the child and freely chosen by the child.* Play has its own value and provides its own purpose. It may or may not involve equipment or other people.

We believe play has many benefits, including but not limited to:

- 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, as well as

different concepts and 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.

“We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing.” -Charles Schaefer.

5. AIMS

In relation to play, The John Wesley CEM Primary School aims to:

- Develop and 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.

6. 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.

Our school values reflect this commitment to Article 12 and 31. By ensuring that children have a safe, welcoming place to play and that play areas are developed alongside our pupils, we show our commitment to Love and Compassion to one another and of Service to the greater community.

7. BENEFIT AND RISK

'Play is great for children's well-being 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 John Wesley CEM Primary 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. 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).

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'.

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.

We believe 'Flourishing in F.A.I.T.H' compels us to give our children the opportunity to experience appropriate risk and challenge, step outside their comfort zone and be given the chance to push their own boundaries of what they think they can achieve. We do this because we believe that our children will be better equipped for the outside world if they learn these skills through their play.

See Appendix A for the H&SE Managing Risk Statement

8. SUPERVISION

The law requires that children in school have supervision at all times of the day, but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day, there should be one or more adults (Playworkers) present outdoors when children are outside. The school recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging.

Our Supervision will take remote, direct and ranging models dependent on the activities taking place on the playground, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can supervise large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and of the 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. Supervisors 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.

See Appendix B for Supervision Site Map (Playtime/Lunchtime Rota) example

9. 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 Playwork 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.

The staff at The John Wesley CEMP School aim to constantly improve their understanding and delivery of playwork through frequent training, both as part of the OPAL Programme and through staff-led updates as the Programme goes on.

See Appendix C for the Principles of Playwork

10. 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.

We aim to create a community with a Christian ethos, where the talents of all our children are nurtured and developed. Our school values of Koinonia, Love, Compassion, Wisdom, Forgiveness and Service are at the heart of what we do.

The school's legal duties in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and which are described in the School's Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy will be further reinforced through our 'Thriving and Flourishing Relationships' (Behaviour) and Anti-Bullying Policies and seek to safeguard vulnerable pupils. We recognise some pupils may need additional support to meet behaviour expectations.

11. 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

A rich play environment promotes children's innate curiosity towards the natural world, and subsequently a love and enjoyment of the outdoors, which is a key foundation for caring for the environment. A rich play setting supports safeguarding, and enables children to advocate for their own rights and the rights of others.

12. STRUCTURE OF ADULT ROLES

OPAL Working group

This is the team working directly with OPAL to ensure policy is in place and develop play and outdoor learning at The John Wesley CEM Primary School. It consists of:

- The Headteacher & Deputy Headteacher
- Play Leader
- Lead Playworker
- Caretaker
- School Council Facilitator
- Parent Representative
- A Governor
- Other staff members with an interest in developing play

The John Wesley CEM Primary School Play Team

All adults working at the school are part of the play team and have a responsibility to follow this policy. When on the playground at playtimes, all staff are considered 'playworkers'. Our play structure consists of:

- Play Leader – Strategically leads and manages strategy and curriculum
- Lead Playworker - Manages playtimes and lunchtimes
- Playworkers - Support children's' play

13. REVIEW

This policy will be closely monitored by the Headteacher. The 'OPAL working group' will take responsibility for managing the action plan for play.

This policy has been shared with the whole school community including children, staff and parents.

APPENDIX A: The Health and Safety Executive Statement on Managing Risk in PlayHealth and Safety
Executive**CHILDREN'S PLAY AND LEISURE – PROMOTING A BALANCED APPROACH**

1. Health and safety laws and regulations are sometimes presented as a reason why certain play and leisure activities undertaken by children and young people should be discouraged. The reasons for this misunderstanding are many and varied. They include fears of litigation or criminal prosecution because even the most trivial risk has not been removed. There can be frustration with the amounts of paperwork involved, and misunderstanding about what needs to be done to control significant risks.

2. The purpose of this statement is to give clear messages which tackle these misunderstandings. In this statement, HSE makes clear that, as a regulator, it recognises the benefits of allowing children and young people of all ages and abilities to have challenging play opportunities.

3. HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well-managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential danger.

4. HSE wants to make sure that mistaken health and safety concerns do not create sterile play environments that lack challenge and so prevent children from expanding their learning and stretching their abilities.

5. This statement provides all those with a stake in encouraging children to play with a clear picture of HSE's perspective on these issues. HSE wants to encourage a focus on the sensible and proportionate control of real risks¹ and not on unnecessary paperwork. HSE's primary interest is in real risks arising from serious breaches of the law and our investigations are targeted at these issues. Recognising the benefits of play Key message: 'Play is great for children's well-being 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'.

