

Risk-benefit assessment date: Updated May 2025. Assessed by: John Howe

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
<p>Large loose parts Falling on children Crushing injuries Heavy lifting Could involve players or bystanders</p>	<p>All those listed in play policy plus – core strength, coordination, cooperation, creativity. Items are essential to a rich play environment.</p>	<p>Agree stacking heights in play assembly. No higher than shoulder height. Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. “Ready, steady, lift” – bent knees and straight back. No double size pallets. Four children to carry any pallet around. Children at the front are always facing forward. Large dens only in supervised den zone, off the main yard. Logs may only be rolled to be moved. Check for potential hazards including as part of daily maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choking hazards, splinters and sharp edges. These either must be removed or sanded down. 	<p>OPAL lead</p>	<p>November 2023</p>

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bacterial infection through stagnant water. • All tyres added must be drilled. • Play team apply the principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts. 		
Digging area use of real spades Chopping feet Accidental blows Use as weapon Risk to players and bystanders	All those in play policy – plus Upper body strength Creativity Core strength Enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools not toys training in play assembly. • Only diggers in the digging zone. • Only spades, not forks. 	Play coordinator	Ongoing
Level of adult supervision in children's play	Children are able to follow the play principles that are described in our play policy.	We use a form of supervision called 'ranging supervision'. This means that staff are situated across our site in key locations and move around designated areas, engaging with play, carrying out dynamic risk assessments and	JKH introduced to staff Autumn 2024	Ongoing

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<p>supporting the schools values and rules introduced.</p> <p>This level of supervision means that staff focus on the ‘sensible and proportionate control of real risks’ (Health and Safety Executive – Play Policy) and are readily available to react to incidents as well as respond to children’s invitations to play and opportunities to extend play values</p> <p>Areas chosen for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied play environment during lunchtime and playtimes, • Ease of non-invasive supervision Area prepared by: • Sourcing relevant equipment to nurture varied play experiences, • Risks managed by: Play team introduction and 		

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<p>discussion of all areas and specific risks,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPAL staff identified to check equipment regularly <p>OPAL team regular updates (at least once a term),</p>		
Children playing with rope and other loose parts equipment that has the potential for neck injury and strangulation and any other areas of being bound.	Thick rope enables pulling and dragging and other safe applications such as demarcation, den-building etc Use rope enables children to tie things together to be creative	Play Team to be vigilant on the use of rope and any other loose strings that have the potential for injuries.	Play Team to monitor the loose part equipment.	Ongoing
Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
Pupils playing in different environments with new potential dangers e.g. loose parts: There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid.	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	All Play Team Members will have 1st aid pouches and 1st aid records. Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated in situ. More serious injuries will be referred to office staff and school first aid protocols will be followed.	Play Team	Ongoing

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
Loose parts play such as plastic tubes, guttering etc is broken (See Loose parts action plan and risks appendix 1)	Enabling children to play with the guttering enables children to develop their creative play.	All loose parts are checked regularly (fortnightly) to ensure it is safe enough to play with. All parts that are identified as having 'rough' edges or broken will be removed. Children are encouraged to place broken items in a 'broken zone' - wheelie bin.	JKH IT - Site supervisor	Ongoing
Children may use the loose parts equipment in an inappropriate way and injuries may result in misuse.	Enabling children to play with the loose parts enables children to develop their creative play. Play policy deems what is appropriate and inappropriate play.	Children are encouraged to develop imaginative, creative play. Regular assemblies are held to ensure that all children are aware of their responsibilities at break times to play with loose parts appropriately.	JKH IT - Site supervisor	Ongoing
Pallet Use Risk of using pallets include: Unstable stacking, nails from popping up, slats breaking from under pressure, minor splinters caused by hands on rough sawn wood. At Risk pupils: Harm - category:	Enabling children to play with the loose parts enables children to develop their creative play. Useful knowledge and skills of construction. Healthy living link to core strength, cardiovascular and mental health	Through the play policy and through assemblies the children have been taught the expectations for using more than one pallet. Pallets chosen for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable condition/sturdy. 	Play Team IT - Site Supervisor	Ongoing Assembly

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
Splinters – med Scrapes – low Cuts - low		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any protruding nails removed/made safe. Area prepared by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site supervisor sanding down pallets prior to use. OPAL identified staff check areas daily. Risks managed by (pupils worked with through play assembly): Don't build above shoulder height. Pallets may break, uncovering protruding nails/screws, be careful and tell the play team. Pallets can give splinters if not handled correctly. 		
Use of crates or pallets are stacked too highly and children are injured. Main risk for this will be from unstable stacks, or from	Play policy deems what is appropriate and inappropriate play.	Children are aware of the rules for stacking any crates and pallets. This has been communicated clearly to the children. LBS remain	Play Team Staff on Duty	Ongoing Assembly