6. HSE fully recognises that play brings the world to life for children. It provides for an exploration and understanding of their abilities; helps them to learn and develop; and exposes them to the realities of the world in which they will live, which is a world not free from risk but rather one where risk is ever present. The opportunity for play develops a child's risk awareness and prepares them for their future lives.

7. Striking the right balance between protecting children from the most serious risks and allowing them to reap the benefits of play is not always easy. It is not about eliminating risk. Nor is it about complicated methods of calculating risks or benefits. In essence, play is a safe and beneficial activity. Sensible adult judgements are all that is generally required to derive the best benefits to children whilst ensuring that they are not exposed to unnecessary risk. In making these judgements, industry standards such as EN 1176 offer benchmarks that can help.

8. Striking the right balance does mean:

- Weighing up risks and benefits when designing and providing play opportunities and activities
- Focusing on and controlling the most serious risks, and those that are not beneficial to

- the play activity or foreseeable by the user
- Recognising that the introduction of risk might form part of play opportunities and activity
- Understanding that the purpose of risk control is not the elimination of all risk, and so accepting that the possibility of even serious or life-threatening injuries cannot be eliminated, though it should be managed
- Ensuring that the benefits of play are experienced to the full

9. Striking the right balance does not mean:

- All risks must be eliminated or continually reduced
- Every aspect of play provision must be set out in copious paperwork as part of a misguided security blanket
- Detailed assessments aimed at high-risk play activities are used for low-risk activities
- Ignoring risks that are not beneficial or integral to the play activity, such as those introduced through poor maintenance of equipment
- Mistakes and accidents will not happen

What parents and society should expect from play providers

Key message: 'Those providing play opportunities should focus on controlling the real risks, while securing or increasing the benefits – not on the paperwork'.

10. Play providers should use their own judgement and expertise as well as, where appropriate, the judgement of others, to ensure that the assessments and controls proposed are proportionate to the risks involved.

11. They should communicate what these controls are, why they are necessary and so ensure everyone focuses on the important risks.

12. It is important that providers' arrangements ensure that:

- The beneficial aspects of play - and the exposure of children to a level of risk and challenge - are not unnecessarily reduced
- Assessment and judgement focuses on the real risks, not the trivial and fanciful
- Controls are proportionate and so reflect the level of risk

13. To help with controlling risks sensibly and proportionately, the play sector has produced the publication *Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide* which provides guidance on managing the risks in play. The approach in this guidance is that risks and benefits are considered alongside each other in a risk-benefit assessment. This includes an assessment of the risks which, while taking into account the benefits of the activity, ensures that any precautions are practicable and proportionate and reflect the level of risk. HSE supports this guidance, as a sensible approach to risk management.

If things go wrong

Key message: 'Accidents and mistakes happen during play – but fear of litigation and prosecution has been blown out of proportion.'

14. Play providers are expected to deal with risk responsibly, sensibly and proportionately. In practice, serious accidents of any kind are very unlikely. On the rare occasions when things go wrong, it is important to know how to respond to the incident properly and to conduct a balanced, transparent review.

15. In the case of the most serious failures of duty, prosecution rightly remains a possibility, and cannot be entirely ruled out. However, this possibility does not mean that play providers should eliminate even the most trivial of risks. Provided sensible and proportionate steps have been taken, it is highly unlikely there would be any breach of health and safety law involved,

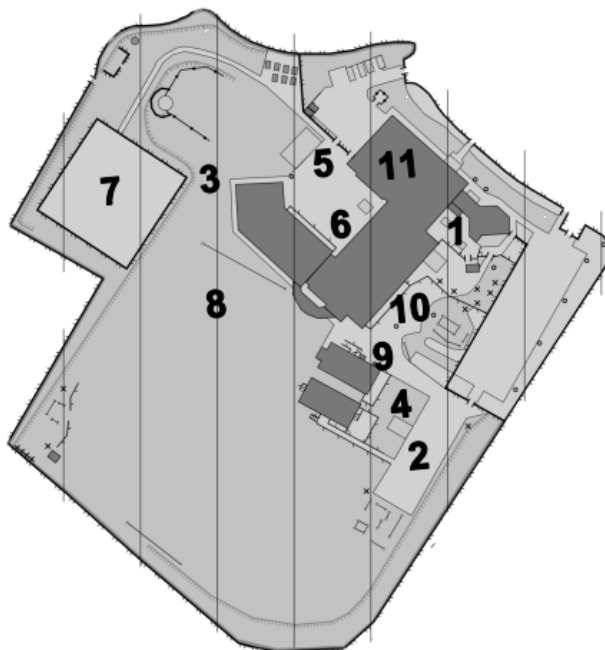
or that it would be in the public interest to bring a prosecution.

September 2012

APPENDIX B - Staff Supervision Rota and Site Map

Please note: This map and rota is an example of supervision, and is subject to change due to staff absence or from changes based on needs that become apparent throughout the school day.