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
toppling of pallets when balanced on their edge.		vigilant in the areas where pallets/crates are in play.		
Risk of using baskets as stepping stones or being piled up on each other	Enabling children to play with the loose parts enables children to develop their creative play.	Through regular assemblies (fortnightly) children are made aware themselves to be able to identify broken pieces of loose parts and to highlight this to different adults. Regular checks are made of all equipment.	Children Play Team JKH	Ongoing Assembly
Tyre use At Risk pupils: Harm - category: Knocks – low Scrapes – low	Play Policy, Benefits of children engaged in an exciting and engaging activity. Exploration of movement and imaginative play. Useful knowledge and skills of construction. Healthy living link to core strength, cardiovascular and mental health. Challenge for gross motor skills when moving and lifting types.	Tyres chosen for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable tread, no metal showing, Size and weight medium/low – moving No slope long/steep enough to produce dangerous inertia when the tyre rolled down. Risks managed by (pupils worked with through play assembly): 	Play co-ordinator Play Team	Assembly - Dec 23

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't build above shoulder height, • Don't move tractor tyres for climbing/balancing only. • If rolling down a slope, check the area is clear. 		
Risk of climbing on small houses/shelters	Enabling children to play with the houses without compromising their safety or the structures themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No climbing on the roof of the small house/built shelters. Message shared in OPAL assembly with children. 	Play co-ordinator Play Team	May 2024
Suitcases (e.g. role play) and push chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports storytelling, role-play and creativity - Encourages turn-taking and negotiation - Develops fine motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All zips removed to eliminate trapping risks • Weekly check for damage or loose parts • No dropping suitcases after pulling - potential head injury. • Play guidance provided through OPAL induction 	OPAL Team	May 2024
Chalk/water paints	Beneficial in all ways, develop creativity and fine motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalks and paint brushes to be maintained by children and play team. 	Play Team	Sept 2024

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board to be cleaned on Fridays. 		
Scooters, circus stepper, small skateboards.	Increased balance and improvement of gross motor skills. Fitness and core strength improved with use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be shown possible pitfalls of falling off bikes, crashing into others with bikes and injury while pushing others on bikes. • Awareness of finger trap risks. • Staff to make sure all bikes and scooters have proper rubber handles or taped off • Children to wear helmets when playing. 	Play Team All Staff	January 2025
Digging areas	Encourages independent and/or cooperative play and mastery play - fine motor skills improved. Knowledge of gardening improved through digging and planting in Garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated areas to be created for digging. • Plastic trowels to be used for digging purposes. 	Play Team	January 2025
Water play – water trays around garden	Children to explore water. Use of water supports sensory and creative play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water drained - no stagnant water. • Only two buckets of water to be used. 	Play Team	February 2025

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly cover the use of water. 		
Pupils playing in sand pit: Sand pit possible attraction for cats, dogs and fox faeces. Sand in eyes.	Large, 25m squared area enables creative, sensory play for a large number of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pit checked daily by the OPAL team and monitored throughout the day by staff. New sand added annually 	OPAL Team Play Team	February 2025
Tyre and Wooden plank swing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops balance, strength, coordination - Supports cooperative play and turn-taking - Stimulates imaginative play (e.g., pirate ship, jungle swing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered in OPAL assembly and class safety talks. Rules: no hanging upside down, one child at a time, no jumping off. Daily visual checks for wear or damage. Regular ground checks for safety, eg removal of pallets from loose parts. 	OPAL Lead & Curricular Lead for Play	March 2025
Static Hanging Bars (Fixed in ground, <1m high)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds upper body strength and confidence - Encourages persistence and resilience - Safe height reduces injury risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No flipping. Three points of contact. Rules reinforced through OPAL assemblies. Weekly maintenance check for bar stability and ground surface integrity. 	As above and Play Team	March 2025

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three children only - at one time. 		
Fibre glass boat and kayak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sparks imaginative, small-world and role-play scenarios - Encourages social interaction and collaborative play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No rocking boats (see saw motion or jumping onto them.) - Regular inspection for cracks or sharp edges - Use discussed in assemblies with clear expectations - Checked after bad weather 	OPAL Lead & Site Supervisor	March 2025
Dead Hedge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotes environmental awareness and creativity - Opportunity for building and constructive play - Encourages respect for nature and habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No jumping over or removing sticks • Ongoing safety education through OPAL assembly • Monitored regularly for stability and to remove sharp or protruding sticks 	Opal Team and Climate Friendly Schools Group	April 2025
Large Storage Boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports independence in equipment access - Encourages responsibility and self-organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No standing in or hiding inside boxes. • Monitored daily • Children trained in proper use during OPAL assembly 	OPAL Play Team	April 2025

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
	<p>- Can be used as part of collaborative tidy-up routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment stored safely with lids kept off during play hours 		
<p>Wooden Play Boat</p>	<p>Supports rich imaginative play linked to themes such as adventure, teamwork, and exploration</p> <p>Provides opportunity for cooperative role play and problem-solving</p> <p>Helps develop spatial awareness, balance, and confidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered in OPAL assembly and playground rules overview Clear expectations. No more than six children on the structure at any one time No jumping off the boat or climbing onto high edges No standing on the edges or hanging from the mast or bow. Structure inspected regularly for wood wear, splinters, and structural stability. Adults trained to reinforce safe behaviour and prompt 	<p>OPAL Lead & Site Supervisor</p>	<p>April 2025</p>

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
		reminders given during playtime if misused		