OPAL PLAYGROUND MAP AUTUMN TERM 2023



PLAYTIME ROTA	Zone	Area	Adult/s
	1	EYFS Playground	2 EYFS Staff
	2	Vehicles	2 Year 3 Staff
	3	Mud Play/Kitchen	2 Year 2 Staff
	4	Sandpit	1 SRP Staff
	5	Stage; Dressing-Up;	1 Year 4 staff
	6	Reading Area; Board Games & Drawing	1 Year 4 Staff
	7	Ball Games/ Football	2 Year 5 Staff
	8	Den Building	2 Year 6 staff
	9	Water Play	1 Year 1 Staff
	10	Skipping; Equipment	1 Year 1 Staff

* A TA (Named or otherwise) to accompany/support/ observe each named child at playtimes.
 *Den Building not set yet - 3 possible options. Adults try all areas.

LUNCHTIME ROTA	Zone	Area	Adult/s
	1	EYFS Playground	3 Adults
	2	Vehicles	1 Adults
	3	Mud Play/Kitchen	1 Adults
	4	Sandpit	1 Adults
	5	Stage; Dressing-Up;	1 Adults
	6	Reading Area; Board Games & Drawing	1 Adults
	7	Ball Games/ Football	2 Adults
	8	Den Building	1 Adults
	9	Water Play	1 Adults
	10	Skipping; Equipment	1 Adults
11	Hall	4 Adults	

LUNCHTIME ROTA

Zone & Area Name	11.30 – 12.00 (11.20-11.30am All MDS put up tables and get themselves sorted)
Willow & Magnolia Classroom: Supporting EYFS children to eat lunch, support table manners and bring puddings as well as wipe tables/clear away.	Mrs Kathy Siddle, Mrs Lisa Doubtfire, Mrs Paula Marsh, Mrs Sarah Vincent, Mrs Linda Calvert
Hall & then EYFS Classroom: Set tables for Yr1-3 and sort lanyards for Yr4-6 and then set up outside if needed	Mrs Sharna Bennett (Not Mon); Mrs Jenny Sheppard (Mon- Thurs); Mrs Karen White (Fri)

	12.00 -12.25	12.25 – 12.50 (12.50-12.55 – Time to deliver messages etc)
1: EYFS Playground	Mrs Carolyn McVittie; Ms Jo Tombs; Mrs Arwen Hopkins (Tues-Fri); Miss Agnes Krawiec (Mon)	
2: Vehicles	Mrs Sarah Vincent	Mrs Sarah Vincent
3: Mud Play/Kitchen	Mrs Jenny Sheppard (Mon – Thurs) Mrs Karen White (Fri)	Mrs Jenny Sheppard (Mon – Thurs) Mrs Karen White (Fri)
4: Sandpit	Mrs Jo Bolejko	Mrs Lisa Doubtfire
5: Stage; Dressing-Up;	Mrs Kay Osmundsen	Miss Chrissie Spring
6: Reading Area; Board Games & Drawing	Mrs Sharna Bennett (Tues - Fri) Mrs Ali Brient (Mon)	Mrs Sharna Bennett (Not Mon); Miss Agnes Krawiec (Mon)
7: Ball Games	Mrs Paula Marsh; Mrs Jayne Bennett	Mrs Paula Marsh; Mrs Hayley Mitchell
8: Den Building	Mrs Lisa Doubtfire	TBC
9: Water Play	Mrs Kathy Siddle	Mrs Kathy Siddle
10: Skipping; Equipment	Mrs Linda Calvert	Mrs Linda Calvert
11: Hall	Mrs Samie Shepherd; Mrs Lauren Nock; Ms Imani Albert; 1 x SLT/Phase Leader	Mrs Hannah Page; Mrs Hannah Bridges; Mrs Sarah Martin; (1 x SLT/Phase Leader if needed)

Named TA out with their children/supporting lunchtime across zones:

12.00 -12.25	12.25 – 12.50
Mrs Becky Jones (JR); Mrs Katharine Underwood (JO); Miss Katie Morris (NS); Miss Molly Spence (ZK); Mrs Chanel Edwards (SD); Miss Leigh Jenkins (DM); Miss Andria Mason (CL); Mrs Lesley Bull (RLE); Mrs Riz Wickens (RWH); Mrs Emma Dodsworth (EWS); Miss Calypso Lee (DD)	Mrs Becky Jones (JR); Miss Natasha Richmond (TS); Miss Katie Morris (NS); Mrs Anna Hosken (MBJ); Mrs Sarah Rees (OD); Mrs Lucy Clark (BM/VB)

* Children must bring water bottles and packed lunches to the hall or collect on way to hall.

APPENDIX C - The Playwork Principles

- 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 wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- Play is a process that 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.
- The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
- The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
- Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.